

**A CAUSAL MODEL OF SPIRITUAL
LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT:
A CASE STUDY
OF THE NAQSHABANDIYAH KHALIDIYAH
SPIRITUAL ORDER IN MALAYSIA**

MOHAMED SAFIULLAH MUNSOOR

**ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2018

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MOHAMED SAFIULLAH MUNSOOR

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2018



PREFACE

This research study is born out of a need to share a ‘life-line’, meaning, spiritual orientation and practices aimed at those who want to transform their lives through revitalising their inner selves and achieving a sense of peace. What is unique about this study is that it weaves together emerging data from neuro-science generated from spiritual and related practices, while incorporating theories from humanistic psychology. The role and modeling of the Sheikh-Exemplar, the approach and spiritual practices and its impact on well-being and consciousness is demonstrated through the construction of an in-depth case study of a spiritual Order in Malaysia. The most powerful narrative to emerge from this research is that of the spiritual and behavioural transformation of the general seekers, drug addicts, HIV patients, and transgender persons. It is expected that this study will benefit both non-Muslims, who are generally unaware of the inner dimensions of Islam, as well as Muslims who are unfamiliar with the Islamic tradition of ‘tasawwuf’ (inner development). This is demonstrated through the development of a causal model of spiritual leadership and self-development, substantiating the claim that Islam does have an architecture for the development of the self. This, then, forms the quintessential message of the faith; enlighten your soul before you move on to the next abode. Finally, this research postulates a spiritual theory of learning building on Albert Bandura’s social learning theory. It is expected that there will be future studies along these lines to validate the causal model of spiritual leadership and self-development, leading to the building of a comprehensive theory of spiritual development. This research and the writing of this thesis has created within me a greater level of awareness and it is hoped that the reader will benefit from it.

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: Mohamed Safiullah Munsoor

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Title of Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation/Thesis ("this Work"):

Knowing Thyself: A Causal Model of Spiritual Leadership and Self-Development:
A Case Study of the Naqshbandiyah Khalidiyah Spiritual Order in Malaysia

Field of Study: Islamic Thought (Religion)

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**A CAUSAL MODEL OF SPIRITUAL
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SPIRITUAL ORDER IN MALAYSIA**

ABSTRACT

The contemporary period signifies a turbulent time, where internal and external strife is on the rise, increasing the burden on human beings. It is in this kind of situation that one tends to search inwardly, while concurrently pursuing external solutions. In order to find a sense of peace and meaning of life, most traditions, including Hindu, Buddhist and the Christian monastic traditions, have emphasized the inward aspects, which is largely exemplified through contemplative practices combined with related moral codes. Islam, with its transition through contemporary times, has been seen to place more emphasis on externalities, while loosing the spirit of the inwards dimension and practices known as ‘tasawwuf’; the hallmark of the Prophetic life. There is increasing evidence of these spiritual practices having a positive impact on well-being, as corroborated by emerging neuro-science data. This study poses the fundamental question: is there an architecture of the development of the self within Islam? The study goes on to explore this using an in-depth case study of the life of a Spiritual Order in Malaysia. While developing the narrative within the Islamic tradition, data from neuro-science and humanistic psychology has been used to augment the research findings. The Interpretive Phenomenology Approach (IPA) was utilised, which enabled the gaining of insight into the personal and spiritual world of the leader and the seekers. The inter-linked methods within IPA were used, including thematic analysis and Neuro-Semantics-Neuro-Linguistic Programming. The emerging data set was constructed through the use of the ‘clean language’ approach, which builds on the original narratives of the subjects, with methodological triangulation including interview and survey data. The synthesis, which resulted from this process, was a fusion of diverse areas of knowledge. There were four

fundamental findings, which substantiates the claim that ‘Islam has a spiritual architecture, with its approaches, methods and tools that can be utilized for modeling and developing oneself’. Firstly, from the data set, a causal model of Spiritual Leadership and Self-Development was conceptualised, where the following essential variables were identified and explained: i) within the context of the Self, the ‘calling (self-realization)’ followed by the ‘efforts’ of the seekers; and ii) within the framework of the Spiritual Order, the ‘Leader’s values’ and ‘behavior’, as well as the ‘membership’ of the seekers, which provided the required guidance and knowledge. All of these influenced the ‘performance’ and ‘rewards’ impacting on the seekers ‘well-being’ and their ‘acquisition of knowledge’. This model needs to be tested to be further validated and to make it more robust. Secondly, the nexus between worship and morality exemplified by the modeling of the spiritual leadership, as well as the adaption of the various practices, is seen to lead the seeker to a more holistic development of the seeker, represented by a fusion of both the inward and the outward aspects of Islamic practices. Thirdly, the integration of the heart-brain as experienced by the seekers is seen as being critical factor for self-development. This signifies the integration of both contemplative methods attuned to the heart, combined with the more cognitive aspects of learning and practice represented by the brain. Finally, a spiritual theory of learning is postulated, which includes: observation-attention, reflection, self-accounting, supplication, mirroring, testing and retention, reproduction, internalization, and motivation. It is expected that there will be future studies to validate the causal model of spiritual leadership, self-development, and the spiritual theory of learning.

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ABSTRAK

Zaman kontemporari menandakan keadaan yang tidak stabil, di mana tuntutan zahir (luaran) dan batin (dalaman) yang semakin meningkat membebankan manusia. Di dalam situasi inilah seseorang bermuhasabah diri (dalaman) sambil mencari penyelesaian luaran. Di dalam usaha mencari rasa keamanan diri dan makna kehidupan, kebanyakan tradisi agama, termasuk agama Hindu, Buddha dan Monastik Kristian telah memberi penekanan terhadap aspek dalaman (batin) yang kebanyakannya digambarkan melalui amalan muhasabah diri yang digabungkan dengan kod-kod moral yang berkaitan. Umat Islam melalui peredaran masa telah memberi penekanan kepada aspek luaran (zahir) sehingga mengabaikan dimensi dalaman dan amalan yang dikenali sebagai “tasawuf” yang merupakan lambang kehidupan para anbiya’. Terdapat semakin banyak bukti menunjukkan bahawa amalan kerohanian mempunyai impak positif terhadap kesejahteraan kehidupan seseorang individu yang kini pula disokong oleh data-data neuro-sains. Kajian ini bertujuan membentangkan persoalan penting, apakah terdapat satu pendekatan pembangunan diri di dalam Islam? Ia seterusnya cuba meneliti keadaan ini melalui kajian kes yang terperinci terhadap kumpulan tarekat tasawuf yang bergiat di Malaysia. Data daripada kajian neuro-sains psikologi humanistik telah digunakan untuk mengukuh hasil penyelidikan. Pendekatan “*Interpretive Phenomenology Approach*” (IPA) digunakan yang mana telah memberikan pemahaman terhadap kehidupan peribadi dan rohani pemimpin dan pengamal tarekat tasawuf ini. Kaedah-kaedah yang saling berkaitan di dalam IPA telah digunakan termasuklah analisis tematik dan Neuro-Semantics-neuro-linguistic programming, yang mana set data dibina melalui penggunaan “*clean language*” yang mengukuhkan subjek-subjek naratif yang

asal, dan juga kemudiannya ditriangulasikan dengan data kaji selidik. Keputusan dari proses sintesis ini ialah gabungan daripada pelbagai bidang ilmu yang menghasilkan tiga penemuan penting yang mengukuhkan dakwaan Islam mempunyai struktur pendekatan rohani (*spiritual architecture*), beserta pendekatan, metode dan kaedah yang boleh digunakan untuk membangunkan model kepimpinan spiritual (*spiritual leadership*) dan pembangunan diri (*self-development*). Pertama, daripada set data yang diperolehi, model kasual “*spiritual leadership*” dan “*self-development*” dikonsepskan, di mana pemboleh ubah penting berikut dikenal pasti dan diperjelaskan: i) di dalam konteks diri (*self*) iaitu menjurus kepada kesedaran diri (*self-realisation*) yang diperolehi dari usaha pengamal (*seekers*) ii) di dalam rangka kerja “*spiritual order*”, nilai-nilai dan perilaku (*behaviour*) pemimpin serta keahlian pengamal telah menyediakan panduan dan pengetahuan yang diperlukan. Kesemuanya ini mempengaruhi prestasi dan ganjaran yang memberi kesan kepada kesejahteraan, perolehan ilmu pengetahuan, dan perubahan dalam kesedaran diri pengamal. Model ini perlu diuji untuk pengesahan selanjutnya serta membuatnya lebih kukuh. Kedua, hubungan antara ibadah dan moraliti (akhlak) yang ditunjukkan daripada model kepimpinan spiritual serta pelbagai amalan kerohanian pengamal dilihat membawa kepada pembangunan spiritual holistik para pengamal tanpa berlakunya pertembungan di antara aspek dalaman dan luaran berlandaskan ajaran Islam. Ketiga, integrasi antara kalbu-minda seperti mana yang dialami oleh para pengamal dilihat sebagai faktor penting untuk pembangunan diri. Ini ditunjukkan melalui integrasi metode muhasabah diri yang memberi penekanan kepada kalbu yang digabungkan dengan aspek kognitif pembelajaran dan amalan melalui minda.

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University of Malaya

DEDICATIONS

To my Late Father Munsoor Zainudeen, Late Mother Sithy Rafeeka,
My Beloved Wife Husna and Children Hannah & Umair (son-in-law), Wardah, Leena,
and Inaam &

To the Seekers of the Enduring and Unified 'Reality'

TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM¹

Arabic Letters	Romanisation
أ	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	d
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
long vowel a	ā
long vowel i	ī
long vowel u	ū

¹ Arabic – Transliteration Table, UNESCO,
http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/32265/11619358083arabic_en.pdf/arabic_en.pdf

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LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS

Clean Language (CL)
Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA)
INVIVO (qualitative analysis software)
Meta Programme (MP)
Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
Neuro-Linguistic Programme (NLP)
Neuro-Semantics (NS)
Symbolic Modelling (SM)
Therapeutic Life Style Change (TLC)

SELECTED MEANINGS OF KEY WORDS

Akhfa (Inner most)
Aql (Intellect)
Baraka (Blessing)
Dhikr (Remembrance of God)
Dua (Supplication)
Hidaya (Inspiration or Spiritual Calling)
Ju' (Hunger)
Khafi (Inner Most)
Ma'rifa (Divine knowledge)
Nafs (Soul or Self)
Sabr (Patience)
Ruh (Spirit)
Qalb (Heart)
Sadaqa (Voluntary giving)
Sahar (Vigilance)
Salah (Obligatory and Voluntary ritual Prayers)
Sawaab (Reward)
Saum (Fasting)
Sheikh (Exemplar-Leader)
Sirr (Inner Most)
Sukur (Gratitude)
Silsila (Lineage)
Samath (Silence)
Sunnah (Words and Actions of the Prophet)
Tariqa (Order)

Tarbiath (Education)
Tarkiyath (Spiritual Grooming)
Tazkiyath (Purification)
Tauba (Repentance)
Tawajju (Spiritual Beneficence)
Zakah (Obligatory giving)

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Context: Religions, with their spiritual leadership and accompanying faith-based traditions, have been instrumental in developing systems for self-development, combating vices, and enhancing virtue (see chapters 2.1, 2.2). These traditions, embedded in their role models and spiritual orders, have outlined various contemplative practices² ranging from prayers, meditation, contemplation, repentance, supplication, voluntary support to others in need, to name a few (see chapter 2.3). These systems, by and large, are seen to instill a sense of wellbeing and provide meaning to life, while inculcating calmness through its contemplative practices (see chapters 2.3 and 2.4). It affords methods for being integrated with oneself, as well as for socialization with society at large, with its core value systems, which are generally based on equity and social justice. This sense of religiosity or spirituality provide individuals with appropriate concepts, tools, methods, and a self-development framework, which underpins their lives or should do so.³

It is to be noted that there are aberrations to this above-mentioned process, where religion is misused or misinterpreted. This is seen to pose an issue as seen in some intolerant and violent contemporary movements masking under the name of religion. To put this into context within the Islamic perspective, there are several chapters that deal with some fundamental concepts, contemplative practices and the role of morality in some detail, which includes the spiritual leadership Prophetic Model and his life-style (see Chapters 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2).

² Contemplative Practices and define and a conceptual diagram is presented in Section 2.4 and lists those within Islam.

³ Professor Manfred Seligman's (Prof of Psychology University of Pennsylvania, USA) extensive research on Happiness covering the past decades, clearly points out three main ingredients leading to a sense of happiness-contentment, with the top priority being people having a purpose and meaning to life and a sense of optimism, which the research author states as Faith in God for those who are religiously inclined. Source: BBC Interview, Hard Talk, Asia services, aired on 19/12/2007.

1.1 Statement of Problem & Justification for the Research Study: Within the framework of Islam, one of the subjects that has received unbalanced attention, as well as a mixed reaction, is self- or spiritual-development, as compared with Hinduism (yoga), Buddhism (mindfulness meditation), or Christianity (contemplative methods of Christianity and its link-up with Judaism underlined by the Jewish and Christian⁴ ethos-values). Both within Buddhism and Hinduism, there have been numerous scientific experimentations⁵ that have been carried out, which have outlining the numerous benefits of their respective contemplative practices on health and well-being (see Chapter 2.4).

In a contemporary sense with Islam, there has been a general neglect of these traditional practices unless one is a part of a spiritual order commonly known as a ‘tariqa⁶’, which essentially means ‘a way or a path’. Notwithstanding this, one sees these practices being incorporated into professional work or in a clinical setting often by a clinician who has found value in it. Otherwise, on a general note, one spends insignificant amounts of time on or with these practices, which are inadvertently being replaced by active entertainment for the senses, which seems to be a burgeoning industry. Yet, in times of crises, one is forced to seek help from spiritual role-models and their related practices in

⁴ i) Yoga (Sanskrit) is a group of ancient spiritual practices originating in India. As a general term in Hinduism, it has been defined as referring to “technologies or disciplines of asceticism and meditation which are thought to lead to spiritual experience and profound understanding or insight into the nature of existence.” Yoga is also intimately connected to the religious beliefs and practices of the other. Raja Yoga, known as simply as yoga in the context of Hindu philosophy, is one of the six orthodox (astika) schools of thought, established by the Yoga sutras of Patanjali (Indian religions).

ii) Buddhist meditation encompasses a variety of meditation techniques that develop mindfulness, concentration, tranquility and insight. Core meditation techniques are preserved in ancient Buddhist texts and have proliferated and diversified through the millennia of teacher –student transmission .

iii) Thomas Merton. *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century*. USA: Fonsvitae Publishing. This expounds on Eastern Christians having a shared tradition, but that they became divided during the early centuries of Christianity in disputes about Christology and fundamental theology. In general terms, Eastern Christianity can be described as comparing four families of churches: the Assyrian church of the East, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodoxy, and the Eastern Catholic Churches.

⁵ Scientific studies referenced in Table 2 from Andresen, J. *Meditation Meets Behavioral Medicine: The Story of Experimental Research on Meditation, Cognitive Models and Spiritual Maps: The Interdisciplinary Explorations of Religious Experience*, special issue of the *Journal of Consciousness* 7, 11-12, (2000), 21-29. See: Chisea, A. *Vipassana Meditation: Systematic Review of Current Evidence*, *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 16, 1, (2010), 37-46.

⁶ Tariqa or ‘turuq’ (singular), which is “associated with the mystical teaching and the set of spiritual practices and rituals that are performed within this order, with the ultimate aim of seeking haqiqah or ultimate truth.” Tariqa Islam: Layers of Authentication, Hassan Marzouqi, June 2013, Arab Center for Resrach and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, 1

order to find a sense of peace and solitude. Even though modern life-style has made life more comfortable in terms of material wellbeing on the one hand, on the other, life has become more stressful. This has led to challenge that Walsh⁷ outlines:

“In modern affluent societies the diseases exacting the greatest mortality and morbidity such as cardiovascular disorders, obesity, diabetes, and cancer are now strongly determined by lifestyle. . . smoking, physical activity, alcohol intake, and diet exert a major impact on mortality, and even small differences in lifestyle can make a major difference in health status ... The importance of healthy lifestyles for treating multiple psychopathologies, for fostering psychological and social well-being, and for preserving and optimizing cognitive capacities and neural functions.”

In this light, Walsh⁸ succinctly articulates that:

“Therapeutic lifestyle changes (TLCs) are underutilized despite considerable evidence of their effectiveness in both clinical and normal populations. TLCs are sometimes as effective as either psychotherapy or pharmacotherapy and can offer significant therapeutic advantages... [They can] include exercise, nutrition and diet, time in nature, relationships, recreation, relaxation and stress management, religious or spiritual involvement, and service to others.”

With scientific advancement and the evolution of the modern life style, the socio-psychological and religious base of human life has significant changed. Notwithstanding this, the religious and traditional role models, concepts, tools, and methods to deal with life and its vagaries, are more relevant today than they have ever been before. For example, the need for inner space, ordering or discipline within life, prayers, mentoring, support networks, counseling, yogic exercises, meditative practices, and developing connectivity with forces beyond us, are those that have largely evolved with the religious traditions. The Contemplative Tree in Chapter 2.3 provides a range of these contemplative or devotional practices and methods within the Islamic framework.

These above-mentioned religious practices associated with the development of one's self are now being utilized for variety of functions, including dealing with anxiety,

⁷ Khaw et al., 2008, p. 376 in Walsh, R. Life Style and Mental Health, University of California, Irvine College of Medicine, *American Psychologist*, Vol. 66, Vol. 7, 579-592, 2011; Last Retrieved 25th August 2016; <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-66-7-579.pdf>

⁸ Ibid

depression, maintaining a healthy life style, developing dialogue and discourses, and finding meaning in life. Many of these practices have been taken out of their religious context and secularized, being given a 'scientific perspective'. This includes Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction⁹ (MBSR) and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy¹⁰ (MBCT). Both methods, derived from the Buddhist practice and adapted within Psychology, are used to treat a range of conditions, from pain management to anxiety and depression¹¹. This basically provides an in-road to the need for contemplative practices, as well as development of one's code of conduct and behavior, which has embedded within it concepts, tools, and methods, providing key ingredients to shape one's life positively.

1.2 Key Claim and Research Questions: The original intent of the research was to explore the nexus between worship (ibadah) and morality (akhlaq), as a vehicle for the development of the self. However, during the course of the literature review and specifically when collecting data from the field, there was a realization that this nexus, while being important, was only secondary to actually understanding the role of the Sheikh and the impact that the Order has on its seekers. This systemic inter-relationship between the Sheikh and the Seekers, as well as the Organisational dimensions of the Order, underlines the inter-connection between worship and morality.

⁹ MBSR was developed by Kabat-Zinn, a Scientist, after having studied Buddhism and utilizing its meditative methods, which is a moment-to-moment awareness of one's-self, either one's breath or body without evaluating the emerging thoughts. This training of the self-perception of one's breath, bodily sensations, posture etc. and linking it with the alienated parts of the body, is seen to be therapeutic. It has been shown to have numerous benefits on well-being. Esch, T. The Neurobiology of Meditation and Mindfulness in Eds. Stefan Schmidt and Harald Walach – Meditation – Neuroscientific Approaches and Philosophical Implication (2014, International Springer Publications, New York), 156-157

¹⁰ MBCT was developed by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale, based on Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program. MBCT is designed to help people who suffer repeated bouts of depression and chronic unhappiness. It combines the ideas of cognitive therapy with meditative practices and attitudes based on the cultivation of mindfulness. The heart of this work lies in becoming acquainted with the modes of mind that often characterize mood disorders while simultaneously learning to develop a new relationship to them. Last Retrieved 26th September 2016; <http://mbct.com>.

¹¹ Ibid (MBSR) and Ibid (MBCT)

1.2.1 Key Claim: Islam has a spiritual architecture, with its role models, approaches, methods and tools that can be utilized for modeling and developing oneself.

Counter Claim: Islam does not have a spiritual architecture for self-development and is ritualistic in its outlook.

This claim will be operationalized through eliciting primary data both through in-depth interviews of the Sheikh, as well as from selected seekers, and by utilizing a questionnaire to gain a wider perspective. This section deals with the central questions, which form the core to this research inquiry. Based on this, the primary and secondary objectives for this thesis are framed as underlined by the issues, context, and need as articulated above in section 1.2. In order to investigate the claim and its related objectives, Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) was used, which aimed at gaining an insight into the personal and spiritual world of the leader and with the seekers of the Order.

The 'Clean Language (CL)'¹² approach, which is subsumed within IPA, was used for eliciting interview responses and building on the emerging narratives. In line with the CL approach, very few questions were asked during the interviews. In contrast, the survey questionnaire developed by the researcher built on the concepts found in the literature review (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 1). Neuro-Semantics-Neuro-Linguistic

¹² James and Penny Lawley says that the therapist David Grove who developed the system for 'Clean Language' reflected and "wondered what it would be like to fully preserve and honour a client's experience with minimal interference by the therapist." He achieved this by identifying a number of very simple questions with a particular syntax and a unique delivery method. These questions contained a minimum of presupposition and were therefore called 'Clean Language.' What he discovered was the more he used Clean Language, the more clients naturally used metaphor to describe their symptoms. When Clean Language questions were then directed to the metaphors and symbols, unexpected information became available to the client, often with profound results. He found that the *less* he attempted to change the client's model of the world, the *more* they experienced their own core patterns, and organic, lasting changes naturally emerged from 'the system'; Less is More..The Art of Clean Language, The Clean Language Collection, 2016, Last Retrieved 30 August 2016; <http://www.cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/109/1/Less-Is-More-The-Art-of-Clean-Language/Page1.html>

Programming (NS-NLP) was used to frame the leadership intent, style, and pattern of thinking (Chapter 4).

1.2.2 Central Research Questions:

- Does Islam have an architecture (framework) on the development of the self, with its under-pinning philosophy, role-models, and guiding principles including approaches, methods, and tools that can be used for modelling aimed at developing the self.
- Is there a prototype of an Islamic personality, which can be a role model for Muslims and if so, what are the essential traits of this exemplar and how does he/she impact on the seekers?

1.3. Research Objectives

1.3.1 Primary Objectives:

- I. Based on an in-depth assessment of the spiritual order, to develop a model of spiritual leadership and self-development of its seekers.
- II. To determine the nature of the spiritual Order, its leadership, and the impact it has on its seekers.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives:

- i. To identify through a non-intrusive process of inquiry the spiritual landscape including its concepts, metaphors, and guiding principles that enhance and contribute to the development of the self.
- ii. To identify the essential features and traits of relevant spiritual role model or exemplar.

- iii. To model the state of excellence of these role models or exemplars, namely the Exemplar-Sheikh.
- iv. To identify spiritual practices that go towards positively contributing to the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of practitioners.

1.4 Significance of Research: There has been in recent years some emerging scientific based studies relating to Islamic practices¹³, which are yielding interesting results that point to the positive impact on the mind-body relating to contemplative and devotional practices. However, there is a clear need for more research in this direction given the variability of practices and orientations. This general neglect within Islam may be due to a number of reasons: i) either a lack of comprehensive understanding of the concepts, methods, and tools used within Islam; ii) the minimalistic approach taken by people due to pressure of time; iii) a lack of understanding of the merits of these practices; iv) an understanding that some of these practices are not following the Prophetic tradition. Notwithstanding this, Islam has had a long history of communities of spiritual practices, commonly known as ‘tariqas’ or Islamic spiritual orders, dating back to the 6th Century, which are generally low key, that have developed and pursue these contemplative practices, and which are still active across the globe (see Chapter 5 – introduction).

There has been a general tendency by a segment of the Muslim population to be pre-occupied with the Sharia¹⁴ especially in terms of the rules and regulations governing one's life and the outward acts and rituals, which are no doubt altogether important in

¹³ Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111; Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18. Aldahadha, B. “The Effects of Muslim Praying Meditation and Transcendental Meditation Programs on Mindfulness among the University of Nizwa Students,” *College Student Journal* 47(4) (2013): 668-676; Roky, R., Chapotot, F., Bencheekroun, M.T., Benaji, B., Hakkou, F., Elkhalfi, H., & Buguet, A. (2003): 95-101; Afifi, Z. E. M. (1997): 231-235; Roky, R. Iraki L., HajKhida, R., Ghazal, N.L., Hakkou, F. (2000): 101-107.

¹⁴ Shariah (Arabic) is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means “way” or “path to the water source”; it is the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Muslim principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the domain. *Shariah* deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues.

Islam. This, however, has to an extent over-shadowed the inner dimension of Islam (tasawwuf), with its core emphasis on self and spiritual development, which includes akhlaq (behavior, attitude code of conduct) and ibadah (worship). Dhikr (remembrance) and several other contemplative practices fit well within the sharia and sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). Some of the key concepts aforementioned are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.3 and 2.5.

The Arabic language has a wide array of texts that deal with the issue of the development of self in an in-depth manner, but they are not generally accessible to the public and often only form part of the course of Islamic Studies. There have been an increasing number of materials available in English pertaining to the above subject, but this has largely been for specialist readers who are interested in spirituality and which are not freely accessible to the common reader. However, in recent times, there have been attempts by some Islamic Scholars to elucidate these areas to the general English-language reader, as we shall see in the discussion encapsulated in the literature review (chapters 2.1 to 2.6).

The development of the contemplative practice, with its various methods and tools, is to basically develop a consciousness of God and a heightened sense of awareness when one is involved in acts of worship. Yet, for example, one observes generally that prayer (salah) tends to become a mechanistic exercise, whereby the various dimensions are properly observed but with some people hastily performing it. It is a sunnah not to move one's body repeatedly, and in this the various techniques to focus the mind – where "stillness of the body stills the mind" – and enables a graceful movement when transiting between different postures, allotting sufficient time for each of posture and attentively

listening to the sound of the recital – could be beneficial and lead towards the improvement of concentration and the attempt to establish connectivity with the divine.

There are authenticated hadith, which back up the above statement of "stillness and calmness": for example, narrated Aisha¹⁵ (r.a.), " I asked Allah's Messenger about looking hither and thither in As-Salah" he replied, "It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the Salah of a person." Another hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, states that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sent a man back several times since the salah was not being observed properly: ".... Then rise your head and stand up straight, then prostrate till you feel at ease during your prostration, then sit with calmness till you feel at ease (do not hurry) and do the same in all your salah¹⁶." Thus, all these are observed, prayer can become therapeutic and also inculcate self-regulatory discipline, as Khan and Gaylor (2003) point out.¹⁷

1.5 The Scope of the Research: This is largely a qualitative based research using IPA (see chapter 4), with a quantitative method, that is a survey questionnaire, used to augment the study. This study draws on neuro-scientific evidence pertaining to contemplative practices and humanistic psychology, while weaving its related theories and concepts within the Islamic tradition. This study, however, does not itself venture into experimental research and this forms its limitation. This research is restricted by its sample size, where only one in-depth case study has been used and therefore, the conclusions drawn cannot be generalized to the population or spiritual Orders at large. From a qualitative research perspective, it can be generalized as an evolving theory to be validated by other studies and methodological triangulations.

¹⁵ Bukhari Book 12: Characteristics of Prayer Hadith 718 (volume 1)

¹⁶ Khan, M.M. (1975), 239-241.

¹⁷ Khan, M.U. & Gaylor, M.S. (2003). *The New Behavioral Medicine Concepts Reflects teachings of Islam*. www.quranicstudies.com/article40.html. Last accessed September 2007.

1.6 Research Gap: There are several emerging research studies especially in the field of neuro-science that point out the positive impacts of ‘mindfulness meditation’¹⁸, which in-effect forms a part and parcel of many religious traditions including Islam. Mindfulness is a form of awareness and intuitive knowing, from moment to moment, of what on going on inside and with the outside world and is cultivated through meditation. This forms a way of training one’s attention over time so that one is able to concentrate, for example, on prayers, which within Islam is called ‘Kushu’, a type of absorption. This state of concentration is conducive towards developing ‘muraqaba’, or a state of deeper contemplation where one feels that God is witnessing you. This field of inner development, which is facilitated by spiritual Orders with their leadership and traditional practices, and which seem to have an impact on its seekers, has been one area that has not been well researched. This is especially so in the light of the emerging data relating to neuro-science and humanistic psychology of numerous benefits in terms of well-being and the process of the development of the self or self-actualization.

Given the above, there is a need to articulate and present succinctly to the readers the process of role-modeling, specific approaches, concepts, methods, and tools that can be used for self-development within an Islamic framework. These needs be examined at two levels, one the theoretical and the other more operational:

- i) The former includes the broader Islamic framework, which includes much of the body of belief (‘aqidah), theology (kalam), the legality (fiqh), and the philosophy (falsafah), which lays down the fundamentals and the variances within Islam. This is very much the rational or the cognitive dimension and is connected with the brain or cognitive functions.

¹⁸ What is Mindfulness? Greater Good: The Science of Meaningful Living, University of California, Berkeley, 2016, Last Retrieved 30 August 2016, <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition>

ii) There is within Islam the non-rational or more operational level, those areas that are more related to the heart, which include the Prophetic revelation (wahy), divine inspiration (hadith qudsi), the states of mind in worship including contemplative practices (prayer, fasting, supplication), a state of being (khushu`, absorption in worship), intuition, illumination, a kind of knowing related to telepathy (firasah), with states of the heart relating to compassion, empathy, love, and charity. These are more related to spiritual and emotional states of the heart, not necessarily related to cognitive actualisation.

What this thesis builds on is that both the rational (brain – cognition, intellect) and the non-rational (heart – revelation, intuition, inspiration, emotion) aspects are required for the development of the self, where the neglect of one leads to an unbalanced state of self-development. Perhaps, this can be best summed up in the saying of Imam Malik¹⁹: “Shari`ah without tasawwuf (inward development) is lame and tasawwuf without sharia is heresy”. This, then, refers to a more holistic perspective of Islam, which should focus on both the outer/external and the inner/internal. Based on the research data set from the case study, the discussion (chapter 6) puts this into context by presenting and discussing a causal model of spiritual leadership and development of the self.

The linking of the spiritual practices with the mental and physical wellbeing and being able to effectively utilize the related practices while cultivating good behavior, provides the required justification for this research. Moreover, the question is asked by those who are not Muslims; does Islam have these types of materials in terms of virtues and self-development, which other major religions like Christianity, Buddhism or Hinduism have more readily available within their domain. When Muslims start to look at other traditions and practices to find solace and peace of mind, then they have essentially

¹⁹ M. Hisham Kabbani, *The Repudiation of “Salafi” Innovations* (Kazi, 1996), Chicago) p. 277-279

missed out on the inner dimensions of Islam. This, then, needs to be effectively articulated, which forms the significance of this study and the research gap as outlined below:

- To develop a causal model of spiritual leadership and self-development after mapping out the metaphoric, symbolic, and conceptual landscape of a spiritual leader.
- To develop the nexus between worship and morality, as well as the rational (brain) versus the non-rational (heart), which needs to be better articulated within English-language Islamic literature.
- To provide empirical data and thus first hand insight into the contemplative practices within Islam including a framework relating to meditation-contemplation and neuro-science.

There has been many studies done in relation to spirituality and spiritual orders including: nature of spiritual orders and tassawwuf²⁰, its authentication and history²¹,

²⁰ Hamka, *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (Kota Bahru, Pustaka Aman, 1967:56) in *Reorienting Sufism: Hamka and Islamic Mysticism in the Malay World*, Khairudin Aljunied, Indonesia, No. 101 (April 2016), pp. 69, Published by: Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5728/indonesia.101.0067> Accessed: 29-03-2017 17:36 UTC

²⁰ Hamka, *Tasauf Moden*, 6 in *Reorienting Sufism: Hamka and Islamic Mysticism in the Malay World* Author(s): Khairudin Aljunied, Indonesia, No. 101 (April 2016), pp. 75 Published by: Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5728/indonesia.101.0067> Accessed: 29-03-2017 17:36 UTC

²⁰ Hamka, *Perkembangan*, pp 105-125 in *Julai Day Howell, Indonesia's Salafist Sufis*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 44, No:5 (September 2010), pp. 1040, Cambridge University Press; Last retrived 28th March 2017; URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40926540>

²⁰ Imam al-Ghazali's *Deliverance from Error and the Beginning Guidance*, Trans. W. Montgomery Watt, Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 2005.

Ritual activities of Tariqas in Zanzibar, Chiaki Fujii, *African Study Monographs*, Supplimentary Issue, 2010, 4, Koyoto University, Japan, Last retrived 28th March 2017, <https://doi.org/10.14989/108281>

Picturing Islamic Authority: Gender Metaphors and Sufi Leadership in Senegal Author(s): Hill, J. Source: *Islamic Africa*, Vol. 5, No. 2, En-gendering Islamic Authority in West Africa (Winter 2014), pp. 275-315

Pasilov, B & Ashirov, A. REVIVAL OF SUFI TRADITIONS IN MODERN CENTRAL ASIA: "JAHRI ZIKR" AND ITS ETHNOLOGICAL FEATURES *Oriente Moderno, Nuova serie*, Anno 87, Nr. 1, (2007), pp. 163-175

De Jong, F. The Sufi Orders in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Palestine: A Preliminary Survey concerning Their Identity, Organizational Characteristics and Continuity. *Studia Islamica*, No. 58 (1983), pp. 149-181

Gammer, M. The Beginnings of the Naqshbandiyya in Dāghestān and the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus. *Die Welt des Islams, New Series*, Vol. 34, Issue 2 (Nov., 1994), pp. 204-217

Bousfield, J. Adventures and Misadventures of the New Sufis: Islamic Spiritual Groups in Contemporary Malaysia. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (AUGUST 1993), pp. 328-344

Van Bruinessen, M. Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia. *Die Welt des Islams, New Series*, Vol. 38, Issue 2 (Jul., 1998), pp. 192-219

contemplation and psychospiritual²², transformative roles²³, approach, tools and methods²⁴, diseases of the heart and their cure²⁵, and spiritual psychological²⁶ expositions. This study is different in the sense that it uses the above studies in terms of developing a conceptual and theoretical framework but goes beyond this in terms of actually investigating first hand a spiritual Order – the Naqshabandi Khalididiyah using multi-methods within the domain of interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA). This, thereby, enables to gain finer insights into the spiritual landscape of this order. Thus, this forms an empirical based study, which combines the findings from areas relating to the spiritual, neuro-scientific and humanistic psychological to enrich the texture of the data and the research. The culmination of all of this has resulted in the development of a causal model of spiritual leadership and self-development, which provides an explanation of how and why the order works.

²¹ Tariqa Islam: Layers of Authentication, where H. Marzuqi provides an exposition of tariqas from an historical and Islamic perspective (Doha, Qatar, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2013)

²² Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study, where M. Badri provides an overview of the Islamic based contemplative practices from a psychological and spiritual view point, Trans. Abdul-Wahid Lu'Lu'a (Herdon, Virginia, International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2000)

²³ The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation, where Kabir Helminski, the Sheikh of the Mevlevi Order, USA provides insight into the heart and its role in spirituality (Boston & London, Shambala, 1999).

²⁴ Ibn Arabi provides an excellent exposure into the approach, methods and tools that can be used for spiritual transformation in his treatise, The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation, Trans. Hirstenstein, S (Oxford, Anqa Publication in association with Ibn Arabi Society, 2008).

²⁵ Abdullah, F, Therapeutic Ethics: Managing Anger, Negative Thoughts and Depression according to Al-Balkhi (AFKAR, Journal of 'Aqidah and Islamic Thought, BILL 12, Rabi, al-Awwal, 2011)

Abu Hamid Muhammad b. Muhammad Al-Ghazali al-Tusi in his seminal works Ihya-Ulum-Id-Din, Volume III, Trans, M.F. Karim (New Delhi, Islamic Book Services, 2007)

Ibn al Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah provides a very well articulated insight in his book Spiritual Diseases and its Cure, Ed. Sheikh Zakariya (London, Amiraat Al-Firdous Ltd, 2006).

Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani offers excellent discourses in this exposure The Removal of Cares (Fala Al-Khawatir: A Collection of Fursas, Trans, Mukhtar Holland (Kuala Lumpur, Abdul Majeed & Co. 1997)

Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah Taqi ad-Din Ahmad provides insightful guidance in his book Disease of the Heart and their Cure, Trans. Abu Rumaysah (Birmingham, Daar Us-Sannah Publishers, 2010)

Imam Muhasibi's spiritual exposure is collated by Gavin Pickens in his book Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and works of al-Muhasibi, (UK, Routledge, 2011)

Imam al-Mawlud's Matharat al-Qulub deals with Purification of the Heart, Signs, Symptoms and Cures of the Spiritual Disease of the Heart (USA, Sandala Inc, (2012)

²⁶ Imam Sidi Zarouk, a master of both sharia and tasawwuf provides a detailed identification and treatment of the diseases of the heart in his masterful treatise The Poor Mans Book of Assistance, a set of 16 CDs, Trans. and commentaries by Sheikh Hamza Yusuf (USA, Al-Hamra Production, 2001).

Hashim, H and Rosli, Spiritual Psychology and Subjective Well-Being: Horizons of Spiritual Psychology, Trans. I.H. Yusuf (India, Global Vision Publishing House, 2008)

A. Husain's Spiritual Psychology (New Delhi, Global Vision Publishing House, 2005)

Abdullah Ansari's The Sufi Path: Stations of the Heart: Sad Maydan: The One Hundred Fields, Trans. n. Angha (Cambridge, UK, Archetype Publishers).

The seminal work of Imam Sawarwardi Arif-ul-Maarif, Trans. Lieut, Col Wilberforce Clark (Lahore, S.H. Muhammed, Ashraf Publishers, 1979)

1.7 The Structure of the Research: This thesis has been categorized into six main sections. The introduction (chapter 1) provides an overview of the research exploration, with the problem statement, justification, significance, key claim and counter claim, research questions, objectives, scope, and limitations of this study. The second section is divided into two conceptual frameworks, the first dealing with worship and the second underlining morality and the way of the Prophet (chapters 2 and 3). The third section (chapter 4) outlines in some detail the methodology of the study and the philosophical basis driving it. The results together with the interpretation and analysis are presented next, with the detailed case study of a spiritual order in Malaysia (chapter 5). This integrates both interview and survey data and is subjected to interpretation by the researcher. Then in chapter 6, the integration of the full data set with related theories and concepts is discussed and an integrated analysis and synthesis is presented. Finally, conclusions (chapter 7) are drawn from the whole study with regards to its significance and the scope for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive literature review is carried out in chapters 2 and 3, where chapter 2 provides a conceptual framework for worship (ibadah), including an exposition into the soul (2.1), the diseases of the soul and its treatment (2.2), contemplative practices (2.3), and well-being and the worshipper (2.4). Chapter 3 covers the conceptual framework for morality, and includes the right way to God (3.1) and the spiritual path of the Prophet (3.2)

2.0 Conceptual Framework for Worship (Ibadah)

2.1 The Soul (Heart) And Its Attributes: An Islamic Perspective with Reference to Self in Western Psychology

2.1.1. Introduction & Overview:

The subject of the soul is a perennial one, meaning that it has been a subject of inquiry and debate from time immemorial. This research attempts to decipher and understand the soul, the spiritual self, and its differentiation from the corporal self with its accompanying attributes, largely using the body of knowledge as articulated by Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭū i al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) in his seminal work *Ihyā ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*²⁷, Shahāb al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad Suhrawardī²⁸ (1144-1234) in his *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah²⁹ (1263-1328) in his *Diseases of the Heart and their Cures*, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya³⁰ (1292–1350) in *Spiritual Disease and its Cure*. One eminent and early scholarly work on this subject is

²⁷Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭū i al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, Volume III, Translated by Maulana Fazul-Karim. 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Islamic Book Services, 1995), 1-351.

²⁸ Shahāb al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad Suhrawardī, *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*, 2nd Reprint. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1991), 1-298.

²⁹ Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah, *Disease of The Heart and their Cures* (Abu Rumaysah, Trans.). (Birmingham: Daar Us-Sunnah Publishers, 2010), 1-102.

³⁰ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Spiritual Diseases and its Cure*, ed. Sheikh Zakariya ‘Amiraat (London: Al-Firdous Ltd, 2006), 1-260.

by Imam Harith ibn ‘Asad al-Muḥāsibī³¹ (781-857), who was one of the forerunners in Islamic tasawwuf (inward science) and a notable theologian, said to have influenced Imam Ghazālī³². Related references, including those from Western psychology on the self, with special reference made to Abraham Maslow³³ and Carl Rogers³⁴, are interwoven within the text. There are many references to some notable personalities and their works like Imam Ghazali and Imam Surawardi amongst others and this is due to their seminal nature of their works especially relating to the heart, its nature and development.

2.1.2 Key Concepts: Some of the key terms that are defined here are *nafs*, *rūḥ*, *qalb* and ‘*aql*. Imam Ghazālī³⁵ defines the soul, also termed the heart or *qalb*, as ‘... that perfect, simple jewel-like substance whose only business is recollection, memorisation, contemplation, discrimination and careful consideration, and it accepts all branches of knowledge and does not grow weary of receiving abstract images free of matter. This jewel-like substance or the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*) is the leader of the spirits and the commander of the faculties and all serve it and comply with its command.’

Imam Ghazālī³⁶ refers to the soul, or an immaterial thing cited, as ‘*laṭīfah*’, with its attributes. There are scholars who hold the view that there is only one *laṭīfah* and that is the heart (*qalb*), while others say that there are five *laṭāif*³⁷, which have been mapped out, with the *qalb* (heart) being the key, followed by the *rūḥ* (spirit), *ṣirri* (innermost

³¹ Smith, M. *Al-Muḥāsibī*. (1935), 1-311.

³² *Al-Ghazālī and Intuition: An Analysis, Translation and Text of al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah*. Translation. and analysis by Che Zarrina Sa'ari. (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya. 2007), 15

³³ Abraham Maslow, the proponent of the famous Hierarchy of Needs in *Towards a Psychology of Being* (New Jersey: Martino Publishing, 2011), 127

³⁴ Rogers, C. (1991)

³⁵ *Al-Ghazālī and Intuition*, 40

³⁶ *Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā*, 4

³⁷ Maulana Allah Yar Khan. *Dalael-E-Sulook: An Objective Appraisal of the Sublime Sufi Path*. (Murshad Abad Mianwali): Idarah-E-Naqshabandiah Owaisiah. 1976), 8

conscience), *khāfi* (hidden depth), and *ahkfā* (most hidden depth). These then become the different facets of the soul. They become points of focus for the remembrance (*dhikr*) of certain Islamic Sufi orders, referred to as subtle spiritual organs³⁸, which is not necessarily a practice amongst the general body of Muslims.

Imam al-Muḥāsibī³⁹, in discussing the heart, bases his evidence on the Qur'an:

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

“... (and when) only he (will be happy) who comes before God with a heart free of evil.”⁴⁰

كَذَلِكَ نَسْلُكُهُ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

“Even so do we (now) cause this (scorn of Our message) to pervade the hearts of those who are lost in sin.”⁴¹

He sees the qalb as the essence of the self, which is immaterial, controlling the conscious nature of man and an instrument, which enables reality to be perceived and interpreted. For the Lord says:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٦٦﴾

“Have they, then never journeyed about the earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom, and causing their ears to hear? Yet, verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind – but blind have become the hearts that are in their breasts!”⁴²

³⁸ Khan, *Dalael-E-Sulook*, (1976), 61-73.

³⁹ Smith, *Al-Muhasibi*, 86.

⁴⁰ Qur'an, *Al-Shura*, 26:89.

⁴¹ Qur'an, *Al-Hijr*, 15:12

⁴² Qur'an, *Al-Hajj*, 22:46.

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

“... and men who have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see and ears with which they fail to hear”⁴³.

Thus, there is a repeated emphasis in the divine scriptures on the heart, which is a facet of the soul and the seeking of its development.

Skellie⁴⁴, in commenting on the various works of Imam Ghazālī⁴⁵, states that it is not clear whether he held the view that the soul was material or immaterial in its nature. He says that some hints allude to its material nature are found in *Kimiya al-Sa‘ādah*; *naḥs* is seen as the vehicle (*markab*) of the heart; similarly, in *al-Risalah al-Laduniyya*, the *naḥs* is termed the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*). Skellie⁴⁶ points out that the clearest hint to its material nature is in *Mizan al-Amal*, when Imam Ghazālī⁴⁷ refers to the two meanings of the soul as the animal soul (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) and the human soul (*al-naḥs al-insāniyyah*). One can argue that this above-mentioned reference of Imam Ghazālī⁴⁸ applies solely to the immaterial nature of the soul, where analogies and imageries such as ‘the vehicle of the heart’ are used to capture one’s imagination rather than alluding to its material nature.

In discussing the ‘*Rūḥ*’⁴⁹ there are two meanings that are alluded to. The first meaning applies to a material thing within the heart, termed the ‘life force’, which gives the impetus to hear and which vibrates the whole body, akin to an electric current. The

⁴³ Qur’an, Al-A’raf, 7:179.

⁴⁴ Skellie, J.W. (2007), xiii.

⁴⁵ Al- Ghazālī *Iḥyā, Ma‘ārif al-Quds fī Madārij Ma‘rifat al-Naḥs, al-Risalah al-Laduniyya* and *Kimiya al-Sa‘ādah*

⁴⁶ Skellie, J.W. (2007), xiii.

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 5.

second meaning is an immaterial and subtle thing, also referred to as the soul, which distinguishes life from the lifeless. It is something about which not much is known and when the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about it, he referred to the Qur'an, where God says: 'And They will ask about (the nature of) divine inspiration (*rūḥ*). Say: 'This inspiration (comes) at my Sustainer's behest; and (you cannot understand its nature, O men since) you have been granted very little of (real) knowledge''⁵⁰.

Like *rūḥ*, *nafs* has two meanings; firstly, it refers to passion or the base, lower self, which embodies greed, anger and other evil attributes. A prophetic⁵¹ saying captures this: "Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart"⁵². Secondly, it refers to the situation when the passion has been removed and it assumes different forms as it goes through stages of purification and refinement. This is where the self becomes aligned with the soul or the heart. This will be dealt with in detail in section 3 below.

To bring some clarity to the over-lapping terms of *nafs* and *rūḥ*, a differentiation is cited that states the distinction lies in the attributes; when a soul is infused into a child, it is the *rūḥ*. As life proceeds, as both good and bad traits are acquired and life becomes associated with the physical body, it is termed the *nafs*⁵³. Imam Suhrawardi states that *nafs*⁵⁴ is said to have two meanings as follows: i) *nafs-i-syai'* (the *nafs* of a thing), which effectively forms the *dhāt* (essence) and the *ḥaqīqah* (truth) of a thing; and ii) *al-*

⁵⁰ Qur'an, Al-Isra, 17:85.

⁵¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 5.

⁵² Al-Nawawī, *Forty Hadith*, 3rd Edition, Hadith no: 6, related by Imam Bukhari and Iman Muslim, trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Dennys Johnson-Davies (Damascus: The Holy Qur'an Publishing House, 1977), 42.

⁵³ Khan, *Dalā'el-E-Sulook*, 59.

⁵⁴ Suhrawardi, *The 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, 127.

naḥs-al-nāṭiqah-al-insāni (the human rational *naḥs*), which is also termed the human natural soul.

‘*Aql*’⁵⁵ likewise has two meanings. Firstly, it refers to the intellect or the medium through which the ‘true nature of the material things are known and its seat is in the soul’. Secondly, it alludes to the ‘power to understand the secrets of different learnings’, where it is termed a subtle essence manifested as knowledge, which is contained within the intellect. These two aspects, one with a material base and the other immaterial, are interdependent. This is reinforced by the *hadiths* that state that the first thing that God created was the intellect⁵⁶. A point of view is that revelation (*wahy*) comes from the universal intellect, while inspiration comes from the universal soul by a process of emanation⁵⁷. Islam affords a prime place to the intellect, which also includes reason, the ability to discern between right and wrong, good and evil, the real and the illusory, all of which enable man to get nearer to God⁵⁸. The Qur’ān aptly articulates this in ’39:9 and ’19:20, the latter being a metaphor for those who are ignorant or whose hearts are blind:

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَنِيتٌ أَنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ ۚ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي
الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ۚ

Say; are those who know and those who do not know equal?’⁵⁹

The blind and the seeing are not alike, nor are the depth of darkness and the light.’⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 5.

⁵⁶ cited in Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 5. William Chittick says that this *hadith* is found in many Shi’a *hadith* texts but in the Sunni tradition it is the sufis who quote it. Cited in *Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth-Century Sufi Texts* (New York: State University of New York, 1992), 211.

⁵⁷ Al-Ghazālī and *Intuition*, 122.

⁵⁸ Schuon, F. (2006), 23.

⁵⁹ Al-Qur’an, Sura Zumar, 39:9.

⁶⁰ Al-Qur’an, Sura Fāṭir 35, 19-20.

This is followed by his citing of Ibn Jurayj, who is said to have stated, ‘The *rūh* and *nafs* are in the body of a person, being separated by something resembling a ray of light...’⁶¹ Here Imam Muḥāsibī points out the differentiation between the *rūh* and the *nafs* and at the same time their intrinsic link with each other. Ibn Qayyim alluding to the *nafs* and the *ruh* brings about some clarity into the discussion when he states, “The difference is in the way of the attributes and not in terms of entity”.⁶² Thus, they are two names of the same entity, where the distinction lies is in the way of its attributes.

Al-Attās sums up the meaning of the four key terms related to the human soul as ‘... an indivisible, identical entity, a spiritual substance, which is the reality or very essence of man’.⁶³ He adds that this alludes to *kamāl*, or perfection of being, which is a unifying principle. As Imam Ghazālī⁶⁴ states, it has the power to transform something potential to something actual and forms a spiritual entity, termed *al-rūḥāniyyah*, which is created but is in effect immortal, confined neither by space or time. *Al-rūḥāniyyah* can be known through the intellect and by means of observing what originates in it⁶⁵. Given that it has varied states, it is called by different names, for example, when it is involved in intellectuality and learning it is termed ‘intellect’; when it governs the body it is called the soul.⁶⁶ In a similar vein, when it receives intuitive illumination, it is called the ‘heart’ and when receiving its own world of abstract entities it is termed the ‘spirit’.⁶⁷ In this sense, it is manifesting itself in all these different states.

⁶¹ Gavin Picken, *Spiritual Purification*, 172-173.

⁶² In *Kitab-ar-Ruh* by Ibn Qayyim p 265 cited in Khan, *Dalal-Us-Sulook*, 60

⁶³ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 148.

⁶⁴ *Al-Ghazālī and Intuition*, 62.

⁶⁵ Al-Attās, *Prolegomena*, 148.

⁶⁶ Al-Attās, *Prolegomena*, 148.

⁶⁷ Al-Attās, *Prolegomena*, 148.

2.1.3 The Structure of The Soul (*Nafs*) And the Stages of Its Development:

2.1.3.1 An Islamic Perspective: Within Islam, the understanding of the self is inter-linked with its spiritual dimensions, where the concept of *nafs* in the Quran is translated as self or soul. As described by the Quran, the *nafs* traverses three distinct stages in its life:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

“Before birth all souls are with God and all souls bear witness that Allāh is their Lord⁶⁸; the stage where our purpose is to worship Allāh⁶⁹, and after death we will be raised up and held accountable for our deeds in this lifetime and we will be either rewarded or punished.”⁷⁰

The structure of human individuality within the domain of Islamic psychology can be comprehended through the three primary elements: *nafs* or ego-self; *qalb* or heart; and *rūḥ* or spirit⁷¹. The *nafs* or self consists of the ego-self, the natural-self, and the carnal-self, and it is seen as a complex manifestation linked to the body and inter-twined with its pleasure and survival. It has no limit to its desires, be they to its body or personality, where it needs the spiritual self (*rūḥ*) to guide and liberate it⁷². The inter-connection between the spiritual self (*rūḥ*) and the natural self (*nafs*) is outlined, where the former needs the latter, in order to ‘aspire towards completion, or perfection’⁷³. The heart or *qalb* is captured as the core of our being, the soul, where our deepest and most comprehensive knowing takes place, including its psychic function. A schema of the development of the *nafs* or self, as derived from Imam Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā*⁷⁴ and Imam

⁶⁸ Qur’ān, Al-A’rāf, 7:172.

⁶⁹ Qur’ān, Al-Dhāriyat, 51:56.

⁷⁰ Qur’ān, Al-Qāri’ah 101:5-8

⁷¹ Helminski, K., *The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation* (Boston & London: Shambala, 1999), 62.

⁷² Helminski, 63, *The Knowing Heart*.

⁷³ Helminski, 63, *The Knowing Heart*.

⁷⁴ Al- Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 5.

Suhrawardi's '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*'⁷⁵ with backing from the Qur'an⁷⁶, is outlined in Figure 2.1.

It is to be noted that the knowledge of the soul or psyche is sometimes referred to as 'Islamic psychology' even though this field goes beyond this into the metaphysical realm. Thus, in-effect, one may not find the answers that one is seeking since the approach, tools and methods for this purpose may be different from the material sciences. Moving from the above state of *al-nafs al-ammārah al su'* (animal self) to that of the self that is reproachful (*al-nafs al-lawwāmah*), Imam Muḥāsibī⁷⁷ draws an analogy of a beast of burden, which is wild and must be tamed with constant discipline so that it becomes useful to the master, by which he moves towards the Lord.

This is captured as a process, where at this stage the struggle is still going on, with the higher soul gradually beginning to gain the upper hand. This struggle and tribulation continues, until with time, effort, and the mercy of the Lord, '*Iblīs (satan)*' and his hosts have been routed and the lusts of the flesh no longer make any appeal; the soul has become a captive, in complete submission to the Will of its Lord'⁷⁸. The self is now at rest and is called *al-nafs al-mutmaiinah* (see Figure 2.1), the self at peace with itself and in unison with the soul and all its facets.

2.1.4. Illustrations of The Characteristics of The Soul

In order to understand the complexity of the soul, Imam Ghazālī sketches the soul and its attributes by drawing an analogy of a secret army. This is best illustrated in Figure 2,

⁷⁵Al- Suhrawardi, '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*', 127-129.

⁷⁶Al- Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 4.

⁷⁷Smith, M. Al-Muḥāsibī, 91.

⁷⁸Smith, M. Al-Muḥāsibī, 92.

where the soul at the center is seen as the king, with the embedded intellect acting as conscience and one's action acting as Ministers who govern. From this, we see that greed and anger both have a role in so far as they maintain their functions well within the limits of feeding the body and fending off threats, while anger keeps guard to an extent. Beyond this, both of these traits take over the mind-body function and become detrimental to both the body and mind.

The weakness of the soul and its progressive ascension in the first three main stages, what Margret Smith⁷⁹ calls Muhasibi's psychological theory, are:

- i) 'Nafs al-ammara bi-su': The lower soul ('nafs') represents the seat of appetites and of passion, the 'flesh' with its sinful lusts. This leads one to sinful states while striving for one's own self-interest. As the Qur'an says, 'Verily, man's inner self does incite (him) to evil, and saved are only they upon whom my Sustainer bestows His grace!' Imam Muhasibi⁸⁰ alerts us to the nature of the nafs whereby, if you give in to it, it will lead you in a downward spiral to the death of your spiritual self, while leaving it alone will take you to its own dictates and you come under its control. Imam Muhasibi says, 'Place it where God Almighty placed it and describe it as He described it and withstand it according to His command, for it is a greater enemy to you than Satan (Iblis) himself, and Iblis gains power over you only by means of it and your consent to it'.⁸¹
- ii) 'Nafs-al-Lawamma': Imam Muhasibi⁸² says that the lower soul is akin to the beast of burden, which needs to be tamed, and therefore needs a variety of disciplines, so that it can serve the immediate master, which will then enable the person to serve the Ultimate Master. At this stage, the soul struggles with its desires and there is self-critical inquiry; with discipline over time, the soul starts to take the upper hand and becomes a

⁷⁹ Smith, M. Al-Muhasibi, 90-91

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. 90.

⁸² Ibid. 91.

reproachful soul ('al-nafs al-lawwama'). In this light, the Lord says, 'But nay I call to witness the accusing voice of man's conscience!'⁸³ Asad⁸⁴ adds that man's reproaching soul is the subconscious awareness of his own shortcomings and failings.

iii) 'Nafs-al-Mutma'inna': Once the soul becomes reproachful, the higher nature has taken over and it is in a better position to wage war successfully against the lower soul. This is where human nature is seen at its best, 'the soul at rest' ('al-nafs al-mutma'inna'). At this juncture, the 'lust of the flesh' is no longer an issue and 'the soul has become a captive, in complete submission to the Will of its Lord', while becoming the 'soul at rest' ('al-nafs al-mutma'inna').

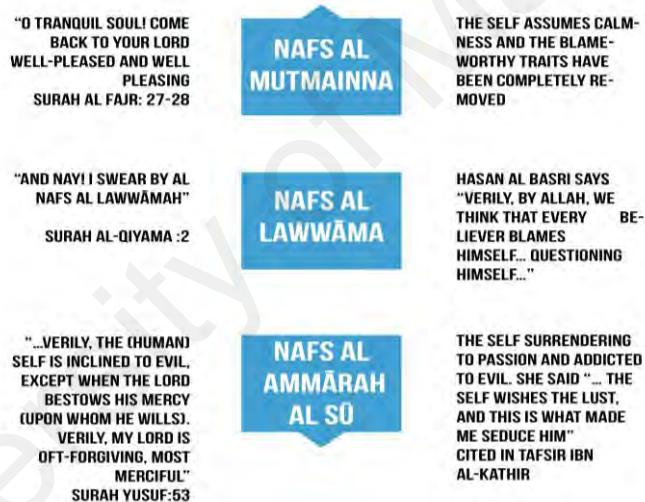


Figure 2.1.1 – Stages of Development of the *Nafs* (Self)⁸⁵

⁸³ Al-Qur'an, Al-Qiyamah (Resurrection), 75:2

⁸⁴ The Message of the Qur'an, trans. and explained by Muhammad Asad, Al-Qiyamah, 75:2, 109.

⁸⁵ This figure has been conceptualized by the researcher based on Qur'anic Verses and the stages of development or progression of the nafs.

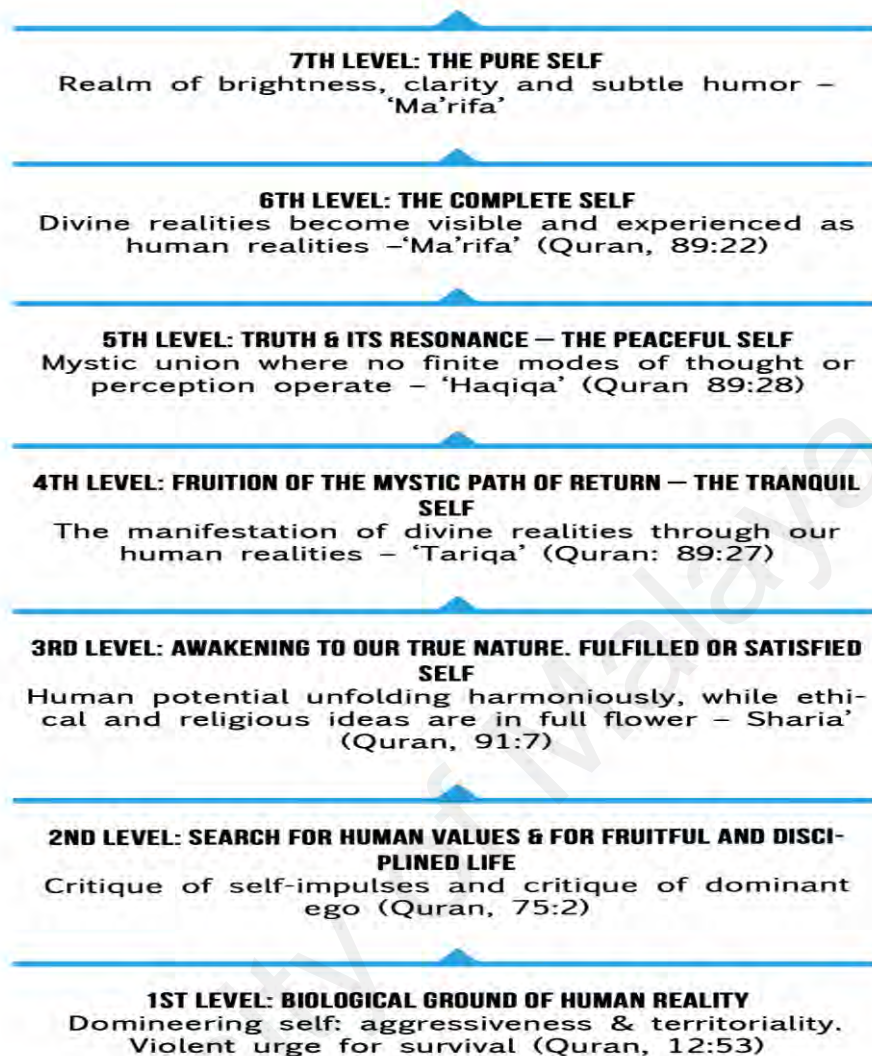


Figure 2.1.2 – The Stages of Meditative Progression & Consciousness⁸⁶

In this context, the Lord says, ‘(But unto the righteous God will say,) O thou human being that has attained to inner peace! Return thou unto thy Sustainer, well-pleased (and) pleasing (Him): enter, then, together with My (other true) servants – yea, enter thou My paradise!’⁸⁷ Further, as the Lord says:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾

⁸⁶ Chisthi, “The Stages of the development of the Soul”, last modified 2nd October 2007, http://www.chisthi.ru/soul_development.htm.

⁸⁷ Al-Qur’an, Sura Al-Fajr (The Dawn) , 89:27-30

“Hast thou ever considered (the kind of man) who makes his own desires his deity?”⁸⁸

This is a strong statement admonishing humans for their greed, which itself is triggered by desires that make them forget God. The Lord goes on to say:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ ۖ وَءَاثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۚ ۝۳۸ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوٰى ۚ ۝۳۹

“For, unto him who shall have transgressed the bounds of what is right (to the good of his soul), that blazing fire will truly be the goal.”⁸⁹

Imam Ghazālī ⁹⁰ draws an analogy of the soul as an army with an external and an internal eye; the hands, feet, eyes, ears and tongue are the former, and greed for food and drinks is the latter. He then organises these into four divisions: the first, the division of greed, benefits the soul by providing the desire for food and drinks for the up-keep of the body. The second, the open division, uses anger to move the bodily organs to produce the object of greed, namely power and strength. The third division, the senses, with their powers of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, are manifested through the five organs to help the human being function properly. The fourth division lies secretly in the brain, generating the power of ideas, thoughts, memories, retention and consolidation. The analogy that is drawn here defines the importance of both the internal organs and the senses to maintain the equilibrium of the mind-body.



Figure 2.1.3 – Illustration of Some Functionalities of the Soul⁹¹

⁸⁸ Qur'an, Sura Al-Furqān, 25: 43.

⁸⁹ Qur'an, Al-Nāzi'āt, 79:37-39.

⁹⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, Volume III, (1995), 5-7.

⁹¹ This figure has been conceptualized by the researcher based on the articulation by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ilyā-Ulum-Udin*, Chapter on the Soul and its attributes, Volume III, 1995, 11-13

2.1.5 The Soul as A Special Vehicle

The high stature of the soul is best portrayed in the divine communication, which said:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا
وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴿٧٢﴾

“Verily, We did offer the trust (of reasons and volition) to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains; but they refused to bear it because they were afraid of it. Ye man took it up...”⁹²

The soul was in pre-existence, where God said:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

“Am I not your Sustainer?” and they answered, ‘Yes indeed!’⁹³

Imam Ghazālī says that by virtue of the trust placed in humans, all else has been made subservient to them. This trust he says is *Ma’rifat*, or divine knowledge, and *Tawhīd* (*Oneness*). The objective of purifying the soul is to rekindle the light of divine knowledge, as God says:

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِلنَّفْسِیَّةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مَنْ ذَكَرِ
اللَّهَ أُوتِيكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

“Could then, one whose bosom God has opened wide with willingness towards self-surrender unto Him, so that he is illuminated by a light (that flows) from his Sustainer...”⁹⁴

Imam Haddād⁹⁵ best captures the spiritual journey of the soul when he describes its pre-existence, it then being infused into an infant, where it grows through the life stages until it passes away from this world and goes into the next, with the soul in the *Barzakh* (Isthmus or intermediate stage), until the day of reckoning. When the screen of sins and obstructions are lifted from the soul, it sees the pictures of the unseen things, where the

⁹² Qur’ān, Al-Ahzāb , 33:72.

⁹³ Qur’ān, Al-A’rāf, 7:172.

⁹⁴ Qur’ān, Al-Zumar, 39:22.

⁹⁵ Abdallah Ibn ‘Alawi Al-Haddād. *The Lives of Man*, Trans. Mostafa Badawi (Aligarh: Premier Publishing Company, 1990), 1-97.

world of signs and the unseen world unite into Rububiyyah or the presence of God's being, which encompasses everything. There is no existence of anything except of God, His action, His sovereignty.⁹⁶

2.1.6 Disciplining of The Soul and Actions to Get Near to God

In terms of disciplining the soul or inner self, the Lord then speaks about a reward for those in control thus, in 79:40-41:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾

“But unto him who shall have stood in fear of his Sustainer's Presence, and held back his inner self from base desires, paradise will truly be the goal!”⁹⁷

The bodily organs, such as hands, the feet and the internal organs all have their respective functions, which keep the body in a state of equilibrium. The soul, with its embedded intellect, acts as ministers controlling and overseeing all related functions, both external and internal, that impact on the mind-body complex (see Figure 2.2).

It is the servant's duty to purify the soul and make efforts with true and sincere intentions. As Imam Muḥāsibī says, one of the key gateways in the path of man to God, which propels him to divine knowledge, is the ‘gate of the intention and its purification, which leads to the will to do good in secret and openly, in things great and small.’⁹⁸ The Jibrīl ḥadīth⁹⁹ lays down a comprehensive framework in Islam, whereby the Angel Jibrīl both asks the questions and confirms the response from the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) on the fundamental

⁹⁶Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'...*?

⁹⁷Qur'ān, Sura Al-Nāzi'āt, 79: 40-41.

⁹⁸Smith, *Al-Muḥāsibī*, 105.

⁹⁹ This ḥadīth was related on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab and recorded both in Sahih Bukhari and Muslim. *Hadith An-Nawawī's Forty Hadith*, Hadith 2, Trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Damascus: Holy Qur'an Publishing House, 1976), 28-30.

concepts of Islam, Imān and Iḥsān. Relating to Iḥsān, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘It is to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not to know truly He sees you’. This has been interpreted in a number of ways, including sincerity of purpose, right action, goodness, charity, and also as excellence in whatever one does, especially in worship. This is further reinforced by the Prophetic saying, ‘Actions are but by intentions and every man shall have but that which he intended...’¹⁰⁰ This in effect forms the doorway to the purification of the soul, thereby directing due attention to God.

The trigger to action is intention and therefore it is not a case of doing or not doing something unless it is laced with proper intentions and sincerity in purpose. As Imam Muḥāsibī says, ‘Many a man lives his life and dies when his hour comes, without having realised the importance of this.’¹⁰¹ The most pertinent Prophetic ḥadīth, which has spun several theories and practices, is that, ‘Indeed there is in the body a piece of flesh which if it is sound then the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt then the whole body is corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart ...’¹⁰², referring to the soul, which is also termed as the spiritual heart. This is teamed up with the Qur’an injunction in ‘13:11 where God says:

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِمَّنْ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ ابْنَ آدَمَ
لَا يَغْيُرْ مَا يَقُومُ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا
مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ ﴿١١﴾

“Verily, God does not change men’s condition unless they change their inner”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ This ḥadīth was related on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab and recorded both in Sahih Bukhari and Muslim. *Hadith An-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith*, Hadith 1, Trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Damascus: Holy Qur’an Publishing House, 1976), 26-27.

¹⁰¹ Smith, *Al-Muḥāsibī*, 105.

¹⁰² Ḥadīth reported both in Sahih al-Bukhari (Eng. Trans 1/44/no:49) and Sahih Muslim (Eng. Trans, 3/840/no:3882)

¹⁰³ Al-Qur’ān, Sura al-Ra’ad, 13:11.

This calls for ways and means to educate oneself and purify one's heart. Asad¹⁰⁴ refers to this verse as '... an illustration of the divine law of cause and effect (*sunnat Allah*) which dominates the lives of both individuals and communities ...'

Within this framework and in terms of disciplining one's self, there are numerous writings, notably those of Imam 'Abdullah Anṣārī¹⁰⁵, Imam Ghazālī¹⁰⁶, Sheikh Ibn 'Arabi¹⁰⁷, Imam ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya,¹⁰⁸ Sheikh 'Abd al Qāder al-Jīlānī¹⁰⁹, Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi¹¹⁰, and Imam Sidi ibn Zarrū¹¹¹, whose writings can be broadly articulated as follows:

- i) Guiding Principles: Concept and principles that guide and orient one towards God;
- ii) Morality (*Akhlāq*): A code of conduct or behaviour that maximises benefits and leads to good, including virtuous characteristics, while excluding blameworthy ones;
- iii) A Guide-Teacher: Being in the right company and getting the required guidance to check one's ego states and developing oneself, which impacts on the soul;
- iv) Methods-Tools: Ways and means of dealing with one's nafs or self at different stages of its development;
- v) Repentance (Tauba) - Supplication (*Du'a*): Repentance and supplications that evoke one to turn towards the Lord and the proper ways of doing this.

¹⁰⁴ Mohammad 'Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, footnote 26 in reference to verse 11, Sura Ar'Rad, 13:11, (Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 2011), 432.

¹⁰⁵ Abdullah Ansari, *Stations of the Sufi Path: The One Hundred Fields: Sad Maydan*, trans. and introduced Nahid Angha (Cambridge: Archetype, 2010).

¹⁰⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā*

¹⁰⁷ Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation*, trans. Stephen Hirtenstein, (Oxford: Anqa Publication in Association with Ibn Arabi Society, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Spiritual Disease and its Cure*, ed. Sheikh Zakariya 'Amiraat (London: Al-Firdous Ltd, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Abd al-Qāder al-Jīlānī, *The Removal of Cares (Jala Al-Khawātir): A Collection of Forty-Five Discourses*, trans. Muhtar Holland (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed & Co, 1997).

¹¹⁰ Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *In Pursuit of Virtue: The Moral Theology and Psychology of Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi*, with a translation. of his book *Al-Akhlāq wa'Isiyar*, Trans. Muhammad Abu Laylah (London: TA-HA Publishers, 1998).

¹¹¹ Sidi Zarrūk *The Poor Man's Book of Assistance*, (California: Al-Hamra Production, 2001). 16 CDs.

- vi) Remembrance of God (*Dhikr*): Practices and rituals, including prayers, recitation of the divine scriptures, and remembrance (*dhikr*), which deepen understanding of oneself and others.

The soul is like a fortress; frequent attacks are made on it by the devil and therefore it is necessary to safeguard it through its doors, which are made up of the character and conduct of the human being in which it is. In this context, there are twelve doors, of which one must be aware and take care of, states Imam Ghazālī¹¹²:

- i) Anger and sexual passion, when the intellect becomes weak;
- ii) Hatred and greed: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Your love for anything makes you deaf and blind'¹¹³;
- iii) Eating to satisfaction: eating to your heart's content or excessive consumption intoxicates the mind and prevents you from prayers, increases your passion, decreases compassion and increases the chance of disease;
- iv) Love for fine things: the love for material things leads to its embellishment and the tendency to pay undue attention to them;
- v) Dependency on people: The undue dependency on people leads individuals to do things in order to gain the attention of others and seek their favour, which lends itself to becoming artificial. Greed gets into it and becomes the deity;
- vi) Hastiness and absence of steadiness: Making haste in action and not having a firm resolve leads to disruption. While the Prophet (ﷺ) stated, 'Hastiness comes from the devil and delay comes from God', God says, in '2:37:

¹¹²Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 39-42.

¹¹³ It has been related on the authority of Abu'd-Darda' that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Your love for something that makes you blind and deaf." Abu Daw'ud, *al-Adab*, 14/38; Ahmad, *al-Musnad*, 5/194. The hadith is classified as *hasan*; The Purification of the Heart compiled from the works of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Last retrieved on 2 September 2016; <http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/charac/pure-heart.html>

فَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَةً فَتَبَٰءُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ النَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

“Man is a creature of haste ...”¹¹⁴

- vii) To possess wealth beyond necessity: the more one gets, the more one wants and there is no end to it; all time and energy are expended on it and therefore there is no peace of mind;
- viii) Miserliness and fear of poverty: this leads to another door, whereby people are prevented from being charitable, which in turn encourages hoarding and generates greed for wealth;
- ix) Staying in bazaars: this is where people while away their time and it consumes them with things that are worldly;
- x) Love for sects and hatred for opponents: there is a tendency to hold on to one's sect and develop a hatred for others who do not belong to one's particular sect. This leads to disruption and darkness in the mind, which affects society;
- xi) When ordinary men are the leaders of religion: this becomes an issue when those who do not have learning and education and who do not reflect on the mysteries of creation and actions of God lead society. They are not well grounded and therefore they are not able to properly guide people;
- xii) Bad opinion about Muslims: This is seen as an issue which has ramifications, whereby people spin their opinions about others causing malice. The Lord says, as per '49:12:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

“O you have attained faith! Avoid most guesswork (about one another) – for behold, some of (such) guesswork is (in itself) a sin...”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Qur'ān, Sura al-Anbiyā, 2:37.

¹¹⁵ Qur'ān, Sura al-Hujarāt, 49:12.

The eminent physician and scholar, Abu Zayed Ahmed Ibn Sahl Al-Balkhī (1006-1056), practiced psycho-social healing¹¹⁶ because he understood that one's emotional and spiritual state affects one's physiological and physical health. Thus, he combined a code of conduct ('*adab*'), with philosophy (*falāsifah*)¹¹⁷, to impart ethical training for managing oneself and thereby develop one's soul. There are an increasing number of neuro-science studies¹¹⁸ that have identified and discussed the positive impact of these spiritual practices on wellbeing or on the mind-body, which is something to think about seriously in the current context of work-life balance and mental health.

2.1.7 The Human Mind And Thoughts:

The Prophet (ﷺ)¹¹⁹ encapsulates the mind and its nature in three examples that he cites. Firstly, the mind is like a sparrow, which changes every moment. Secondly, the mind is like water in a pot, which changes state when it is heated. Thirdly, it is like a feather in an open field, which is turned over again and again. In the light of virtues, vices and doubtful things, the mind takes three forms, as outlined here by both Imam Ghazālī¹²⁰ and Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah¹²¹:

i) Sound Heart: God-fearing, nurtured by divine service and free from bad conduct. This type of mind is where good thoughts and knowledge are reflected and the Lord bestows his blessings on it, saying, in '5:92:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُوا فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَى
رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٢﴾

¹¹⁶ Fathima Abdullah, "Therapeutic Ethics: Managing Anger, Negative Thoughts and Depression According to Al-Balkhī," AKFAR, *Journal of 'Aqidah and Islamic Thought*, BIL12: Rabi' al-Awwal 1432H (Feb, 2011): 79.

¹¹⁷ Abdullah, *Therapeutic Ethics*, 79.

¹¹⁸ Fathima Abdullah, Wan Abu Bakar Wan Abas and Ng Siew Cheok, *Revealing the Scientific Facts of Behind The Act of Salah; Salat – Benefits From The Science Perspective*. (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 2008).

¹¹⁹ Cited in Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, 49.

¹²⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, 49-50.

¹²¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Diseases of the Heart*, 41-43.

‘Those who have attained faith and do righteous deeds incur no sin by partaking of whatever they may ... and continue to be conscious of God and to believe, and grow ever more.’¹²²

This type of mind, which is devoid of blameworthy traits, where the carnal self has been subjugated to the control of the soul. In this state, it is blessed with nine virtues: gratitude, patience, God-fearing, poverty, asceticism, love, commitment, reliance on God, good thoughts and other good qualities, and it becomes free from vices and evils.

This type of a self is termed *al-nafs al-mutmaiinah*, where the Lord says, in ‘89:27-28:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۖ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾

‘O thou human being that hast attained to inner peace! Return thou onto thy Sustainer, well-please (and) pleasing (Him) ...’¹²³

ii) Corrupt Heart: This is a mind full of passions, low desires and other evils. This lends itself to the door to Satan to be opened and for the doors to the angels to be closed. The reference is to a state of mind as stated by the Lord in ‘25:43:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾

‘Hast thou ever considered (the kind of man) who makes his own passion his deity?’¹²⁴

This refers to *al-nafs al-ammārah bi al-su’* (beastly self), where the self predominates the soul with its darkness.

iii) A Mixed Heart: A mind that is a mixture of good and evil, which vacillates depending on the side towards which it is tilted. It swings between good (or good guidance) and evil deeds (or misguidance). The two forces fight until one of them is triumphant. This can be referred to as *nafs al-lawwāma* or the self-critical self, where there is intense competition between the self and the soul.

¹²² Qur’ān, Sura al-Mā’idah, 5:92.

¹²³ Qur’ān, Sura al-Fajr, 89:27-28.

¹²⁴ Qur’ān, Sura al-Furqān, 25:43.

2.1.8 Islamic And Western Psychological Perspectives

2.1.8.1 Western Psychology Perspective: Western thought and influences are perverse in the contemporary world and therefore, it is necessary not only to examine key issues only from an Islamic perspective but also from a Western perspective. Moreover, it is pertinent to make Islamic works to Western audiences for creating awareness about the insightful nature of Islam.

There is often confusion in terms of understanding what the soul, the spirit, the heart, and the intellect are, given that they are often used interchangeably. Essentially the term *nafs* is the concept of self in Islam, which is synonymous with what is called the self in the Western context. Research in Western psychology, interestingly, resonates with the stages of development of the *nafs*, where ‘possible selves’¹²⁵ are defined as ‘ideal selves that we very much like to become, and the selves we are afraid to become’ and they can be manifested as evil self, alcoholic self, depressed self, critical self, loving self etc. Even though there are no spiritual gradations in Western psychology as there are in Islam, as described above, this stratification is important from two viewpoints. Firstly, this stratification provides the potential for individuals to change and develop themselves. Secondly, the strata ‘provide the essential link between the self-concept and motivation’, to bring about change. Maslow’s¹²⁶ theory of self-actualisation of the human being. This is also indicative of the development of the self from a lower state to a more evolved state of being and maturity, what Carl Rogers¹²⁷ calls those who have ‘become’ or attained ‘full-humanness’.

¹²⁵ Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius, “Possible Selves”, *American Psychologist* (September 1986): 954.

¹²⁶ Maslow, A. *Towards a Psychology of Being*, 127.

¹²⁷ Rogers, C. *On Becoming A Person: A Therapist’s View of Psychotherapy*.

The notion of self in Western psychology is different from that of Islam, as is evident in the discussion that follows. From a behaviorist viewpoint, ‘the self-concept has an aura of mysticisms not far removed from the concept of the soul’.¹²⁸ As can be deduced from the definitions cited in Table 2.1, with the exception of Carl Jung’s definition below and his related theories, the concept of self and its development seems to be largely rooted within the worldly realm, in that it is fashioned by how one feels about oneself, as well as what others perceive about you as an individual. There seem to be no concepts or directions connecting one to a spiritual dimension or another life, which Islam embodies.

¹²⁸ Epstein, S. (1973), 404.

Table 2.1 – Multiple definitions of the Self in Western psychology¹²⁹

Definition	Source ¹³⁰
Self as designated in speech in the first person singular: I, me, my, mine and myself. It is through the subjective feeling that the self can be identified. Linked to the concept of 'looking glass', where an individual perceives himself/herself in a way that others perceive him/her.	Cooley (1902): 136
Expanded on Cooley's definition stating that there are as many selves as there are social roles, with some being significant while the others are specific to particular situations and of minimal significance.	George Mead (1934)
Similar to Cooley and Mead, where the self arises out of social interaction, where he identified the self-system as: an organisation of educated experience called into being by the necessity to avoid or minimise incidents of anxiety.	Sullivan (1953): 165
Two fundamental approaches, firstly, self as a knower, secondly, self as an object of what is known. The first proposition was totally rejected, while the second was referred to as whatever the individual views as belonging to himself including the material self (own body, his family and possessions), the social self (views others hold of the individual), and spiritual self (emotions and desires). Self-viewed as having unity and differentiation and being intimately associated with emotions as mediated through self-esteem.	William James (1950)
Self-concept seen as the nucleus of personality, where personality is defined as the organisation of values that are consistent with one another. It involved the constant assimilation of new ideas and rejection or modification of old ideas, where the concepts are organised into a unified system, which is preserved.	Lecky (1945): 160
Self-concept defined as those parts of the phenomenal field, which the individual has differentiated as definite, and fairly stable characteristics of himself.	Snygg & Combs (1949): 112
View common with Lecky, Snygg and Combs. Self is defined as an organised, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the 'I' or the 'me' together with values attached to these concepts. Self-concept includes those characteristics of the individual that he is aware of and over which he exercises control. A threat to it produces anxiety.	Roger (1951): 498
Behaviour is organised around cognitive structures, with the self being one such structure and it is hierarchically organised and is subject to change, generally from the lower to higher order constructs. There are different types of selves including somatic self, social self etc; depending on the moment in time.	Sarbin (1952)
Proprium: All regions of our life that we regard as peculiarly ours. Those aspects are considered as of central importance to the individual and they contribute to the inward sense of unity.	Allport (1955): 40
A self-system, a dynamism that becomes enormously important in understanding interpersonal relationships. This dynamism is an explanatory conception and is not a thing a region or what not such as superegos, egos, ids, and so on.	Sullivan (1953): 167
Self-concept as a self-theory, where an individual as unwittingly constructed about himself as an experiencing, functioning individual, and it is part of a broader theory that he holds in relation to his entire range of significant experiences. The fundamental aspects of the self-theory are to optimise the pleasure-pain balance of the individual over the course of a life-time; to facilitate the maintenance of self-esteem, and to organise the data of experience in a manner which allows coping with it.	Seymour Epstein (1971: 407
Self is defined as '... compromising of the totality of the person, both conscious and unconscious and is distinct from both the ego and the persona – conscious aspects of personality.'	Carl Jung, (in Glassman & Hadad, 2004:478 ¹³¹).

Al-Attās¹³² sums up the Islamic world view when he states that the focus on worldly ends does not pose an issue in Islam and does not necessarily exclude spiritual aspects; rather, both this world (*dunya*) and the next (*ākhirah*) are inter-linked and cannot be separated. In this sense, worldly works, service to people, and looking after one's family

¹²⁹ Epstein, S. (May 1973), 404-412

¹³⁰ As cited in Seymour Epstein (footnote 36)

¹³¹ William E. Glassman & Marilyn Hadad, *Approaches to Psychology*. (UK: Open University Press, 2004) 1-247.

¹³² Al-Attās, *Prolegomena*, 21-22.

are seen as spiritual, part of the act of worship. According to Al-Attas, the *qalb* (heart) is seen as the mid-point of the psyche, halfway between the *nafs* (self) and *rūh* (spirit) and including the subconscious and superconscious faculties of perception, memories and complexes¹³³. What is referred here by Al-Attas can be seen as the intellect (*aql*'), with its related faculties of consciousness, which are embedded within the heart or the soul. The *rūh* or spirit, referring to the spiritual self or essence, is outlined as an impulse or command of God. It can be a transmitter sending signals to the heart, with it having some key servants including reason, reflection and conscience. The development of individuality or the totality of a person results from the inter-relationship between the three above-mentioned dimensions, namely, the heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūh*), and the self (*nafs*)¹³⁴.

Imam Muḥāsibī¹³⁵ describes ongoing internal dynamics, where the higher nature of man constantly struggles with the lower self (*nafs*), which urges it to pass through the gateway of the senses, 'the seat of the appetites and of passion, the "flesh", with its sinful lusts'. In a similar vein, Ibn 'Arabi¹³⁶ in his Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom, encapsulates the inner struggle when he states:

'The conflict between reason and the evil-commanding self is caused by their very nature, which induces each of them to try to dominate the whole of the human being and to be the ruler of it. Even when one of them is able to conquer the whole realm, the other still strives to regain what it has lost and to repair what has been destroyed. This swing between the two opposing states forms the consciousness of humans, whereby transcending the evil-commanding self forms the very essence of the spiritual journey.'

The Prophet (ﷺ) characterised the best man as the one whose soul is God-fearing, a concept called '*taqwa*', where there is no deceit, no deception, no treachery, no

¹³³ Al-Attās, *Prolegomena*, 63.

¹³⁴ K. Helminski, *The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation*, (Boston & London: Shambala, 1999) 64.

¹³⁵ Smith, *Al-Muḥāsibī*, 90.

¹³⁶ Helminski, *The Knowing Heart*, 65.

contrivance and no hatred. For God says, ‘Consider the human self, and how it is formed in accordance with what is meant to be and how it is imbued with moral failings, as well as with consciousness of God’:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾

“To a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this (self) to grow in purity, and truly lost is he who buries it (darkness).”¹³⁷

The soul is the medium which absorbs both light and darkness according to one’s intentions and action, and in this regard Imam Ghazali¹³⁸ points out that the vision of soul is through the subtle essence or *latīfah* by which spiritual things are seen, where ‘... it is an immaterial thing or formless Latifah or basic subtle element which has got connections with the material heart ... it catches the knowledge of God and spiritual world. It is punished and rewarded.’ This can take the form of dreams or it can be in a wakeful state. In referring to the blindness of the soul, God says in ‘17:72:

وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٧٢﴾

‘... for whoever is blind (of heart) in this (world) will be blind in the life to come (as well).’¹³⁹

The Lord refers to the sight of the soul when He says in ‘53:11:

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾

‘The servant’s heart did not give the lie to what he saw...’¹⁴⁰

This is reinforced by what God said in ‘6:75:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلِكُوتَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَلِيَ كُوْنٍ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾

‘... We gave Abraham (his first) insight into (God’s) mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth ...’¹⁴¹

¹³⁷Qur’ān, Sura al-Shams, 91:9-10.

¹³⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, 4.

¹³⁹Qur’ān, Sura al-Isrā, 17:72.

¹⁴⁰Qur’ān, Sura al-Najm, 53:11.

¹⁴¹Qur’ān, Sura al-An’ām, 6:75.

There are different streams of knowledge, namely that concerning the intellect and that concerning religion. For the salvation of the soul, the intellect, despite being necessary to discern things, is insufficient on its own and, in this regard, anyone applying blind faith (*taqlīd*) without the intellect is a fool, while anyone relying only on the intellect without divine guidance is a proud person.¹⁴² Thus, the two strands should be woven together. Imam Ghazālī likens the intellect to food and religious education to medicine, where both are necessary for a healthy body. In a similar vein, for a diseased soul, the medicine of the *Sharī‘ah* in terms of the duties as prescribed by the Prophet (ﷺ)¹⁴³ is a necessary ingredient for its sickness.

The transmission of knowledge of the soul takes three forms, namely, the prophecies of the Prophets (*wahy*); *ilhām-kashf* (inspiration); and the whisperings of the devil (*waswās*). An important distinction is presented, whereby thoughts are divided here into good and bad. The state of the soul is thus captured: ‘... the soul changes from one condition to another. This effect on the soul is called *Khawāṭir* and out of it there grows will and then intention.’¹⁴⁴ Knowledge in the above light can be seen as being bi-polar along a continuum, where for example things can be good-bad in varying degrees. As a general axiom, there are always two aspects to things in nature, the exception being God, who is One.

Having presented an exhaustive list through which one can be misled, Imam Ghazālī¹⁴⁵ advises what can drive away the devil: “when the devil which is like a hungry dog comes to your door, fill yourself with constant *dhikr* or remembrance of God; when the soul is heedless of remembrance, the machination of the devil comes in.” This means

¹⁴²Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 20-21.

¹⁴³Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 21.

¹⁴⁴Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 32-33.

¹⁴⁵Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, 42-44.

that whatever thoughts and actions one may have or do, it is necessary to stay focused on the Lord, so that the devil cannot seep into your soul. Focusing on the here and now, or a state of mindfulness, has now become a form of meditative practice that has an impact on the brain and well-being of individuals¹⁴⁶.

The difference between Buddhism and Islam, is that, in Islam it is not mindfulness for mindfulness' sake but the focus on the One, the Intelligence, the Supreme. It is recommended that one recites a verse from the Qur'an titled *Āyat al-Kursi*¹⁴⁷ the verse of the throne, which drives away the devil.

Imam Ghazali points out: ' ... clear your soul first from passion and greed and then take the medicine of *dhikr*. When *dhikr* enters such a heart which is free of thoughts other than God, the devil flees away from it, as disease goes away ...' The other aspect is supplication to God, where He says :

'And If My servants ask thee about Me behold, I am near; I respond to the call of him who calls ...'¹⁴⁸

2.1.9 Discussion: The subject of the soul and its attributes is a vast subject that cannot be comprehended within one paper and therefore what is dealt with here is only an insight into it. It is, however, found that the inner science of the development of the self (*nafs*) is deeply embedded within the Qur'an, as well as in the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ); it is a guide to mankind on how to develop oneself. The most striking feature of the soul, which is embedded within the human self is its propensity to good and evil depending on which side you nurture, and thus the potential to become a saint or a

¹⁴⁶ Williams, M. Oxford Centre for Mindfulness, accessed March 2, 2015, <http://oxfordmindfulness.org>

¹⁴⁷ Qur'an, Sura al-Baqara, 2:255.

¹⁴⁸ Qur'an, Sura al-Baqara, 2: 186.

sinner. The soul is a complex entity and, as the Qur'an has articulated, only a little knowledge has been vouchsafed to us.

From the little that we understand, it seems that the soul has multiple functions in the way it governs itself and it appears that the intellect (*'aql*), which is embedded within it, guides it in terms of decisions made, while the heart (*qalb*), which is part and parcel of the soul, has its active cognition and ability for empathy, is seen as an intermediary between the soul and the spirit, all encompassed within one framework. The *rūh*, or the spirit, is seen as a radiant light that animates the body and is akin to the electricity that keeps things alive: that is, the life force. There is a clear distinction between the notion of soul in Islam and the Western psychological perspective; in the former, in Islam, the soul or the heart (which is used inter-changeably) is from God and serves one both in this world and the next life, while according to the Western perspective the self, as it is called, is confined to this, material, life.

Within the Islamic framework, as outlined in the Divine's words, there are stages in the development of the self (*nafs*), from an animal or beastly self (*al-nafs al-ammāra bi al-su'*), to a self that is blameworthy or has developed a level of awareness (*al-nafs al-lawāmma*), to a more stable state of being at peace with oneself and the Lord (*al-nafs al-mutmainna*). As the self becomes more purified and virtuous, then it integrates with the soul-heart and establishes a more intimate connection with God, from whose domain it originated.

In order to travel through the various stages, there are methods and tools embedded within the acts of worship, as well as in having good morality (*ahklāq*), which is manifested in a courteous code of conduct. There is thus an 'inward science' within

Islam, which enables the development of the self in preparation for life in this world and, more importantly, for the next world. Thus, the soul's purpose is to produce not only an altered state of consciousness but also a deeper comprehension of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.¹⁴⁹ The Prophet (ﷺ) portrayed Islam as a 'middle-way' (*ummataṇ wasaṭan*) and in this light Imam Khwāja Kamāl al-Dīn says, 'It is not the killing of human passion which makes high morality, but the balancing of them to certain measures, which creates healthy morals and produces spirituality.'¹⁵⁰ Islam recognizes that there is a role that passion does play in sustaining the human life especially in terms of its nutrition and reproductive roles. The focus in Islam is overcoming the beastly self, the focus on which pre-disposes one to connect with God.

On the other hand, within the context of Western psychology, there is the self and its development, what Maslow called the progression towards self-actualisation or, as Carl Rogers calls it, full-humanness. There appears to be no concept of the soul in Western psychology, as in Islam or in the Judeo-Christian tradition; rather, the self seems to be anchored very much in this material world, and the preparation is only in the light of this world and not the next life. There are tools and methods within Western psychology, which range widely from cognition and behavioural therapies to people-centered therapy. Most recently, spiritually-oriented practices have been incorporated into these therapies, including mindfulness and meditation, thus reinforcing some of the traditional and spiritual methods used within religion.

The Islamic framework outlined above illustrates a rich tradition for self-development.

Given that the focus within Islam goes beyond this life and into the after-life, the

¹⁴⁹ Malik Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study*, trans. Abdul-Wahid Lu'Lu'a, (Herndon, Virginia, International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2000), 1-2.

¹⁵⁰ Khawaja Kamal-Ud-Din, "The Threshold of Truth", *Higher Studies in Islam Series 1*, (London: The Basheer Muslim Library, The Islamic Review Office, The Mosque, 1923), 80.

methods of self-development appear to be an integral fabric of the faith, which is rigorous and time-tested by scholars and sages. Thus, these methods are thought to be highly beneficial within the context of current society in shifting attention from the extrinsic to the intrinsic self, for real change can come only from within.

2.2 Disease Of The Soul & Its Treatment

2.2.1 Context:

The soul, which is from the domain of the Lord¹⁵¹ with its complexity, is the vehicle that animates our lives and that which lives on when we pass away.¹⁵² Thus giving it the utmost attention is important especially in relation to the diseases that affects it. When Imam Muhammad al-Busayri inquired from Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan al-Kharqani concerning negative psychological states, he pointed to seventeen states¹⁵³ affecting our souls, while other notable scholars have identified similar as well as those that are different. For the sake of comprehensiveness all of these traits are captured in the table below. This includes an exhaustive list of ruinous traits. Sheikh Muhammad Mawlud al-Yaqub identifies twenty-two, while Imam Abu Hamid Ghazali and Ibn Hazm al-Andalus each identify eleven ruinous traits.

¹⁵¹ Al Quran, Sura Al Isra (17:85)

¹⁵² Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum-Din*, Soul and its attributes, Book III, Translated by Fazlul Ul Karim (New Delhi, Islamic Book Services, 1995), 4-5

¹⁵³ Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, "Sufism and the Perennial Conflicts of Good and Evil" Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani by in *Horizons of Spiritual Psychology*, Edited by Akbar Hussain et al, Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (Globe Vision Publishing House, New Delhi, 2008) 3-48

2.2.2 The Ruinous Traits-Emotions of the Heart: For the sake of comprehensiveness, these ruinous traits are firstly, captured as a tree diagramme¹⁵⁴, with the each of the branches manifesting one particular negative psychological state as illustrated in Figure 2.2.1.

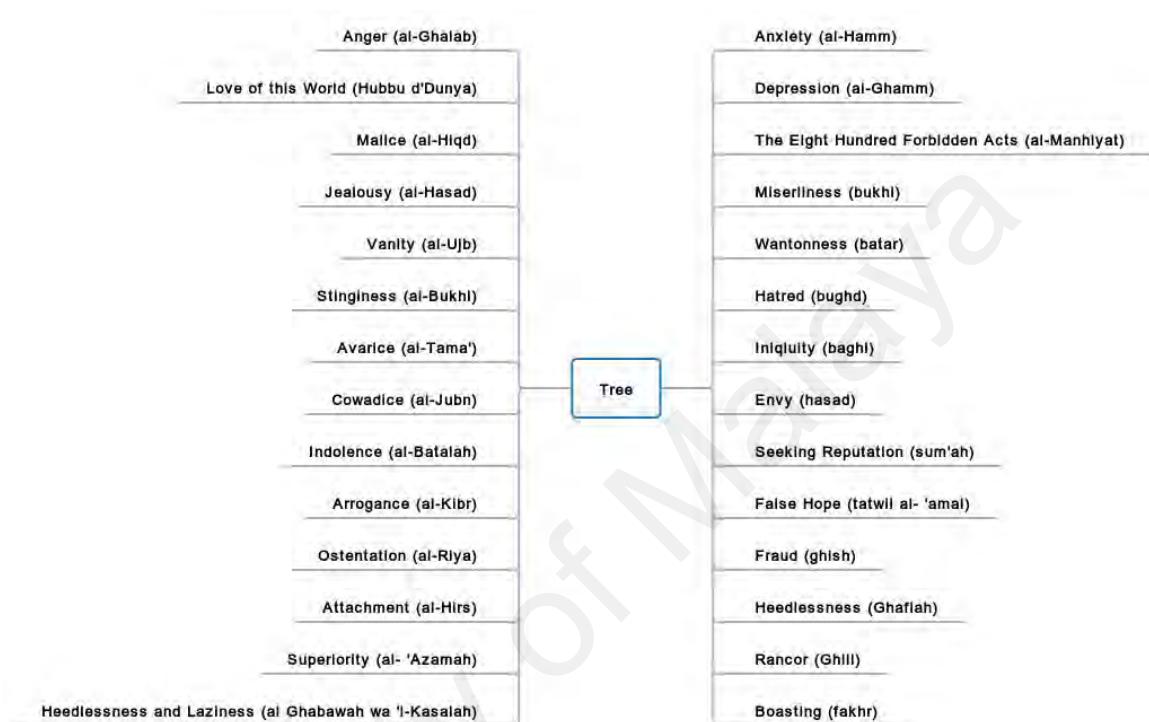


Figure 2.2.1 – The Tree of Bad Manners (al-Akhlaqu ‘dh-Dhamimah – the ruinous Traits)

Table 2.2.1 captures many common ruinous traits as identified by the four scholars and these includes: i) anger, ii) love of this world-attachment, iii) hatred-malice, iv) pride-vanity, v) envy, vi) stinginess-miserliness, vii) greed-excessive sexual passion, viii) harm of the tongue-back-biting, ix) arrogance, x) heedlessness, xi) ostentation and xii) wantonness-extravagance, xiii) superiority-love of power and show. In Table 2.1.1, similar traits have been linked together given that their meanings or inherent qualities are similar. It is found that these ruinous traits which are more commonly cited by the

¹⁵⁴ This tree has been developed using the ruinous traits as derived from four eminent scholars Sheikh Abul Hasan al Karkarni, Imam Mawlud al-Yaqubi, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and Imam Ibn Hazm al-Andalauis.

scholars having significant negative psychological states and its accompanying emotions that cause the diseases of the heart or soul are outlined in the Table 2.2.2.

In this study, an informed decision is made to analysis only these that are common across the selected eminent scholars, while elaborating on the types, implications, and factors to treat them, as well as backing these up with evidence from the scriptures and where relevant with supporting scientific evidence.

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2.2.3 The Implications of the Ruinous Traits and its Treatment:

This section will list the 13 traits that have been flagged repeatedly by some selected eminent scholars, who have written extensively on this subject. These traits have been presented below in a standardized format in Table 2.2.2 for ease of understanding. The implications are outlined and then treatment elaborated, which is backed by the scriptures and hadiths where this type of evidence is available.

Table 2.2.1 – List of Ruinous Traits-Emotions as Identified by Selected Eminent Scholars

	Shakyh Muhammad Mawlud al-Yaqub	Shakyh Abul Hasan Kharqani	Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali	Shakyh Ibn Hazm al-Andalus
1	Anger	Anger	Anger	Arrogance
2	Love of this world	Love of this world	Attachment to this world	Greed
3	Hatred	Malice	Hatred	Ruthlessness
4	Envy	Jealousy	Envy	Envy
5	Vanity	Vanity	Love for wealth	Ostentation
6	Miserliness	Stinginess	Miserliness	Miserliness
7	Iniquity	Cowardice	Greed	Covetousness
8	Rancor	Indolence	Sexual Passion	Hypocrisy
9	Wantonness	Indolence	Love of power and Show	Lying
10	Arrogance	Arrogance	Harm of the Tongue	Back Biting
11	Ostentation	Ostentation	Pride and Self-Praise	Extravagance
12	Relying on other than God	Attachment		
13	Blameworthy Modesty	Superiority		
14	Heedlessness	Heedlessness/Laziness		
15	Fear of Poverty	Anxiety		
16	Displeasure with Divine Decree	Depression		
17	Fantasizing	The 800 Forbidden acts		
18	Fraud			
19	Derision			
20	Displeasure with blame			
21	Antipathy towards death			
22	Oblivious to blessing			

Table 2.2.2 - Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment¹⁵⁵

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment for him	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
Greed: excessive or rapacious desire, especially for food, wealth or possessions ¹⁵⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laziness - Lack of clarity of thought - Diseases (diabetes, cholesterol, high blood pressure, gout etc. - Inability to perform divine duties in a timely manner - Difficulty of performing professional duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hunger and Thirst - Eating only when one is really hungry - Finishing eating before one's hunger is fully satisfied - Becoming aware of false hunger 	<p>Sura Al-Taghabun (64:15-16]: Remain, then, conscious of God as best as you can, and listen (to Him), and pay heed. And spend in charity for the good of your own selves: for, such as from their own covetousness are saved – it is they, they that shall attain to a happy state!</p> <p>Sura Al-Layl (92:8-11]: But as for him who is niggardly and thinks that he is self-sufficient, and calls the ultimate good a lie, for him We shall make easy the path towards hardship and what will his wealth avail him when he goes down (to his grave).</p> <p>Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, delivered a sermon, saying, “Beware of greed, for it was only greed that destroyed those who came before you. It commanded them to be miserly and they did so. It commanded them to sever their family ties and they did so. It commanded them to behave wickedly and they did so”.</p> <p>Ibn ‘Abbas and Anas bin Malik RA reported: Messenger of Allah (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “If a son of Adam were to own a valley full of gold, he would desire to have two. Nothing can fill his mouth except the earth (of the grave). Allah turns with mercy to him who turns to Him in repentance”. (Bukhari and Muslim)</p> <p>Sura Al-Imran (3:14]: Alluring unto man is the enjoyment of worldly desires through women, and children and heaped up treasures of gold and silver, and horses of high mark, and cattle and lands. All of this may be enjoyed in the life of this world – but the most beautiful of all goals is with God.</p>

¹⁵⁵ Citations from the Qur’an are from Muhammad Asad’s The Meaning and the Explanation of the Qur’an, Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 2011

¹⁵⁶ Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/greed?s=t>. last accessed on 11th March 2014

Table 2.2.2 (continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
Excessive sexual passion ¹⁵⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psychologically affects the individual with its dependency and impacts on the immediate family. - Negatively impacts society and can contribute to family break-up. - Increase chances of getting STD, which negatively impacts society. - Encourages human trafficking and prostitution. - Loss of sense of right and wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not being alone with women - Abiding by God's Laws - Observing Fasts - Early marriage - Hunger - Restriction of sight on women and on mental thoughts associated with it - Involvement in some work 	<p>Sura Al-Nur (24:30]: Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be mindful of their chastity: this will be most conducive to their purity, God is aware of all what they do.</p> <p>Sura Al-Mu'minun (23:5-7]: and who are mindful of their chastity, (not giving way to desires) with any but their spouses – that is, those who they rightfully possess (through wedlock): - for, then, behold, they are free of all blame, whereas such as seek to go beyond that (limit) are truly transgressors.</p>

¹⁵⁷ This refers to excesses where sexual passion is concerned, where one is pre-occupied with thoughts and deeds, where one is led to venture beyond legitimized relationships.

Table 2.2.2 (continued)– Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural	Supporting Evidence
Harm of the Tongue (back biting): to attack the character or reputation of (a person who is not present) and/or to speak unfavorably or slanderously of a person who is not present. ¹⁵⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Useless talk - Quarrels - Disputes - Rebukes - Scolding - Harsh words - Cursing - False Speaking - Back-biting - Self-Praise - Disputes - Ornamental Talk - Excessive Talk - Obscene Talk - Hypocrisy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Silence - Good conduct - Speaking well - Not talking but good - Refraining from back-biting - Reducing speech to only what is necessary - Concise statements - Using sweet words - Increasing knowledge of the effects on bad deeds - Not arguing and excessive questioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prophet(ﷺ): He who keeps silent gets salvation (Ghazali, 1995:102) - Prophet(ﷺ): Silence is a rule and a few observe it (ibid). - Prophet(ﷺ): He is safe from the harm of his belly, sexual organs and tongue is safe from all troubles (Ghazali, 1995: 104) - Prophet(ﷺ): Shall I inform you about the easiest divine service and the most comfortable from the body? Silence and good conduct (Ghazali, 1995:104). - Prophet Jesus was asked, tell us a thing by virtue of which we can entre paradise. He said, don't talk. They said, we shall not be able to do that. He said, then don't talk except good. - God: Don't back-bite one another. Do you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? Rather you abhor it (44:12). 	<p>Sura Al-Hujurat (49:12]: O you who have attained to faith! Avoid much guess work (about one another), for behold, some of (such) guesswork is (in itself) a sin; and do not spy upon one another, and neither allow yourself to speak ill of one another behind your backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? Nay you would loath it! And be conscious of God. Verily God is the acceptor is an acceptor of repentance, a dispenser of grace.</p> <p>Sura Qaf (50):18 Not even a word can be utter but there is a watcher with him, ever present.</p>

¹⁵⁸Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Ihya Ulum-Din, Book III, Translated by Fazlul Ul Karim (New Delhi, Islamic Book Services,1995), 102

Table 2.2.2 (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
<p>Excessive Anger: feeling or showing anger or strong resentment (usually followed by at, with, or about): to be angry at the dean; to be angry about the snub.</p> <p>Expressing, caused by, or characterized by anger; wrathful: angry words.</p> <p>(of an object or phenomenon) exhibiting a characteristic or creating a mood associated with anger or danger, as by color, sound, force, etc.: an angry sea; the boom of angry guns.¹⁵⁹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hidden pride of the oppressor and disobedient person. - Damages relationship. - Lose of self-control. - Says things, which will not be said otherwise. - Loss of intelligence. - Become revengeful and greedy. - Loss of sense of right and wrong. - Becomes blind and deaf to advice and council. - Use of abusive language. - Can result in assault and murder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking a path of moderation between not being angry at all and being excessively angry. - Getting it out through practice and habit. - Sticking to what is really essential and getting rid of un-necessary habits. - Getting the mind engaged in more necessary matters. - Knowing that God does not love anger and following this path. - Becoming detached and getting rid of the love of this world. - Being Silent. - Changing posture. - Prostration to God. - Supplication to God. - Taking ablution. - Remembering God. - Being mindful of retribution. 	<p>Sura Al-Imran: (3:134]: who spends (in His way), in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellow-men because God loves the doer of good.</p> <p>Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The strong-man is not one who wrestles well but the strong man is one who controls himself when he is in a fit of rage.</p> <p>Sahih Muslim Book 032, 6313</p> <p>Narrated By Abu Huraira : A man said to the, "Advise me!" "The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Do not become angry and furious." The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, "Do not become angry and furious."</p> <p>Sahih Bukhari , Book 073, Hadith 137</p> <p>Bahz ibn Hakeem reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, anger corrupts the matter just as vinegar spoils honey."</p> <p>Source: Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer 16385, Shu'b al-Iman 7805</p> <p>Grade: Hasan (fair) according to Al-A'jluni</p>

¹⁵⁹ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/angry?s=t>, Retrieved on 11th March 2014

Table 2.2.2 (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
Hatred: the feeling of one who hates; intense dislike or extreme aversion or hostility. ¹⁶⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenge. - Envy - Happiness at the sorrow of others - Non-Cooperation - Back-Biting - Ridicule - Assault - To give no loan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To forgive someone who has done wrong to you - If you forgive you will be forgiven - Reflect on the result of your intended action before you do a thing 	<p>On the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: Do not hate one another (Muslim)</p> <p>"You will never enter Paradise until you believe. And you will not believe until you love one another. Certainly, I shall guide you to something that, if you do it, you will love one another: Spread the greetings (of peace) among yourselves." (Recorded in Muslim)</p> <p>"Creeping upon you is the disease of the peoples before you: envy and hatred. And the hatred is the thing that shaves. I do not say it shaves hair, but it shaves the religion. By the One in whose hand is my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you believe. And you do not believe until you love one another. Certainly, let me inform you of that which will establish such for you: spreading the greetings (of peace) among yourselves." [Ahmad, Tirmidhi]</p>

¹⁶⁰ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hatred?s=t>, Retrieved on 11th March 2014

Table 2.2.2 (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
<p>Envy: a feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc. an object of envious feeling: ill will ¹⁶¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The envious person loves that the wealth and gifts should go away from the person envied and not come again. This is enmity. This is the worst form and it is unlawful (Ghazali, 1995:171). - The envious person wishes to have the gifts of the envied persons, such as, his power, material and non-material things. This is lawful but not commended (Ibid). - The envious person does not wish to have identical things but similar things. This is commendable in some cases and not in others (Ibid). - Envy becomes expressed as back-biting and falsehood (ibid: 175). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accepting that whatever others get are gifts from God. - Curing it with knowledge and action, noting that injurious both in this world and the next. - Knowing that no harm reaches the envied person but rather benefits from it. - The fiery pangs of envy burn your mind resulting in your mind becoming filled with sorrow and difficulties. - Knowing that the envied person will get the virtues of the envious person. - Doing the opposite action intended for the envied turning guilt into praise, pride into humility and destruction into helping out. 	<p>Sura Al-Nisa (4:54): Have they perchance, a share in (God's) dominion? But (if they had), lo, they would not give to other people as much as (would fill) the groove of a date-stone!</p> <p>Sura Al Isra (17:62] (And) he added" "Tell me, is this (foolish being) the one whom Thou hast exalted above me? Indeed, if Thou wilt but allow me a respite till the Day of Resurrection. I shall most certainly cause his descendent – all but a few – to obey me blindly!</p> <p>Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Envy consumes good deeds just as fire burns wood. Source: Sunan Ibn Mājah 4208</p> <p>Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "There is no envy except in two cases: a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it according to its right, and a man whom Allah has given wisdom and he judges and teaches with it."</p>

¹⁶¹ Dictioanary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/envy?s=t>, Retrieved on 11th March 2014

Table 2.2.2 (continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
<p>Pride(kibra) and self-praise (Uzab): a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, or superiority, whether as cherished in the mind or as displayed in bearing, conduct, etc. The state or feeling of being proud a becoming or dignified sense of what it is due to oneself or one's position or character; self-respect; self-esteem; pleasure or satisfaction taken in something done by or belonging to oneself or believed to reflect credit upon oneself: civic pride; something that causes a person or persons to be proud. ¹⁶²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pride and satisfaction owing to self-praise are destructive to the mind, which then becomes diseased. - God humiliates one who takes pride. - He who shall have pride in him will not entre paradise. - Leads to hate, cannot tolerate truth, cannot control anger and cannot accept admonitions. - Three elements in pride: the one who is proud, the one on whom pride is shown and affected by it and the object for which it is felt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeking repentance and pardon from God. - Practicing modesty and humbleness, which can then become internalized. - Gaining real education in which the focus is God and the next world. - Realizing the nature of our own creation from lowly matters. - Supplicating with the Creator to be humble and observing prays. - Bowing down your head to the Lord and realizing that pride only belongs to Him. 	<p>Sura Al – Araf (7:16) “(Where upon iblis) said: “Now that Thou has thwarted me. I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Thy straight way.</p> <p>Sura Luqman [31:18] “And turn not thy cheek away from people in (false) pride, and walk not haughtily on earth: for, behold, God does not love anyone who, out of self-conceit, acts in a boastful manner.</p> <p>Sura Al-Nahl [16:23) Truly, God knows all that they keep secret as well as all that they bring into the open – (and) behold, He does not love those who are given to arrogance.</p> <p>Sura Ghafir [40:35] Such as would call God’s message in question without having any evidence therefor, (a sin) exceedingly loathsome in the sight of God and of those who have attained faith. It is in this way that God sets a seal on every arrogant, self-exalting heart.”</p> <p>Abdullah ibn Mas’ud reported: The Prophet (ﷺ), peace and blessings be upon him, said, “No one who has the weight of a seed of arrogance in his heart will enter Paradise.” (Muslim)</p> <p>Sura Baqara [2:34] And when We told the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam” – they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis, who refused and gloried in his arrogance: and thus he became one of those who deny the truth”.</p>

¹⁶² Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pride?s=t>, Retrieved on 11th March 2014

Table 2.2.2 (Continued)– Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural	Supporting Evidence
Attachment (to the World) : an act of attaching or the state of being attached. A feeling that binds one to a person, thing, cause, ideal, or the like; devotion; regard and an emotional bond between an infant or toddler and primary caregiver, a strong bond being vital for the child's normal behavioral and social development. An enduring emotional bond that develops between one adult and another in an intimate relationship. ¹⁶³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It severs the way of divine service. - Entraps people with its attraction and causes dependency. - The hearts are affected negatively by its separation. - Greed for materials things becomes the causes of man's calamities. - Causes quarrels amongst people due to increasing wealth. - Addiction to materials things leads to the sickness of the body and mind. - Even though things seem steady on the surface, things are constantly chaining. - The greater the urge to seek happiness the greater the sorrow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not getting into disputes with people especially leaders. - Using prayer and fasting as tools to save oneself from passion. - Utilising only what is essential and leaving out the rest. - Reminding ourselves frequently that everything is the world will pass away. - Being reminded of the signs of God and the final destination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prophet (ﷺ): The world is a prison to believers and a paradise to unbelievers (Ghazali, 1995:180). - Prophet (ﷺ): He who loves the world injures his hereafter and he who love his hereafter injures his world (Ibid). - Prophet (ﷺ): Love of the world is the root of all sins (ibid). - Prophet Jesus: Don't take the world as your Lord. If you do so, it will make you a slave (Ibid, 181). - Prophet Jesus: Know that the root of all evil is the attachment to the world (Ibid). - Prophet Jesus: Love of both this world and the next cannot remain united in the heart of a believer, just as water and fire cannot remain united (Ibid: 183) - Prophet (ﷺ): Don't keep your mind engaged in the thoughts of the world (Ibid: 185). - Prophet Jesus: Who is there who constructs a house in the currents of sea? Don't take it as your permanent abode (Ibid:186) 	<p>Sura Baqara - 2:86: All who buy the life of this world at the price of the life to come – their suffering shall not be lightened, nor shall they be succored!</p> <p>Sura Al-Tawbah: (9:38)“... Would you content yourselves with (comforts) this worldly life in preference to (the good of) the life to come? But the enjoyment of life in this world is but paltry thing when compared with the life to come!</p> <p>(Sura Al-An'aam: 32: And nothing is the life of this world but a play and a passing delight; and the life in the hereafter is by far better for all who are conscious of God. Will you not, then, use your reason?</p> <p>Sura Luqman - 31:33: O Men! Be conscious of your Sustainer, and stand in awe of the Day.... God's promise (of resurrection) is true indeed: let not, then, the life of this world deludes you, and let not (your own) deceptive thoughts about God delude you!</p>

¹⁶³ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/attachment?&o=100074&s=t>, Retrieved on 11th March 2014

Table 2.2.2. (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
Wantonness (batar): done, shown, used, etc., maliciously or unjustifiably deliberate and without motive or provocation; uncalled for; headstrong; willful; without regard for what is right, just, humane, etc.; careless; reckless: sexually lawless or unrestrained; loose; lascivious; lewd ¹⁶⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By being excessive not fully utilizing a thing, and therefore wasting it. - Not sharing and apportioning one's wealth with others, which could have been derived from the wastefulness. - A sign of affluent society but also those who are not very affluent but drive themselves to debt by trying to live an exuberant life style. - Utilising more than what one needs and wants and not sharing with others who are in dire need, thus not benefitting the latter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using hunger intentionally as a tool to restrain oneself leading to greater understanding. - Internalising that too much of anything is not healthy, especially food, and its deals not only to physiological issues but impacts negatively on the spiritual heart. - Remembering the hereafter and that God does not love those who are extravagant. - Reflecting on the earlier generations and civilizations, which exulted in their wealth, who are now not even positively remembered, while their soul awaits final judgment. 	<p>Sura Anfal (8:46-47): And pay heed unto God and His Apostle and do not (allow yourself) be at variance with one another, lest your heart and moral strength deserts you. And be patient in adversity. And be not like those (unbelievers) who went forth from their homelands full of self-conceit and a desire to be seen and praised by men; for they were trying to turn others away from the path of God – the while God encompassed all their doings (with His might).</p> <p>Sura Al-Qases (28:76): (Now) Behold, Qarun was one of the people of Moses; but he arrogantly exalted himself above them – simply because alone would We had granted him such riches that his treasure-chest alone would have been too heavy a burden for a troop of ten or even more.</p> <p>Sura Al-Jathiyah (45:23): Hast Thou ever considered (the kind of man) who makes his own desires his deity, and whom God has (thereupon) let go astray knowing (that his mind is closed to all guidance), and whose hearing and heart He has sealed, and upon whose sight He has placed a veil? Who then can guide hi, after God (has abandoned)? Will you not, then bethink yourself?</p> <p>Sura Qasas (28:50): And since they cannot respond to this they challenge, know that they are following their own likes and dislikes and who could be more astray than he how follows (but) his own likes and dislikes without any guidance from God?</p>

¹⁶⁴ Imam Mawlud, 2012:15

Table 2.2.2 (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Mitigating Measures	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural	Supporting Evidence
<p>Boasting & Arrogance: offensive display of superiority or self-importance; overbearing pride¹⁶⁵.</p> <p>Arrogance - Kibr is the force behind the act of Boasting¹⁶⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrogance signifies the glorification and aggrandizement of the self¹⁶⁷. - Feeling superior to others by virtue of knowledge, which poses the greatest danger of arrogance¹⁶⁸. - Manifest as contempt and scorn towards others signifying a higher status. - Feeling that one is better than others because of their lineage. - Feeling that one is better than others due to one's state of beauty and making others feel less than yourself. - Affluence tends to cause disregard to those who have no means or lesser than them. - Those with physical strength tends to display and intimidate others who are less stronger. - Those having an abundance of materials and connections tend to look down upon those who comparatively do not have it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maulana Rumi: "Be not content with the stories of those who went before you. Go forth and create your own stories"¹⁶⁹. - Remembering and reflecting on our origins and from what we were made of. - Reflecting on our limitations of our bodies and our dependency on things. - Reflecting on oneself and one's life, which is cyclic and that riches are temporary and beauty fades away. - Realising that wealth is not permanent and observing that it is cyclic and that one can lose possessions due to unexpected circumstances. - To become aware that blessings are coupled with responsibilities that one has when one possesses an abundance of things. - It is to know that the highest honor is by the servitude to the Lord and with this comes the benefits and this is not based on beauty, power, wealth, lineage and authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God: "God does not love the arrogant and the boasting ones" (Qur'an, 31:18, 57:23). - God said: "I will divert My signs from those who show arrogance without right" (Qur'an, 7:146). - Prophet(ﷺ): None of those who has an ounce of arrogance in his heart will entre Paradise. - God: "sets a seal upon every arrogant tyrant" (Qur'an, 40:35). - God: "He does not love those who wax arrogant" (Qur'an, 16:23). - God: "Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you. Surely, God is all knowing and all-aware" (Qur'an, 49:13). - God: 'Perished is man! How ungrateful he is! From what stuff did He create him? From a sperm drop He created Him and proportioned him" (Qur'an, 80:16-19). 	<p>Sura Al-Insan: Has there (not) been endless span of time before man (appeared) –a time) when he was not yet a thing to be thought off? Verily, it is We who have created man out of a drop of sperm intermingled, so that We might try him (in his later life): and therefore, We made him a being endowed with hearing and sight.</p> <p>Sura Al-Mulk (67:2): He who has created death as well as life, so that He might but you to a test (and thus show) which of you in best in conduct, and (make you realize that) He alone is almighty, truly forgiving.</p> <p>Sura Al-Balad (90:8-11): Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue, and a pair of lips, and shown him the two highways (of good and evil)? But he would not try to ascend the steep uphill road.."</p>

¹⁶⁵ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/arrogance?s=t>, Retrieved on 11th March 2014

¹⁶⁶ Imam Mawlid (2011),111

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Imam Ghazali in Imam Mawlid (2011),111

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

Table 2.2.2 (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Its Treatment	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural	Supporting Evidence
Heedlessness (Ghaflah): careless; thoughtless; unmindful ¹⁷⁰ ; lack of attention or a state of forgetfulness to what is more important in one's life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tendency to forget things that are important thus not benefiting from it. - Being heedless of divine purpose, remembrance of God and acts that one is obligated to accomplish. - Loss of sense of purpose and meaning of life. - Given the closure of one's door to the mind, not seeing reality as it should be seen and experiencing the grace of the God. - Does not develop the inwards state or character of oneself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping good and sincere company. - Seeking repentance and forgiveness (istighfar). - Reflecting at day's end and recounting the good and the bad that one does and repenting for it. - Visiting the righteous people in the path of God – the prophets (al-Nabbiyin), the Truthful one (as-Saddiqin); martyrs ((al-Shuhada); the righteous (al-salihin). - Visiting ones who have passed away as a reminder of reality. - The frequent benediction on the Prophet. - Reciting the Qur'an with reflections (tadabbur) awakens the heart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Imam al-Junayd¹⁷¹: A pathogen which is the cause of all other diseases of the heart. - God: "You were heedless of this. Now We have removed your veil (ghita) from you, so your sight this day is sharp!" (Qur'an 50:22). - God speaks of those who do not profess faith and not accepting the message of the Prophets as having a cover (ghishawah) over their eyes (Qur'an, 2:7). - Prophet (ﷺ) Show me the truth as truth and give me the ability to follow it; and show me falsehood as falsehood and give me the ability to avoid it¹⁷². - God: "O you who believe invoke benediction upon {the Prophet} and salutations of peace" (Qur'an 33:56). 	<p>Sura Yunus (10:57): O Mankind! There has now come unto you an admonition from your Sustainer, and a cure for all (the ill) that may be in men's hearts? And guidance and grace onto all who believe (in Him).</p> <p>The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Verily, what I fear most for you is the lesser idolatry." And he elaborated, "It is showing off. Allah the Exalted will say to them (who show off), on the Day of Resurrection when the people are being rewarded for their deeds: Go to those whom you wished to show off in the world and look for your reward with them." (Musnad Ahmad Hadith 23119)</p> <p>Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), entered upon us while we were discussing the False Messiah. He said, "Shall I not tell you about what I fear for you more than the presence of the False Messiah?" We said, "Of course!" He said, "Hidden idolatry; that a man stands for prayer and beautifies his prayer because he sees another man looking at him." (Ibn Majah Hadith 4202)</p> <p>Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "If anyone wants to have his deeds widely publicized, Allah will publicize (his humiliation). And if anyone makes a hypocritical display (of his deeds) Allah will make a display of him." (Sahih Muslim Book 42, Hadith 7115)</p>

¹⁷⁰ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/heedlessness?s=t>, Retrieved 11th March 2014

¹⁷¹ Imam Mawlud, (2012), 101

¹⁷² Ibid, 102-103

Table 2.2.2 (Continued)– Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Mitigating Measures	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural
<p>Ostentation (Riya): pretentious or conspicuous show, as of wealth or importance; display intended to impress others. ¹⁷³</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performing acts of worship for others to see, thereby nullifying its intention and benefits of it. - Laziness and non-motivation to do things when people are not around. - The tendency to increase or decrease one's ritualistic actions due to praise and non-praise. - Doing things for other than the Lord. - Doing things for others and wasting time and being disappointed when things do not turn up well. - Adopting behavior that is not entirely yours since you want to please someone and this can lead to hypocrisy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sincerely seeking purification from God for four things¹⁷⁴: i) love of praise. ii) fear of blame. iii) desire for worldly benefits from people. iv) fear of harm from people. This is developed on the belief that only God can benefit or harm anyone. 	<p>Abu Musa reported: Two of my cousins and I entered the house of the Prophet. One of them said, "O Messenger of Allah, appoint us as leaders over some lands that Allah the Exalted has entrusted to your care." The other said something similar. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, by Allah, we do not appoint anyone to this position who asks for it or is anxious for it." Source: Sahih Muslim 1733</p> <p>Sura Al-Shura(42:20): To him who desires a harvest in the life to come, We shall grant an increase in his harvest; whereas to him who desires (but) a harvest in this world, We (may) give something thereof – but he will have no share in (the blessings of) the life to come.</p> <p>"My Lord - the Mighty and Majestic - gave me the choice that the valley of Makkah be filled with gold, but I said: No! O Lord. However, grant food to me one day, and hunger the day after. So when I am hungry I humble myself before You and remember You, and when I am full, I am grateful to You."</p> <p>Da'if Jiddan: Related by Ahmad (5/254) and At-Tirmidhi (no. 2348), from Abu Umamah radhiallahu 'anhu. It was declared weak by Sheikh Al-Albani in Da'if al-Jami' (no. 3704)</p> <p>Sura Al-Nur (24:30): Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity: this will be most conducive to their purity – (and,) verily, God is aware of all that they do.</p> <p>Sura Al-Mu'minun[23:5-7]: .. and who are mindful of their chastity, (not giving way to their desires) with any but their spouses – that is, those whom they rightfully possess (through wedlock) - , for then, behold, they are free of all blame, whereas such as seek to go beyond that (limit) are truly transgressors.</p>

¹⁷³ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ostentation?s=t>, Retrieved 11th March 2014

¹⁷⁴ Imam Mawlud (2012),46

Table 2.2.2 (Continued) – Diseases of the Heart (Soul) & Its Treatment

Characteristics – Vice	Implications	Mitigating Measures	Supporting Evidence – Scriptural	Supporting Evidence
Love of Wealth & Power & Show: Ability to do or act; capability of doing or accomplishing something. Political or national strength: Great or marked ability to do or act; strength; might; force. The possession of control or command over others; authority; ascendancy: power over men's minds. Political ascendancy or control in the government of a country, state, etc ¹⁷⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Power gives the means to earn wealth by ethical and unethical means. - Wealth may earn power but this may not necessarily be the case. - Both wealth and power can be used and abused to control the minds of people. - Wealth can be taken away but generally power cannot since it is an influence over one's mind. - Wealth and power can change a person and make him/her arrogant and haughty. - Inherent fear of losing one's wealth and power leading to anxiousness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realising that one is accountable for one's deeds and actions in the next world. - Reflecting that one cannot use wealth and power all the time to accomplish things and there is liability, which catches up with you, where you are taken into account. - Remembering that those who have wealth and power are generally recognized for this and not necessarily for themselves. - Power dies with death but spiritual knowledge remains with the soul to get full perfection¹⁷⁶. - Realising that wealth and power vanish and that knowledge and freedom will be carried with the soul¹⁷⁷. - Realising that seeking name and fame is unlawful within the perspective of Islam, unless it come to you by itself. - Realising the greater the power the greater the chances of one's downfall or becoming the target of death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prophet(ﷺ): It is sufficient for the evil of a man if he is pointed to regarding his temporal and spiritual work.¹⁷⁸ - Prophet(ﷺ): God does not look at your figure but He looks into your hearts and actions.¹⁷⁹ - Hazarath Ali: Spend but don't disclose it. Don't raise your personality to attract the attention of the people, rather keep it secret and remain silent, you will then be safe¹⁸⁰. - Hazarath Ibrahim-b-Adham: He who loves name and fame does not know God to be true¹⁸¹. 	<p>Sura Al-Qasas (28:83): As for that (happy) life in the hereafter, We grant it (only) to those who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth, nor yet to spread corruption for the future belongs to the God conscious.</p> <p>Hazarath Abu Tayyab: He who loses time in earning wealth for the fear of poverty creates wants¹⁸².</p>

¹⁷⁵ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/power?s=t>, Retrieved 11th March 2014

¹⁷⁶ Imam Ghazali, Ihya-ulum-id-din, Love of Power and Show, The Book of Destructive Evils, Volume III, (1995),254

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid, 255

2.2.4 The Origins of Ruinous Traits: While it is crucial to identify ruinous traits and treat them based on the pointers from the Qur'an and the hadiths, it is important to gain a more in-depth understanding of their root causes. In this vein, Sheikh Ibn Hazm, Imam Abu Zakariya al Razi (313AH/925AD), and Imam Ghazali provides their perspective on the genesis of some key ruinous traits in Figures 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4.



Figure 2.2.2 – Imam Razi's Perspective on the genesis of ruinous traits

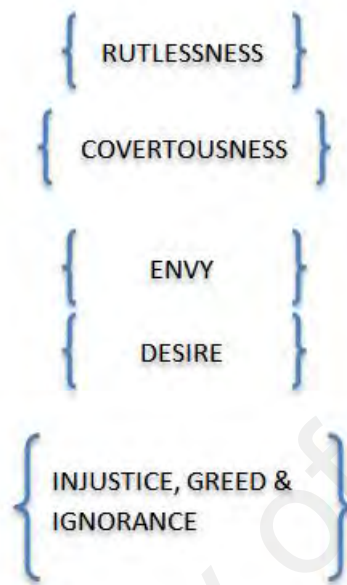


Figure 2.2.3 – Imam Ibn Hazm's Perspective on the genesis of ruinous traits



Figure 2.2.4 – Imam Ghazali's Perspective on the genesis of ruinous traits

According to Sheikh Ibn Hazm¹⁸³ the root cause of traits that destroys humans is within injustice, greed and ignorance, such as, ruthlessness arises from covetousness, which is derived from envy, which in turn comes from desire and greed. This formulation is different from his predecessor Imam al-Razi¹⁸⁴, where he sees miserliness and covetousness as being the base from which envy arises, which is seen to lead to evil. Even though three of the traits mentioned by Imam al-Razi are the same as with Ibn Hazm, their analysis and interpretation of its origin is different. One firm agreement,

¹⁸³ Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, In Pursuit of Virtue: The Moral Theology and Psychology, Trans. of Al-Akhlaq wa'I-siyar by Muhammad Abu Laylah (London, TA-HA Publication, London, 1990), 90

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 93

however, between them is that envy is a ruinous trait that leads to evil or improper behaviour. Imam Ghazali¹⁸⁵ points out that hatred arises from anger in one's mind and outlines eight evils that comes out of the anger-hatred inter-link such as, envy, happiness at the sorrow of another, non-cooperation, contempt, back-biting, ridicule, assault, and to give no loan to the one that is hated.

The term 'hasad' is used for envy, which Ibn Hazm¹⁸⁶ equates also with a sense of laziness, while it is also used in the context of the 'evil eye', where you envy a person or a thing and even though very slight pleasure is derived by the envious ones. This has a very negative impact on the mind, bringing about anxiety, insomnia, begrudging and anger. Ibn Hazm says that the evil eye is primeval and universal, while Francis Bacon¹⁸⁷ is cited as saying that the concept of the evil eye, which represents the glance on an object with in evil intent is common across all cultures and society. Thus envy is seen as one of the most ruinous traits and in this light Imam Ibn Hazm recommends a number of treatments for trying to get over it as follows:

- i) Not to spend extravagantly.
- ii) Lead a moderate lifestyle.
- iii) Not to be arrogant with people.
- iv) Try to soften hearts.
- v) Be charitable to the needy.
- vi) Invoke God's name, seek His blessing and protection.
- vii) Not be boastful of one's strength.
- viii) Cultivate goodwill.

¹⁸⁵ Imam Ghazali (1995), 161-162

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 94

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 96

Imam Ghazali¹⁸⁸ stresses the need to apply the opposite of what is intended as a medicine to combat it: for examples, if it causes pride then treat with humility; if the intention is to mention guilt then praise the person, and if the intention is to destroy then help the person.

2.2.5 Discussion: There are many significant aspects that emerge from the review and analysis notably that there is a myriad of ruinous traits of what contemporary psychologists call negative emotions and the tree diagram (Figure 2.2.1) represents 22 of them, each symbolizing a branch of the tree. This is a metaphor to signify that each branch carries with it a body of its own content, which gives it its inherent characteristic. What is most be-fitting is that this is not a purely academic analysis but one that has implications and profound negative impacts on one's heart or mind and that results in causing pain, confusion and diseases. This starts with a conception in one's mind, where one is envious or hateful and this builds up negative emotions, which impact on the spiritual heart causing the 'darkening of the heart'¹⁸⁹. This can subsequently precipitate as psychological and medical conditions as it is empirically observed within the contemporary context of anxiety, depression and unhappiness. Such is the profundity of the spiritual heart being affected by these ruinous traits and the need for human beings to take careful care of it before it becomes diseased.

It will be noticed that not all of the 22 emotions have the same negative impacts, some are seen to be more pernicious than the others and 13 emotions have been repeatedly flagged by the eminent scholars who were analysed in Table 2.2, where its implications, as well as treatment are elaborated. The pattern that emerges from the implications is its

¹⁸⁸ Imam Ghazali (1995), 174-175

¹⁸⁹ The Prophet (ﷺ) talked about the black spots appearing in the heart when one sins, be it mental or physical.

destructive impact on oneself. This, however, does not seem to stop at oneself but impacts on those on whom the negative emotions are directed at, for example, envy results in a state of anxiety and hatred on the envier and has negative energy or evil eye on the envied and this is seen to be prevalent in many societies and cultures as Francis Bacon points out.

Envy does not stop at envying others but hate starts developing within oneself since one cannot have what others have received and out of it arises anxiety and frustration. The Prophet (ﷺ) in this regard points out that evil eye can put a camel into the pot and the child into the grave, indicating the negative power of this destructive emotion¹⁹⁰. Within the Islamic frame of reference, the evil eye is a reality and for this there are prayers to try and mitigate it. This is very problematic from an Islamic perspective since one tends to ignore the gist and blessings that one receives from the Lord and, more importantly, one moves to not being able to accept that the Lord gives to whomever he wants irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Thus, as the Lord says, “My Mercy supersedes my Wrath”¹⁹¹, and therefore it is necessary to safeguard from these types of emotions, where the three Kulhu suras are seen as a protection against it.

What is most significant from the analysis is to bring attention to the fact that the extremes of what could be termed as good emotions – charity, humbleness, kindness, compassion – if taken to the extreme become a weakness in the sense that it leads to extravagance, abasement, being abused etc. In a similar vein, bad emotions like anger,

¹⁹⁰ In the hadith narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah: “Evil-eye is true. It puts a camel in a cooking pot and a man in grave.” (Kashfu’l-Khafa, 2: 76, narrated Abu Naim), Does evil-eye kill a person? What kind of precautions can be taken against evil-eye? What are the reasons of evil-eye? Is it permissible to wear an evil-eye bead?, Questions in Islam; Last retrieved 25th March 2017; <http://www.questionsonislam.com/question/does-evil-eye-kill-person-what-kind-precautions-can-be-taken-against-evil-eye-what-are-reasons>

¹⁹¹ Hadith Qudsi No:10 as narrated by Abu Hurayrah on the authority of the Prophet (ﷺ) as recorded in Sahih Muslim, A Selection of Authentic Qudsi (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi Forty Hadiths, trans. Muhammad. M. Abdul Fattah and Reima Youssif Shakeir (Egypt, Dar Al-Manarah, 2004), 2

greed, pride, attachment to the world, wantonness etc. become a very morbid and destructive emotion that affects both the individual, as well as the family around you, as well as society at large.

In light of the above, Ibn Hazm's analysis of the mid-point of the vices being the best position, for example, the position of modesty being between arrogance and extreme humbleness or abasement of oneself; while courage being a medium course between fear and rashness. Thus Ibn Hazm says that, "Virtue is a medium course between two vices"¹⁹². In this sense, Ibn Hazm's definition of virtue is aligned with Aristotle's¹⁹³ middle course but this does not apply to evil deeds such as theft, murder, envy, treason etc., given that they are inherently evil and should be rejected outright. This leads us to the position as articulated by the Prophet that Islam is the middle-way or the middle-path (ummatan wasathan).

Where do these ruinous traits originate from? To this there were three points of view, one where Imam Razi see miserliness and covetousness, meaning not willing to part with what one has and wanting what others have, which he sees has giving rise to envy, which leads to evil. Imam Ibn Hazm see is differently, where he points out that injustice, ignorance and greed form the basis from which arises desire leading to envy, covetousness and ruthlessness. Here injustice is defined as the quality or fact of being unjust; inequity; violation of the rights of others; unjust or unfair action or treatment; an unjust or unfair act;¹⁹⁴ while ignorance¹⁹⁵ is the state or fact of being ignorant; lack of knowledge, learning, or not having the right kind of information and awareness. This is

¹⁹² Ibn Hazm (1990), 86

¹⁹³ Ibid

¹⁹⁴ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/injustice?s=t>, Last Retrieved on 13th March 2014

¹⁹⁵ Dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ignorance?s=t>, Last Retrieved on 13th March 2014

combined with greed, which refers to excessive or rapacious desire, especially for wealth or possessions. Imam Ghazali points to the anger-hatred inter-link as giving rise to an array of emotions as already pointed out, with the medicine being applying the opposite of what was intended, thereby attempting to change one's behaviour and with time trying to internalize these changes in behaviour.

A connection is seen here with these points of view, where people want more than their needs (greed) while concurrently being not willing to part with what they have for the fear of losing it. This in-effect portrays a sense of injustice or perpetuating inequality by not sharing, while not factoring that all provisions or risk is from the Lord and this has been determined for a person before the individual came into existence¹⁹⁶. Given that there are both good and evil within humans, there is a need to follow contemplative spiritual practices (prayers, dhikr, fasting, zakat etc.), combined with good morals, which enable one to tide over these ruinous traits.

It can be stated that the external purifications and rituals are to give structure to one's life combined with the social and legal controls that tend to keep one on track and give life order, which is within the confines of the Sharia. However, the tradition of tasawwuf or the purification of the inner self – also termed as tazkiyathun nafs – is a central core of Islam and this addresses the diseases of the heart and the treatment of ruinous character. The treatment, as seen from Table 2.2, covers a wide range of approaches, methods and techniques pertaining to the body and mind:

¹⁹⁶ Ibn Mas'ud narrated that Allah's Messenger (saw) said to his wife Umm Habiba: "Verily you have asked Allah about the duration of life already set, and the steps you would take, and the sustenance the share of which is fixed. Nothing will take place before its due time, and nothing will be deferred beyond when it is due." [Muslim], Islamic Revival, Last retrived 25th March 2017; <http://islamicssystem.blogspot.com/2006/07/seeking-your-provisions-rizq.html>

- i. Body: Observing fasts including abstaining from food, water; regulating one's eating; and sexual acts.
- ii. Mind: This can be categorised into contemplative practices and other Practices and includes remembering God consistently (dhikr), recitation and reflection of the divine scriptures; asking for forgiveness; forgiving those who do wrong to you, cultivating silence, reflecting on death; reflecting on one's life, supplicating to God; reflecting on the impermanence of life etc.;
- iii. Behavioural and Other Practices: Doing the opposite of bad habits (reversing the process), being in the company of the pious people (Shoheba); giving charity (zakat and saddaqa); sharing from things that you love; being compassionate.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing”¹⁹⁷, while emphasizing the importance of emotional wellbeing for health. This is being backed by an increasing body of evidence from diverse fields of epidemiology, social sciences as well as experimental research, which points to the failure of the health system for not taking into consideration mental and social health¹⁹⁸. Here social health refers to overcoming social diseases such as dependency and misuse of alcohol and drugs, domestic violence, and child abuse, which fall within the gambit of the ruinous traits within an Islamic perspective. Concurrently, emotional wellbeing is critical given that emotional distress forms one of the pre-conditions to physical illness¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁷ Stewart-Brown, S. “Emotional wellbeing and its relation to health: Physical disease may well result from emotional distress”, *British Medical Journal*, December, 1998; 317 (7173): 1608-1609;
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1114432>

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 1

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

In the light of the above, treatment of the diseases of the heart in-effect predisposes one to a healthier life. In this light, looking at wellbeing from a psycho-spiritual perspective, whereby identifying the ruinous or negative traits and treating them as exemplified in Tables 2.2, inter-links with the concept of social and mental wellbeing and is thus key to social and emotional well-being. Here, we see science fitting into the spiritual realm, which is evidence-based and has been developed over millennium. This indicates that religion, should subsume Spiritual Psychology²⁰⁰, defined as “an applied field which focuses on the knowledge that a person has or possess in terms of beliefs, resources, experience, and behaviours; and the importance giving to spiritual practices and rituals in order to increase well-being”²⁰¹.

Islam, thus, has within its framework and tradition both aspects that are above articulated to bring about a balance of life both for the body and the mind. This can be best encapsulated in the statement where Imam Malik stated ‘Islam without Haqqika (inward) is lame and Islam without Sharia (outward) is heresy’²⁰².

2.3 - Contemplative Framework and Practices: An Islamic Perspective

2.3.1 Introduction: Contemplative practices form the cornerstone of Islam and infiltrate every facet of life. These can be categorized into seven main types of practices, ranging from stillness through generative, ritual, and activist, relational and creative, to movement. Yet these practices are not very well known compared to Buddhist meditation, Hindu yogic systems, or Christian monastic practices. The ‘tree of contemplative practices’ was used within the Islamic context to map out seven main

²⁰⁰ Husain, Hashim and Rosli (2008) in Mohan, “Spiritual Psychology and Subjective Well-Being”, Eds. Husain et al, Horizons of Spiritual Psychology (Global Vision Publishing House, India, 2008)

²⁰¹ Ibid

²⁰² Imam Malik cited in Hisham Kabbani (1995)

categories of practice derived from the divine scripture, as well as the words and practices of the Prophet and the Sages.

2.3.2. Context: Contemplative practice is a key to building one's mind and body and overcoming the negative emotions or ruinous traits that plague human beings. In this sense, it forms the cornerstone of Islam, as the ensuing discussion demonstrates. Before delving into the practice itself, it is imperative to examine its main categorization and understand the framework within which it is embedded. The contemplative framework is presented as the tree of contemplative practices²⁰³ (Figure 2.3.1). This is presented as seven major branches, which can be condensed into three dimensions:

- i. The practices where the mind and more specifically the heart predominate, namely, stillness and creative practices.
- ii. Where the collective behaviour predominates, including generative and relational practices.
- iii. Where the body predominates, including activist, movement and ritualistic practice. The above practices represent a wide spectrum, embracing the mind-heart-body-relationships.

2.3.3 The Fundamentals of Contemplative Practice: The Jibril Hadith²⁰⁴, signified by the visitation of Angel Jibril to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), lays down the framework for the faith. During this visit, the Prophet (ﷺ) was questioned on three fundamental aspects of Islam, and the Prophetic responses are outlined here:

- i. What is Islam? Islam comprises the Five Pillars:

²⁰³ Modified based on The Centre of Contemplative Mind in Society, "The Tree of Contemplative Practices", last modified September 2007, <http://contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html>.

²⁰⁴ Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, A Treasury of Hadith, Hadith No; II, A Commentary on Nawawi's Selection of Forty Prophetic Traditions, trans. by Mokrane Guezzo. (UK: Kube Publishing, 2014) 20-22.

- a. The testimony of faith that there is no other God but God, which denotes a negation and an affirmation (Shahabad).
 - b. Pray five times a day (Salah).
 - c. Give obligatory charity (Zakat).
 - d. Fast (saum).
 - e. Pilgrimage (Hajj).
- ii. What is Iman? Iman comprises six articles of faith:
- a. Belief in the Oneness of God.
 - b. Belief in the Angels.
 - c. Belief in all the Prophets.
 - d. Belief in the divine Scriptures.
 - e. Belief in the Day of Judgment.
 - f. Belief in pre-destination (qada qadr).
- iii. What is Ihsan? Ihsan is interpreted as virtue and excellence in one's intention and actions. The word Islam derives from the root word 'salam, which means 'peace'; it also contains the meaning of being in total submission to God. Iman means to have faith in one's heart, while Ihsan is excellence in worship and in dealing with oneself and others.

The pivotal aspect of Islam is the shahada or the testimony of faith, which states that there is no other God but God and that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Prophet. The most critical belief is in the Oneness of God, which is called tawhid. This forms the bedrock from which all else is derived, including all contemplative practices (see Figure 1). Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, commenting on the work 'Vision of Islam'²⁰⁵, describes the shahada as having a vertical dimension through its connection with God; this is

²⁰⁵ The Vision of Islam, William Chitik and Sadoka Murata, presentation and commentary by Hamza Yusuf (2002, California, Alhambra Productions, Inc), CD No: 2

quintessential to Islam, where one is to fully surrender to God. The horizontal dimension, or Iman, with its inherent beliefs as described above, is the link to the chain of all Prophets going back in time. The dimension of depth, Ihsan, is ‘Worshipping God as if you see Him, while you don’t see Him, He sees you.’²⁰⁶ As will be noted, the other five pillars of Islam also form part of the contemplative practices under the ritualistic-cyclic practices (see Figure 2.3.1).

2.3.4 Contemplative Practices in Islam: As seen in the Tree of Contemplative Practices (Figure 2.3.1), there are seven major branches, defined as Stillness, Generative, Creative Process, Relational, Activist, Ritualistic-Cyclic, and Movement Practices. This categorization has been undertaken based on the nature of the practices, each of which is expounded below.

1) **Stillness** focuses on quieting the mind and body, in order to bring about a state enabling one to turn to God. Within the Islamic framework, there are several elements that can be categorized under stillness: contemplation, meditation, repentance, supplication, centering, reflection, thinking about death, and silent ritual prayer. In discussion, there is often confusion between contemplation and meditation. In Islam, contemplation appears repeatedly in the Qur’an²⁰⁷, where it says, “And He has made the night and the day and the sun and the moon subservient (to His laws, so that they be of use) to you, and all the stars are subservient to His command: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who use their reason.” This means taking cognizance of things within you and without, which involves observation, reflection, and

²⁰⁶ Ibn Daqiq al-‘Id, A Treasury of Hadith, 22

²⁰⁷ Qur’an, Sura Al-Nahl, 16:12 The Message of the Quran, trans.by Muhammad Asad, (Islamic Book Trust: Kuala Lumpur, 2011), 472

internalization of human beings and their total environment including the celestial systems.

Schuon²⁰⁸ equates intellectualism with contemplation; he does this by framing it within the context of the unity of God and in relation to Islamic metaphysics, where he says that psychologically this is manifested in certitude (yaqin) in God and the serenity that arises therefrom. Schuon²⁰⁹ cites Sheikh al-Alawi, who sums up that ‘the profound meaning of religious practices and the reason they exist is for the remembrance of Allah, which means that all the shari’ah, all the dogmas, all the practices reside in the dhikr (remembrance of God).’ Schoun²¹⁰ describes the essence of meditation thus: ‘To close the eyes is in fact to exclude the world, and to pronounce the Name is to affirm God.’ This, he states, is excluding Maya (artifice, illusion), while affirming Atma (the real or true self) and closing the eyes is the nafi (negation) of the shahadah (la Ilaha); pronouncing the Name is the Ithbat (Illa Llah - affirmation). This refers to creating a state of non-existence of oneself or of one’s ego on one hand and the appearance of a sense of a Higher Being on the other.

Sheikh Ibn Arabi discusses meditation in the context of spiritual unraveling saying, ‘We empty our hearts of reflective thinking, and we sit together with al-Haqq (The Real) on the carpet of adab (pious conduct) and muraqaba (spiritual attentiveness) and presence and readiness to receive whatever comes to us from Him – so that it is God who takes care of teaching us by means of unveiling and spiritual realization.’²¹¹ The seeker

²⁰⁸ Schuon, F., (2006), 76.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 146.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 147, 177, 181.

²¹¹ James Winston Morris, *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn Arabi’s ‘Meccan Illumination’* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2005), 61

focuses on ‘perfect collectedness in contemplation (muraqaba) and if God’s grace persists then he may attain vision (mushahada).’²¹²



Figure 2.3.1 – Islamic Contemplative Framework and Practices

From another perspective, the Ignatian (Catholic) tradition²¹³ defines meditation as an attempt made to *understand* God, while contemplation is the *focus* on a single symbol or word. Imam Ghazali²¹⁴ describes meditation as, ‘To keep one’s thought towards God, the One who keeps watch over you and to keep all thoughts involved in Him.’ He adds that meditation results in the generation of knowledge about God (ma’rifa), which

²¹² Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1975), 141

²¹³ Annunciation Trust, “Meditation and Contemplation”, last accessed October 2008, http://www.annunciationtrust.org.uk/approaches/meditation_contemplation.shtml.

²¹⁴ Imam Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen – The Book of Religious Learning: The Book of Constructivist Virtue*, trans. Fazil Kareem (New Delhi: Islamic Book Services, 1995), 395

impacts on both the body and the mind. Thus, Imam Ghazali²¹⁵ points out that meditation is both a state of presence of mind of oneself and knowledge about God and he²¹⁶ defines six stages of spiritual effort:

- i. Mosharata (taking account of passion): Making conditions to better oneself by purification of the soul (Tazkiat al-Nafs), which forms the bedrock of the road to salvation. God says, 'Indeed he succeeds who purifies it. And indeed he fails who corrupts it.'²¹⁷ When this verse was recited, the Prophet used to say, 'O Allah! Give my soul what is good and You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.'²¹⁸ Imam Ghazali²¹⁹ says you have to be careful to not become careless for even a moment especially with guarding one's eyes, ears, tongue, stomach, sexual organs, hands and feet. Thus, he says, you need to instruct them 'to save the soul from these sins.'²²⁰
- ii. Muraqaba (deep meditation)²²¹: The essence here is to 'worship God as if you see him and while you see him not He sees you'²²². Imam Ghazali uses the term 'meditation' in connection with three introspective types of action: a) Sincerity (ikhlas) in relation to virtuous action and purity of intention; b) Examination of one's sinful actions and repentance; c) Observance of rules and laws in relation to lawful action.
- iii. Muhasaba (taking account of oneself)²²³: Taqwa or piety refers to obeying Allah's orders and refraining from what He has forbidden, being accountable for one's deeds before being recompensed, while being mindful of the good deeds

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.,391.

²¹⁷ Qur'an, Ash-Shams, 91:9, Tafsir Ibn Kathir,(Abridged), Volume 10 (Darussalam: Riyadh, 2003), 498

²¹⁸ Ibid., 499. At-Tabarani recorded that Ibn Abbas said that the Prophet (ﷺ)said this verse.

²¹⁹ Imam Ghzaali, Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen, 391

²²⁰ Ibid.,391-393.

²²¹ Ibid.,399-400.

²²² Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, A Treasury of Hadith, 20-22.

²²³ Ibid,400-401.

for the next life²²⁴. Caliph Omar²²⁵ said, ‘Take account of your action before accounts are taken from you and weigh actions before they are weighed upon’, while the sage Hasan al Basri²²⁶ says, ‘A believer takes guard over oneself’.

- iv. Muaqabah (punishment of oneself)²²⁷: Punishing oneself as a result of bad conduct or intention. This involves doing the opposite of the bad act or reprimanding oneself for the act performed. It also offers opportunities to gift things that one possesses or offers self-sacrifice by fasting or performing other acts of worship.
- v. Mujahada (exerting efforts)²²⁸: Exerting effort and conducting oneself against one’s dictates, that is where sins move far away from you. The female sage Shaonah says there are two safeguards at the time of your final exit from this world, namely, ‘to keep sorrow attached to your heart and place the love of God above any temptation.²²⁹’ This entails the striving of the soul in the way of God, constantly fighting against one’s lower desires to attain the pleasure of The Almighty.
- vi. Muataba (self-rebuke)²³⁰: Imam Ghazali stresses that there is no greater enemy than one’s own baser self (nafs), which, if left unrestrained, will lead you to evil and ultimately the destruction of your soul. The nafs is like a wild animal, which without harsh discipline cannot be tamed. It must be rebuked frequently and brought into submission before the will of God, thus transforming it into the self-accusing soul.

As seen from the six categories above, meditation within Islam is a fluid concept, which

²²⁴ Qur’an, Sura Al-Hashr., 59:18; Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Abridged), Volume 10 (Darussalam: Riyadh, 2003), 573

²²⁵ Imam Ghazali, Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen, 399-400

²²⁶ Ibid., 400.

²²⁷ Ibid., 402-405.

²²⁸ Ibid., 405.

²²⁹ Ibid., 418.

²³⁰ Ibid., 420.

Imam Ghazali²³¹ articulates as having two key factors. Firstly, there is the act before the action, which refers to the intention of the seeker, verifying if one is doing it for the sake of God, for human dictates or at the prompting of the devil. Thus, 'Verily works are according to one's intentions, and each person is (gets) what he intends', as the Prophet Muhammad²³² stated. In a similar vein, Prophet Jesus²³³ outlined: an action, which is especially good, follow it; an action, which is especially bad, avoid it; an action, which is difficult to ascertain, as to its goodness or badness, entrust it to one who knows it. The second key factor is one's state of mind during the action, in relation to which the Prophet Muhammad²³⁴ asked three questions: 'How have you done it?', 'Why have you done it?', and 'For whom have you done it?' This, then, ascertains if it was done according to permissible means and that the act was performed not to show off but sincerely for God.

The term 'meditation' within Islam refers to the final query by Angel Jibril to the Prophet, 'What is Excellence (Ihsan)?', to which the Prophet responded, 'Worshipping God as if you see Him (Mushahada), while you see Him not, he sees you (Muraqaba)'. In this case, the aspirant is in a state of focusing on God, with the intention of the Lord turning towards him. This takes two forms, the silent remembrance (dhikr al-Kafi) and the loud remembrance (dhikr al-Lisan), where the focus is on one single attribute of God. There is sound evidence in the Qur'an to support the need for a meditative mind, as indicated here: i) 'God (Allah) watches you.'²³⁵; ii) 'Does he not know that God sees him and hears his word?'²³⁶; iii) 'And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and

²³¹ Ibid., 397.

²³² Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, A Treasury of Hadith, 15-16

²³³ Ibid., 398.

²³⁴ Imam Ghazali, Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen, 397-398

²³⁵ Qur'an, An-Nisa (Women), 4:1, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Abridged), Volume 10 (Darussalam: Riyadh, 2003), 370.

²³⁶ Qur'an, Al-Alaq (The Clot), 96:14, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Abridged), Volume 10 (Darussalam: Riyadh, 2003), 536.

with fear and without loudness in words in the mornings and in the afternoons'²³⁷. The sage Ibn al-Mubarak²³⁸ commenting on 'Allah watches over you' says that this refers to keeping the thought in mind as if you are seeing God, while the sage Ibnul Ata says, 'Constant meditation over truth is good divine service'²³⁹. Meditation is not done for its own sake but to develop the state of one's heart or soul, to transcend from one state to another and to enable one to get closer to God. In this light, seven progressive stages are mapped out by the seeker in the spiritual path, as shown in Figure 2.3.2.

Reflection ('Taffakur') is another type of meditation, which is more cognitive, and is reflection on the creation and created things. This is one of the central themes in both the divine scripture and the Prophetic tradition. Ibn Arabi's²⁴⁰ writing on Islam unfolds this spiritual intelligence, which comprises experience, reflection and right action, which together form a framework for comprehending the Divine. Several Qur'anic verses urge one to reflect: i) 'And among His wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your own kind. So that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are signs indeed for people who reflect!'²⁴¹; ii) 'Have they not travelled through the land, and have their hearts wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind'²⁴²; iii) 'And He has made the night and the day and the sun and the moon subservient [to His laws, so that

²³⁷ Qur'an, Al-Araf (The Heights), 7:205, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Abridged), Volume 10 (Darussalam: Riyadh, 2003), 248-249.

²³⁸ Imam Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen*, 393.

²³⁹ Imam Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen*, 337.

²⁴⁰ James Winston Morris, *The Reflective Heart*, 6.

²⁴¹ Qur'an, Surah Yusuf (Joseph), 12:109, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Abridged), Volume 5 (Darussalam, Riyadh, 2003), 221-223.

²⁴² Qur'an, Surah Hajj (The Pilgrimage), 22:46, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Abridged), Volume 6 (Darussalam, Riyadh, 2003), 590-592.

they be of use] to you; and all the stars are subservient to His command: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who use their reason! ²⁴³

Sheikh Ibn Arabi²⁴⁴ discusses four transformative pillars (see Table 1): silence, seclusion, hunger, and vigilance, which in effect are all stillness practices. These four transformative pillars are comprehended by the aspirant ('murid') and by the one who is more advanced in knowledge, called the verifier ('muhaqqiq') according to the own states ('hal') and stations ('maqam') of consciousness, and also in reference to a particular domain of divine knowledge ('ma'arifa')²⁴⁵.

Regarding silence ('samt') and seclusion ('uzla'), Abu Hurayrah narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him say what is good, or let him be silent.'²⁴⁶ Similarly, Imam Qushayri²⁴⁷ says silence is security but points out that it is, concurrently, important to command what is good and forbid evil although one needs to be silent in the presence of God. Shakyh Ibn Arabi²⁴⁸ and Imam Qushayri²⁴⁹ articulate two types of silence, namely, the outer and the inner. The first is the silence of the tongue, where one does not speak except about God, while the silence of the heart is where one refrains from any thoughts about created things. In the first case, the burden of the person is lightened, while the latter is a speaker of wisdom.

²⁴³ Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankabut (The Spider), 29:20. Tafsir Ibn Kath'r, (Abridged), Volume 7 (Darussalam, Riyadh, 2003), 475-476.

²⁴⁴ Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation: The Adornment of the Spiritually Transformed* (Hilyat al-abdal), trans. and Arabic ed. by Stephen Hirtenstein (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2008), 22-23

²⁴⁵ Ibid

²⁴⁶ Abu-l-Qasim' Abd'al-Karim bin Hawazin al-Qushayri, *The Risalah: Principle of Sufism*, trans. by Rabia Harris, eds. Laleh Bakhtiar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World Inc, 2002), 147

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 147.

²⁴⁸ Ibn Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation*, 32-35

²⁴⁹ al-Qushayri, *The Risala*, 147

When both the tongue and the heart are silent then one's innermost consciousness ('sirr') becomes apparent and the Lord gets closer to the person²⁵⁰.

Seclusion is linked with silence, given that when one withdraws from human company then silence sets in. Seclusion can be categorized firstly as physical seclusion from others and this belongs to the aspirant ('murid'). The second type is having no contact with created things in one's heart and this is of the verifier ('muhaqqiq'), which comes from deep contemplation. This is called witnessing or 'mushahada', 'what the heart retains of the form of the One contemplated.'²⁵¹ Ibn Arabi²⁵² states that if this is done on a sustained basis, it can lead to grasping the mysteries of Divine Unity ('wahdaniyya'), where it brings the quality of uniqueness ('ahadiyya'), as outlined in the Table 2.3.1. Seclusion bequeaths knowledge of this world, says Sheikh Ibn Arabi.²⁵³

Imam Qushayri²⁵⁴ outlines a distinguishing factor between seclusion ('uzla') and retreat ('khalwah'), where 'uzla' refers to detaching from humankind, while the second is gaining intimacy with God. Imam Qushayri²⁵⁵ points out that seclusion is not mere physical isolation but separating blameworthy qualities and replacing them with thoughts of the Divine, whilst still being amongst people.

Regarding hunger ('ju') and vigilance ('sahar), these two are linked, since hunger²⁵⁶ leads to vigilance²⁵⁷. Sheikh Ibn Arabi distinguishes hunger not necessarily as an empty belly but a longing for something, while vigilance means being awake or refraining

²⁵⁰ Ibn Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation*, 33

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁵⁴ al-Qushayri, *The Risalah*, 126

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Ibn Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation*, 35

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

from something, but on a deeper level having perpetuity. Imam Qushayri²⁵⁸ uses the term ‘muraqabah’ instead of ‘sahar’ to mean a state of witnessing or watchfulness of God’s presence, but they essentially have the same meaning. Imam Qushayri adds that preservation of this knowledge of the consummate awareness of God is essential in cultivating it and forms the foundation of good action. This, he says, cannot be accomplished unless one empties oneself through a process of self-observation and inner accounting (‘muhasaba’).²⁵⁹

Ibn Arabi²⁶⁰ says that there are two forms of hunger: firstly, voluntary hunger, which is that of the seekers and secondly, obligatory (involuntary) hunger, which is that of the verifiers or more advanced students of knowledge. Hunger has spiritual states and stations; for the seeker it includes humility, submission, indigence, discretion, tranquil emotions and an absence of base thoughts, and for the verifiers it is characterized by delicacy of feelings, serenity, intimacy (with God), disappearance of worldliness and transcendence of ordinary human characteristics through the Lord. The last, says Ibn Arabi,²⁶¹ represents the station of eternal self-subsistence (‘maqam al-samadani’), where the Lord provides openings for the verifiers. He says that ‘hunger bequeaths the knowledge of Satan, may God preserve us and you from him.’²⁶²

Ibn Arabi says, ‘Vigilance is the fruit of hunger, for an empty stomach drives away sleep.’²⁶³ As in the case of hunger, vigilance also has two types. The first is the eye’s vigil, which aims to maintain the spiritual intention in the heart aimed at pursuing the quest. Secondly, the vigil of the heart is the state of awakening from the state of

²⁵⁸ al-Qushayri, *The Risalah*, 229

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibn Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation*, 36

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

forgetfulness and seeking contemplation. ‘Vigilance bequeaths knowledge of the self,’ says Ibn Arabi.²⁶⁴

2) With regard to **Generative Practices**, the intent here is to forge a platform for evoking common thoughts and feelings through acts of devotion and prayers. The congregational prayers (which are highly valued and firmly encouraged) are where the loud recitation from the Qur’an forms a point of focus of three out of the five ritual obligatory prayers. The weekly Friday sermon forms an established generative practice largely focusing on the current social and cultural issues of society that need to be addressed. The collective recitation of peace on the Prophet and loud dhikr (remembrance of God) offers a devotional platform for generating energy and forging solidarity.

Table 2.3.1 – Four Pillars of Knowledge

The Four pillars (‘arkan’)	Spiritual states		Spiritual stations and secrets (‘maqamat’/’asrar’)	Domains of knowledge (‘ma’arif’)
	For the aspirant (‘murid’/’sali’k)	For the verifier (‘muhaqqiq’/ ‘muqarrab’)		
SILENCE (‘SAMY’)	Safety from harm	Intimate converse	Inspiration (‘wahy’)	God (‘Allah’)
SECLUSION (‘UZLA’)	Transcendent of all attributes		Divine Unity & (‘wahdaniyya’) Uniqueness (quality) (‘ahadiyya’)	This world (‘dunya’)
HUNGER (‘JU’)	Humility, submission, servility, lack of self-importance, calm, indigence, absence of base thoughts	Delicacy of feeling, serenity, intimacy, non-worldliness, transcendence of ordinary humanness	Eternal Self-Subsistence (‘samadaniyya’)	Satan (‘shaytan’)
VIGILANCE (‘SAHAR’)	Cultivating the moment	Cultivating the moment, assuming lordly attributes	Everlasting Self-Existence (‘qayyamiyya’)	The self (‘nafs’)

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 38.

3) **Creative Process Practices:** As with other traditions, the art and architecture of Islam has been heavily influenced by the religion: however, they differ from most others in that traditionally, figurative art has been excluded. Rather, the creative process focuses on the beauty of God's creation through geometry and floral forms inspired by nature. The repetitive geometric shapes and symmetry that have become a hallmark of Islamic art and architecture, with their aesthetic sense and tranquility, provide the ambience for the mind to be oriented towards the infinite.

Poetry and prose have formed a rich tradition within Islam within both the Arab and Persian regions; more specifically the mystical tradition, expressed through the likes of Jalaluddin Rumi, Omar Khayyam, Ghalib, Firdows, Hafiz, Ibn Arabi, and others, who have used the medium to create awareness of and orient people's mind towards God. They speak of the connection between man and God and create a longing in the hearts of man to draw closer to their Creator.

4) **Relational Practices:** these Islamic traditional practices include the relationship between a sheikh or spiritual teacher ('murshid') and a seeker ('murid') and this takes the forms of dialogue, mentoring, and spiritual guidance. This is generally linked to conduct within the confines of the law called Sharia and more specifically the development of the inward state or the self. This practice, termed 'tasawwuf', is a science of self-development within Islam, but although it has been preserved within some societies, it has been lost in others. Given the oral traditions of the Arab, African, and Asian cultures, narrating and listening to stories and asking questions about them has been a lasting tradition, although current technology is fast replacing it with television, where humans are passive recipients.

5) **Activist Practices:** This largely covers those actions done outwardly that benefit oneself and others, including service to others and protests for justice. Service to others forms a core part of Islam, both in the context of helping those in need ('sadaqa' or voluntary giving and zakat or obligatory giving) and benefiting them; this enables one to overcome one's selfishness and rise above one's ego, which is central to Islam.

6) **Ritualistic or Cyclic Practices:** This essentially comprises the five pillars of Islam, including declaration of faith ('shahada'); performing the obligatory prayers ('salah'); giving obligatory charity ('zakat'); fasting; and performing pilgrimage ('hajj') if one can afford it. Given that the 'shahada' has already been discussed, the other four pillars will be outlined here.

Prayer ('salah'): The ritual prayer, which is performed five times a day, was a command given to the Prophet (ﷺ) in his meeting with God in the seventh heaven, highlighting its importance as a pivotal aspect of faith. When one examines it in the light of the tree of contemplative practices, one can identify the following characteristics. It is a stillness practice since the majority of the prayer is undertaken in silent contemplation. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to be silent during the first part of the ritual prayer. When asked about his silence, he replied that he used it for supplication as follows: 'O Allah, remove my sins from me as far as You have removed the East from the West. O Allah, purify me from sins as a white garment is purified from filth. O Allah, wash away my sins with water, snow and hail'.²⁶⁵ One of the most recommended voluntary acts is the 'tahajjud' prayer, as God says, 'And rise from thy sleep during part of the night (as well) as a free

²⁶⁵ Muslim (1245) quoted in Ruqaiyyag Waris Maqsood, *The Muslim Prayer Encyclopaedia: A Complete Guide to Prayers As Taught by the Prophet Muhammad* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 1998), 50

offering from thee'.²⁶⁶ The above prayer is performed during the last third of the night, the most still period of the day. As Rabia Al-Adawiyya said, "Oh Lord: The Stars are shining and the eyes of man are closed and kings have shut their doors and every lover is alone with his beloved and here am I alone with Thee."²⁶⁷

General vigilance needs to be observed throughout the prayers rhythmic movement, for excessive movement nullifies the prayer. This inculcates the principle of 'the still body instills a still mind'. This in effect represents movement meditation with set patterns and contemplative focus:

- i. Generative practice, since congregational prayers are a platform for people to get together and it is reinforced through prayer recitals. This is strongly encouraged as a basis for solidarity as well as spiritual cohesion. A narration of the Prophet supports this: 'A faithful believer to another faithful believer are like bricks in a wall, supporting each other. While (saying this) he clasped his hand and interlaced his fingers'.²⁶⁸
- ii. Activist practice, since there are many voluntary or supererogatory prayers, which are done as additional spiritual activities. These are important in their own sense since the five daily prayers are done out of a sense of obligation, with the understanding that they are a duty which must be performed, while voluntary prayers are done out of love for God.

²⁶⁶ Qu'ran, Sura Al-Isra ,17:79.

²⁶⁷ Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 29

²⁶⁸ Reported in Bukhari (8.88.468) quoted in Ruqaiyyag Waris Maqsood, *The Muslim Prayer Encyclopaedia: A Complete Guide to Prayers As Taught by the Prophet Muhammad* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 1998), 70

Schuon²⁶⁹ captures the canonical prayer as a centerpiece when he says, ‘The prayer integrates man into the rhythm of universe adoration and – through the ritual orientation of the prayer towards the ‘kaaba’ – into its centripetal order’. This movement of prayer then gives it a unified global force of worship of God both in space and time, connecting people from all walks of life and forms a repetitive cycle across the variations in time between countries.

‘Zakah’: This is an important facet of Islam, which not only entails obligatory parting with a defined portion of your wealth, but more crucially parting with your desire to retain it. Schuon points out that ‘the alms (‘zakat’ or obligatory and ‘sadaqa’ or voluntary) vanquish egoism and avarice and actualize the solidarity of all creatures, for alms are a fasting of the soul, even as the obligatory fast (ramadhan) is an almsgiving of the body.’²⁷⁰ He further adds that ‘almsgiving is detachment with regards to the world.’²⁷¹ Imam Ghazali²⁷² states that ‘zakat’ is the ‘purification of properties’ and it has three main causes for being a pillar of Islam: i) Appreciating the oneness of God and abiding with His decree and that ‘Promise reaches perfection when a Unitarian has got no object of love except the One.’; ii) Miserliness is the trigger to destruction, as the Prophet says, ‘There are three destructive guilts - to obey miserliness, to follow lower desires and self-conceit. For the Lord says “those who are saved from miserliness have got salvation” given that it purifies the self and one’s material possessions’; iii) Expressing gratitude for the gifts of God, which are innumerable, ranging from one’s body and mind, to all of the material and non-material things.

²⁶⁹ Schuon, F., (1998), 33.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Schuon, F., (2006), 116.

²⁷² Imam Ghazali Ihya Ulum-Id-Deen, 186-188.

Fasting: This consists of fasts both during Ramadan or obligatory and voluntary fasts. Imam Ghazali²⁷³ states, 'Fasting is half of patience and patience is half of faith.' This is one of the unique acts of worship, which is hidden from people, where one does not necessarily see another doing it. Therefore, there is no inherent 'riya' or pride in it, and the Lord says, 'Every good action will be rewarded from ten to seven hundred folds but the fast is for My sake and it is I who will reward him for it.' The Prophet said, 'Everything has got a gateway and the gateway of worship is fasting' and 'the devil runs through the human body like the circulation of blood; curb it with hunger.'²⁷⁴ Schuon²⁷⁵ asserts that 'Fasting is detachment with regards to desire, hence with regards to ego' and 'Fasting cuts man off the continual and devouring flux of carnal life, introducing into the flesh a kind of death and purification'. Similarly Ibn Arabi²⁷⁶ emphasizes that eating to satisfaction tends to provide more energy to the limbs, which causes it to commit a string of actions, taking one away from the main aim and intention of worshipping God.

Hajj: This is an obligatory act, if one can afford it, Schoun²⁷⁷ says, 'The pilgrimage is the return to the Centre, the Heart, the Self,' while adding, 'The Pilgrimage is a prefiguration of the inward journey towards the 'kaaba' of the heart and purifies the community, just as the circulation of the blood, passing through the heart, purifies the body.'²⁷⁸

7) Movement Practices: In Buddhism, movement meditation is part of the various forms of meditation and it is taught to monks and lay persons. In Islam, there is no conscious teaching of it in the present day, with some exceptions, even though

²⁷³ Ibid., 202.

²⁷⁴ Ibid

²⁷⁵ Schuon, F., (1998), 33.

²⁷⁶ Ibn Arabi, The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation, 46.

²⁷⁷ Schuon, F., (2006), 116.

²⁷⁸ Schuon, F., (1998), 34-35.

meditation forms the very core of Islam. Being mindful of what one is doing, as well as saying prayers or uttering God's remembrance, are part and parcel of Islam. The Lord says, 'Worship me sitting, standing and sleeping'²⁷⁹. Presence of mind in prayers and daily living infiltrates every aspect of the life of a Muslim and this awareness of God is the cornerstone of worship. Thus, consciousness of God is the central theme and it is part of bodily movements, which become basic to stop the movements of the mind.

2.3.5 The Direction and Impact of Contemplative Practices: There are two distinct benefits derived from contemplative practices. The first is the emerging data from neuro-science²⁸⁰ on the positive effects of spiritual practices, ranging from ritual prayers to remembering God or meditation ('dhikr') to fasting. From a scientific perspective, these scientific data sets are from various religions and more recently from practices within Islam²⁸¹; all point to physiological and psychological changes that lead to a sense of wellbeing. Secondly, the experiential data generated from individuals' experiences of these spiritual practices and their sense of well-being and meaning generated by these practices. Here, we touch only upon the former, while focusing on the spiritual impact of these practices and their frame of reference. Suffice to say that there is a whole framework within Islam called 'tasawwuf', or 'inward science', which has a wealth of theory and groups of practitioners. Here only some essential aspects are drawn upon to give a snapshot of its framework for developing the self.

Contemplative practices are generated through obligatory acts of worship, voluntary acts of love and seeking closeness to Him. God essentially does not benefit from our

²⁷⁹ Sura An-Nisa (4): 103

²⁸⁰ Daniel Goleman, "Tibetan & Western Models of Mental Health," in *Mind Science: An East-West Dialogue*, eds., Daniel Goleman & Robert A.F. Thurman (Boston: Wisdom, 1990), 95.
Andresen, J. (2000), 21-29; Chisea, A. (2010): 37-46.

²⁸¹ Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111; Ibrahim, F. & Ahmad W.W. (2013), 687-690; Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18; Afifi, Z. E. M. (1997): 231-235.

worship but it is our prescription for developing ourselves and overcoming our inherent and acquired weaknesses. In the light of this, seven stages have been conceptualized by the Sages, with references from the Quran, as represented in Figure 2. These practices are generally done under a Sheikh or Master, who not only teaches how it is to be done but also observes the students ('murids') and guides them through a combination of demonstration, lectures, one-to-one counseling, spiritual guidance and techniques of reflection and non-formal education. This type of learning is what can be termed as experiential learning, which is validated through a series of dialogues and observations both by the Sheikh and his/her peers.

2.3.6 Discussion: The terms 'contemplation' and 'meditation' have generally been used interchangeably to mean the same thing. The dictionary defines contemplation²⁸² as the act of contemplating; thoughtful observation or full or deep consideration; reflection; religious contemplation. Meditation²⁸³ means the act of meditating, continued or extended thought; reflection; contemplation; transcendental meditation, devout religious contemplation or spiritual introspection. As defined above, there is hardly a difference between these two terms.

Within Islamic thought, the Qur'an frequently refers to contemplation of the signs of God both within oneself and externally. While in Islamic literature itself the words 'contemplation' and 'meditation' have been used interchangeably, a distinction can be drawn. Contemplation refers to being mindful and reflecting ('tafakkur') on the signs and attributes of God, as well as recollection ('tazakkar') of them. Meditation ('muraqaba'), meanwhile, has a deeper sense, meaning movement from the stage of

²⁸² *Dictionary.com*, s.v. "Contemplation," accessed 8th April 2014, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/contemplation?s=t>

²⁸³ *Dictionary.com*, s.v. "Meditation," accessed 8th April 2014, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/meditation?s=t>

contemplation to absorption, where one tries to witness God ('mushahada') or, failing that, that God sees him ('muraqaba'). There are numerous groups within Islam with their own methods of remembrance of God; this can take many forms, depending on the group, from loud pronouncements to one where silence is used either by itself or by using one's breath as a point of attention as in the Naqshabandiyah tariqa (path) method. This process is accompanied by emptying the mind of everything other than God leader a state of absorption in Him, as done by the Prophet during his retreats at Mount Hira for 13 years, prior to receiving Prophethood. Imam Shadhili best captures the essence of this when he says:

‘You who wander in deserts away from your own consciousness, Come back to yourself to find all existence summed up in you. You are the way and reality of perfection. One in whom the great consciousness of God dwells.’²⁸⁴

Every act is an act of worship done in a state of witnessing the Presence of God, and this is the most recommended of states, in line with the Qur’anic injunction, ‘Worship me sitting, standing and sleeping’.²⁸⁵ In order to deepen one’s consciousness of God, several methods have been outlined including rigorous training and meditative practices with their inherent disciplines of hunger, vigilance, silence, and seclusion. In this light, there is a difference between the Islamic and Ignatian (Catholic) traditions of the word ‘meditation.’ The Ignatian understanding of contemplation is rooted in the imagination of God and in this sense is more cognitive.²⁸⁶ In the Islamic context, meditation is a state of absorption ('khushu'), while contemplation is focusing on an attribute of God, and the emphasis in both cases is on the heart. The similarity between the two traditions, however, is the focus on God, even though the point of divergence is the concept of Trinity within the Christian context.

²⁸⁴Edward Jabra Jurji, *Illumination in Islamic mysticism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938)

²⁸⁵ Qur’an, Sura Al-Imran (Family of Imran), 3:191

²⁸⁶ Ignatian Spirituality, “Ignatian Contemplation: Imaginative Prayer”, last modified <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/ignatian-contemplation-imaginative-prayer>

In the Buddhist tradition, meditation essentially refers to quieting the mind through following the flow of the breath ('anapaena sati'), with deep reflection on oneself, or a process of introspection ('vipassana'). Both aspects are a part of Islam in terms of quieting one's mind. However, Buddhism gives an orientation that is completely different. In Buddhism there is no concept of God the Creator as such and the focus is not on a Supreme Being but on the self²⁸⁷, whereas in Islam one must be aware that God is observing you ('muraqabba'), reflect on the signs of God ('tafakkur'), be introspective, and witness divine manifestations ('musahaba').

Why contemplate or meditate? The fundamental reason for contemplative practice is that it helps one to become fully aware of oneself and one's behaviour towards others and God. Thus, there are clear profits to be derived from contemplation and meditation. This is well articulated in the Qur'an, where the Lord says, 'Consider the human self, and how it is formed in accordance with what it is meant to be, and how it is imbued with moral failings as well as with consciousness of God. To a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this (self) to grow in purity, and truly lost is he who buries it (in darkness).' ²⁸⁸ Asad²⁸⁹ commenting on these verses points out that, firstly, the concept of self means not only the physical aspect but also the whole being with its essence of life. Secondly, he points out the concept of moral free will, whereby man can choose to rise to great heights of consciousness ('taqwaha') or to debase himself and become lowly ('fujuraha').

²⁸⁷ The Dalai Lama, Mind Science, 13

²⁸⁸ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al-Shams (The Sun), 91:7-10

²⁸⁹ Footnotes 5,6,7, page 1141-1142 quoted in The Message of the Qur'an, trans. by Muhammad Asad, Al-Shams, 91:7-1.

Likewise, Sheikh Ibn Arabi articulates four pillars of spiritual transformation paired together: hunger-vigilance and silence-seclusion. These are aimed at overcoming the lower, base desires and transforming the self into spiritual actualization. Hunger allows one to curb the desire ('nafs'). The desire for food frequently leads one to over-eat, with negative implications in the long term. Fasting is seen to bring about a state of heightened awareness, which aids spiritual activities and brings about a state of vigilance. Vigilance is congruent with meditation and with the modern day use of mindfulness or a state of witnessing without undue discrimination or evaluation. Silence refers to both that of the tongue and, more importantly, to the silence of the heart, when the focus of thought is none other than God. Seclusion is the silence of the heart, where it is not only physical seclusion from people, but also the higher state which means being amidst the crowd but at the same time being fully mindful of the Lord, in other words, being present while being absent.

These above four are enablers as articulated by Sheikh Ibn Arabi; they empower the seeker to 'tame the beast' or lower base desires, as Imam Muhasibi articulates, and move upwards into the seven levels of consciousness (Figure 2.3.2). Within an Islamic perspective, the effort is very important but alone it is insufficient to make spiritual progress. In this sense, the Prophet (ﷺ) refers to two concepts, namely, trust in God ('tawakkul'), where one exerts effort and then puts trust in God, and God's mercy ('rahma'), the light that shines on the heart to liberate it.

The tree of contemplative practices indicates the wide repertoire available within Islam of practices that fit into the seven categories shown in Figure 2.3.1 The five pillars are subsumed within ritualistic practices, while the voluntary practices, born out of love

and/or fear, constitute the other categories. As is evident, there are a plethora of practices ranging from activist, relation and generative rituals, to stillness and creative practices. Although the ritualistic practices are obligatory, spiritual progression generally occurs in those who involve themselves in voluntary practices. There is special reference and attention given to stillness practices within Islam and this is supported both by the divine scriptures and the words and actions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Qur'an states, 'Worship me in silence and in awe in the morn and in the night'²⁹⁰ "Successful indeed are the believers; they are those who humble themselves in their prayer."²⁹¹, where one should pray with a state of concentration or absorption (khushu). In this light, the essence of Islam is being mindful and having the consciousness of God in whatever one does, which is a state of meditative awareness and living.

The most critical factor is the role of the teacher or the spiritual master, who has attained a certain level of self-actualization and who is able to both teach and guide the seekers ('murids'). There are still traditional organizations where types of experimental learning takes place, but most of which do not necessarily promote themselves. However, given the context of modern society, where people have high levels of anxiety, stress, violence, and diseases associated with disorders, these types of spiritual practices could be integrated into the education system at different levels. There is a need to adopt the format, tools and methods of learning that have a beneficial neurological effect, which impact on the well-being of individuals and groups undergoing such learning. The schema of the development of the self, with its concepts, methods, and tools, calls for integrating these into formal and informal education, so

²⁹⁰ Sura Al-Imran (3:41)

²⁹¹ Sura Al-Mu'minoon (23:1-2)

that students can access this realm of knowledge at a very early age. These practices not only have an impact on their well-being but also enhance their character under the tutelage of a sheikh or master. This, then, forms the inward sciences of Islam, which aim to develop the whole individual similar to other esoteric traditions in other faiths.

2.4 Wellbeing & The Worshiper: A Neuroscience And Islamic Perspective

2.4.1 Introduction: A growing body of scientific data indicates that meditation in the long-term results in changes to the brain structure, a concept termed neuro-plasticity²⁹². This has led to contemplative practices like meditation, prayers and fasting being studied within the context of “human physiology, and a kind of pan-human technology of human spiritual development”²⁹³. Within the Islamic framework, salah, dhikr (meditation) and fasting were found to be beneficial for both the body and mind. However, as compared to the Buddhist and Hindu tradition, there has been comparatively little research into Islamic contemplative practices. Thus, there is a dire need to carry out further research, which is crucial for modern day living, where the focus tends to be on the outer than the inward aspects of Islam.

2.4.2 Introduction to Neuropsychology, Religious and Spiritual Experiences:

This section deals with some key terms and definitions relating to this research. It further outlines brain structures and functions, which is related to understanding the nature of contemplative practices and spiritual experiences.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Andresen, J. & Forman, R.K.C. (2000): 7-14.

2.4.2.1 Key Definitions & their Context

Contemplative Practices: There are many categories within Islam, as depicted by the Tree of Contemplative Practices²⁹⁴ (Chapter 2.3 Figure 2.3.1); for the sake of this discussion, however, only meditation (from stillness practice) and prayer (from ritualistic practice) will be defined. Andresen²⁹⁵ points out that carving out a working definition of meditation poses the danger of limiting this complex phenomenon and overlooking the subtleties involved in the process. Similarly, prayer eludes a precise definition, given that it is a subjective experience. Taking this into consideration, Andresen²⁹⁶ and Smith provide a framework to distinguish these practices according to the categories presented in the table 2.4.1 below.

Table 2.4.1 – Definition of Meditation and Prayer

Method of Meditation	Characteristics	Type of Meditation
Discursive Meditation	Recitative: e.g., invocations and homage to deities. Gestural: as in ritual gesture and movement in groups. Mental: guided contemplation and confession of sins.	Prayer: mental states that entertain thoughts/objects serially. The mind focuses on a series of thoughts and images.
Non-Discursive Meditation	Recitative: mantra practice, Jesus prayer and Muslim prayer (<i>Salah</i>); recitation of the Scriptures (Qur'an, Bible, Torah) and dhikr (meditation). Gestural: Mudra practice or religious dance. Mental: Single pointed meditation.	Meditation: mental states that entertain a single thought/ object serially. Characterized by the mind being focused upon a single object without voluntary discussion or involuntary distraction towards the objects.

Mindfulness and Spirituality: It can be categorized as a non-discursive meditative practice, where the focus is on the breath while thoughts are observed without evaluating them. In its broadest sense, the purpose of meditation from a spiritual

²⁹⁴ The structure of the tree of contemplative practices is from the Society of contemplative mind (www.contemplative mind.com) and this has been categorised by the first author according to the nature of the relevant Islamic practices.

²⁹⁵ Andresen, J. (2000): 20.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 20-21.

perspective, be it Eastern or Western, is to rise above one's limited self. Wilbur²⁹⁷ presents a comprehensive definition of spirituality; it has four dimensions, each having its own truth, and when taken together forms a whole. Spirituality: (i) involves peak experiences or altered states with varying time span and is not dependent on age or stage; (ii) represents the highest levels; (iii) is a separate development pathway; (iv) is an attitude signifying the states of openness, trust and love. Wilber sums up by stating that true spirituality is a change in the levels of consciousness, which can be either temporary or permanent. From an Islamic viewpoint, spirituality involves the changing levels of consciousness, which are states of spiritual development that are articulated by the scholars and directly referenced to the Qur'an, as already cited in chapter 2.1.3.

Basic Brain Neurobiology & Structures in relation to Contemplative Practices: The most important brain region linked to spiritual experience is the limbic system, which is composed of the hypothalamus, amygdala, hippocampus, and the frontal lobe. Some of the limbic system's key functions vis-à-vis contemplative practices are outlined below:

- i) The limbic system is reported to play a crucial role in spiritual and religious experiences (d'Aquili & Newberg, 1993; Saver & Rabin, 1997; Joseph, 2000)²⁹⁸;
- ii) The amygdala controls and modulates higher order emotion and motivational functions, specifically relating to arousal and fear (Morris et al, 1996, in d'Aquili & Newberg)²⁹⁹, while also being involved in attention, learning and memory;
- iii) The hippocampus³⁰⁰ plays a major role in information processing, including new memory, new learning, cognitive mapping of new environments and focusing attention. The hippocampus inhibits the transfer of information between the brain regions;
- iv) The inter-connection

²⁹⁷ Ken Wilber, "Waves, Streams, State and Self: Further Considerations for an Integral Theory of Consciousness," *Cognitive Models and Spiritual Maps*, special issue of the *Journal of Consciousness* 7, 11-12 (2000): 161.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. 256

²⁹⁹ Ibid. 256.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. 257.

between the amygdala, the hypothalamus and the hippocampus, with their various roles of controlling emotions and inhibiting the transfer of information, is said to be important in generating religious and spiritual experiences³⁰¹.

Spiritual Psychology and Islamic Psychology: Given that spirituality has a clear impact on our physiological wellbeing, how does it relate to our mental state? Hussain³⁰² defines spiritual psychology as a unified field with the following aspects: (i) it links body, mind, heart and spirit; and (ii) it establishes the relationship between theory and practice. In order to elucidate this definition, Hussain³⁰³ draws a contrast with cognitive psychology, which deals with empirical research on human mental life or processes, and spiritual psychology, which emphasizes the self and its development. Spiritual psychology forms a significant part of the Islamic framework; some key areas are discussed below. Originating from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), there is formulated within Islam an ‘inner science’, known as ‘tasawwuf’. This is supported by numerous Qur’anic citations and prophetic narrations that discuss the self; a hallmark divine writ being ‘... to a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this (self) to grow in purity, and truly lost is he who buries it (in darkness)’³⁰⁴. It is important to note the inference of this verse, denoting intention and effort required for the seekers to grow.

There are also numerous works by traditional Islamic scholars that deal with Islamic psychology in some depth, notably the writings of Imam ‘Abdullah Anṣārī³⁰⁵, Imam

³⁰¹ Ibid. 257.

³⁰² Akbar Hussain, *Spiritual Psychology* (New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2000), 9.

³⁰³ Ibid. 8.

³⁰⁴ Al-Qur’an, 91:1142, in Muhammad Asad, trans., *The Message of the Qur’an* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2011).

³⁰⁵ Abdullah Ansari, *Stations of the Sufi Path: The One Hundred Fields: Sad Maydan*, (Cambridge: Archetype, 2010).

Ghazālī³⁰⁶, Sheikh Ibn ‘Arabi³⁰⁷, Imam ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya,³⁰⁸ Sheikh ‘Abd al Qāder al-Jīlānī³⁰⁹, Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi³¹⁰ and Imam Sidi ibn Zarrū³¹¹, to name a few. Within Islamic psychology, the ruinous-blameworthy traits model is more commonly cited by scholars as having significant negative psychological states and their accompanying emotions cause disease of the heart or soul.

2.4.2.2 Experiential and Experimental Research: Goleman³¹², a psychologist who also spent time as a monk, in discussing the Tibetan and Western models of mental health, points out that he ‘was astounded to find that cradled within every great religious tradition there is a psychological system, the esoteric part of the religion.’ As Goleman³¹³ highlights, to overcome these negative traits is to retrain both the attention (through prayers, meditation) and the perceptual habits (through seeking repentance, supplication, forgiving others and oneself, mirroring of one’s habits, sitting in the company of those who have changed) aimed at transforming oneself. To this day, this inner science forms the foundations of certain Islamic movements and organizations and manifest in various parts of the world.

Experimental Research Evidence: Hindu & Buddhist Perspectives, including the Relaxation Response: Outlined below is experimental evidence resulting from well-documented Eastern contemplative traditions can be summarized as follows:

³⁰⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’-Ul-Lummudin, The Revival of Religious Learning, The Book of Constructive Virtues*, vol. IV (New Delhi: Islamic Book Services, 1995).

³⁰⁷ Muḥyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi, *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation*, (Oxford: Anqa Publication in association with Ibn Arabi Society, 2008).

³⁰⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Spiritual Disease and its Cure*, (London: Al-Firdous Ltd, 2006).

³⁰⁹ ‘Abd al-Qāder al-Jīlānī, *The Removal of Cares (Jala Al-Khawatir): A Collection of Forty-Five Discourses*, (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed & Co, 1997).

³¹⁰ Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *In Pursuit of Virtue: The Moral Theology and Psychology of Ibn Hazm a-Andalusi*, (London: TA-HA Publishers, 1998).

³¹¹ Sidi Zarrūk *The Poor Man’s Book of Assistance*, (California: Al-Hamra Production, 2001). 16 CDs.

³¹² Ibid, 91.

³¹³ Daniel Goleman, “Tibetan & Western Models of Mental Health,” in *Mind Science: An East-West Dialogue*, eds Daniel Goleman & Robert A.F. Thurman (Boston: Wisdom, 1990), 95.

- i. There are many different types of meditation, from yoga and Transcendental Meditation (Hinduism) to Mindfulness, Tantric Meditation (Buddhism) and the relaxation response, which has also been derived from these traditional spiritual practices.
- ii. All of these meditative practices have been observed to produce benefits for the body and mind, even though the effects on physiology and psychology differ from one to another.
- iii. The spectrum of physiological benefits ranges from lower cholesterol, hypertension and heart rate (both systolic and diastolic) to the activation of the autonomous system, with increased alpha and theta brain waves.
- iv. There is, however, a need for longitudinal studies of specific types of meditation in order to confirm their respective specific effects on the mind and body.

There have been numerous benefits as evident from a systematic review of current evidence on Buddhist Vipassana meditation (also called ‘mindfulness’ meditation), wherein Alberto Chiesa included controlled and cross-sectional studies³¹⁴. There were neuroplastic or structural changes found in the brains of people who meditate as follows:

- i. Strong activation in the rostral anterior cingulate cortex, as well as in the prefrontal cortex of the brain.

³¹⁴ Studies in Buddhist practices: Austin, J.A 1997 in J. Andresen (2000), 26 and Kabat-Zinn, J, Lipworth 1982 in J. Andresen (2000), 23
 Studies with Relaxation Response: Bradley & McCanne 1981; Engel 1997.; Benson et al, 1971 in J. Andresen (2000), 27; Benson & Alexander & Feldman, 1975; in J. Andresen (2000), 27.
 Studies in Yoga practices: Benson, Rosner & Marzetta, 1973 in J. Andresen (2000), 22; Corby, J.C 1978 in J. Andresen (2000), 24
 Studies in Transcendental Meditation: i) Kinsman, R.A & Staudenmayer, H. 1978 in J. Andresen (2000), 22; Warrenburg. S Zamassa; Zamarra et al, 1996 in J. Andresen (2000), 22; J.W. Schneiden, R.H. Besseghini, T. Robinson, D.K & Saferno, J.W (1996).

- ii. The following areas were thicker in the meditators as compared to the controls: regions associated with attention, interception and sensory processing, including the prefrontal cortex and the right anterior insula.
- iii. Greater levels of gray matter concentration were found in the right anterior insula, as well as in the left inferior temporal gyrus and right hippocampus.

In light of the above, the psychological changes observed were as follows: a decrease in alcohol-related problems and psychiatric symptoms, as well as positive psychosocial outcomes; a significant decrease in the avoidance of negative thoughts as compared to controls; more mature defense mechanisms and coping strategies accompanied by greater levels of maturity and better tolerance of common stressors.

The Islamic Perspective: While the empirical body of evidence has much to say with regards to contemplative practices within the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, empirical research on contemplative practices within the Islamic tradition seems to be scarce. As a framework, Islam has its own concept or psychology of the self. At its center lie the key elements of *nafs* (self), *ruh* (soul), *qalb* (heart) and *aqal* (intellect), which are contained within the science of tasawwuf, or the inner self (see chapters 2.1 and 2.2). Accordingly, there are methods within Islam of developing the self, as highlighted in the tree of contemplative practices (Figure 2.2.1).

The Impact of Islamic Contemplative Practices on Mind & Body: an Overview: At present, research on Islamic contemplative practices has just skimmed the surface. The sections below outline key experimental research into Islamic contemplative practices

of ritual prayer, meditation and fasting in the context of well-being and health implications, with special focus on neuroscientific findings.

Ritual Prayer (Salah): The Islamic ritual prayer (see Figure 2.2.3) has been shown to have beneficial effects on the physical and mental aspects of human physiology, such as that by Ibrahim, Abas & Cheok³¹⁵. The most comprehensive investigation on Islamic ritual prayer or Salah from a physiological and neuroscientific standpoint was carried out at the University of Malaya by Ibrahim et al³¹⁶. Here, the implications of ritual prayer on the body and brain were examined.

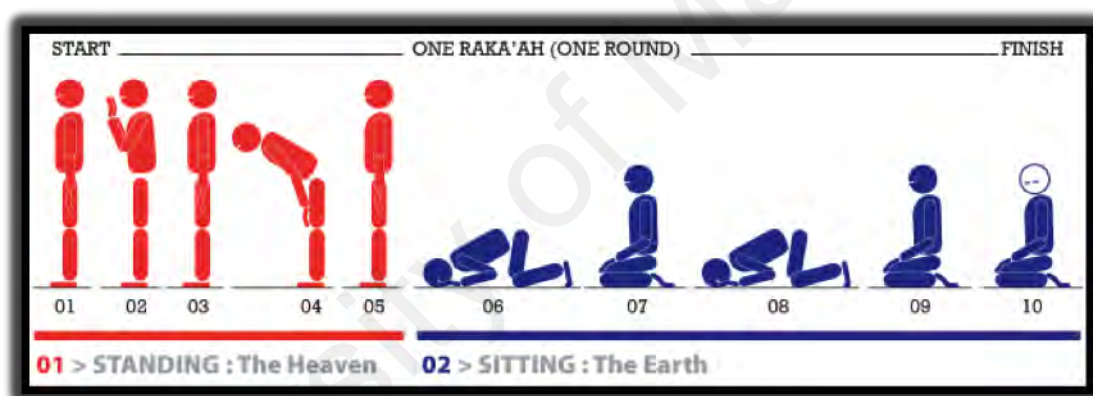


Figure 2.4.3. The order of sequence during Salah (Piet, 2011)

Salah & Body Composition: In investigating the impact of one prayer on body composition, bio-impedance analysis (BIA) readings were used as a health indicator and taken before and after prayer of 47 Muslim students. Individuals satisfying all pre-stipulated essential conditions of prayer compared to their counterparts demonstrated: (1) higher phase angles, signifying larger quantities of intact body cells and membranes³¹⁷, (2) higher body capacitance, signifying the ability of cells to store energy³¹⁸, and (3) a lower body resistance value, an indicator of good blood vessel

³¹⁵ Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ "Phase Angle," Biodynamics Corporation, accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.biodyncorp.com/product/450/phase_angle_450.html.

³¹⁸ "Body Capacitance," Biodynamics Corporation, accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.biodyncorp.com/product/450/body_capacitance_450.html.

elasticity³¹⁹. Thus, individuals who satisfied all conditions of prayer had better body compositions compared to their counterparts.

Ibrahim et al. also examined the impact of the ritual praying five times a day on body composition. Findings indicated that participants, who performed all five prayers, compared to counterparts who did not, demonstrated higher phase angles, body capacitance values, basal metabolic rates³²⁰ and body cell mass³²¹. This indicates that individuals observing prayers regularly had a healthier body composition overall. Furthermore, being able to fully comprehend the meaning of recitation during prayer was shown to provide an added advantage to body composition compared to those with little to moderate understanding. Specifically, individuals able to fully comprehend the meaning of recitations showed a higher phase angle, body capacitance and total intracellular reading (an indicator of blood flow efficiency). In addition, praying in a congregation as opposed to by oneself was also demonstrated to produce a healthier body composition, with higher phase angles, body capacitance and lower body resistance levels. The act of bodily contact during congregational worship is thought to be responsible for the improved composition, since it allows for electrical signals to flow from one individual to the next.

Ibrahim et al. investigated further the impact of taraweeh prayer (a voluntary prayer performed during ramadhan, consisting of 20 rak'ahs or rounds) and fasting during ramadhan on body composition. Findings indicated that after 20 days, there was an increase in phase angle, basal metabolic rate, lean body mass and ratio of intracellular

³¹⁹ "Resistance," Biodynamics Corporation, accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.biodyncorp.com/product/450/resistance_450.html.

³²⁰ "Basal Metabolic Rate," Biodynamics Corporation, accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.biodyncorp.com/tools/450/understanding_printout.html.

³²¹ "Body Cell Mass," Biodynamics Corporation, accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.biodyncorp.com/tools/450/understanding_printout.html.

water compared to body weight. Further observed was a decrease in resistance value, glucose and fat mass compared to initial values. These results demonstrate that taraweeh prayer and fasting are comparable to the effect of moderate aerobic exercise and a calorie-restricted diet. Furthermore, the study provided support for the beneficial nature of fasting to the self, in line with Islamic perspectives.

Salah & the Heart: The heart plays a seminal role within the Islamic framework, where it is said to be the spiritual center. As such, many of the tenets and rituals within Islam are concerned with the purification of this organ. Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) is reported as saying:

Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be sound, all the body is sound and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart. [Sahih Al-Bukhari 322].

This connection between the heart and brain has been supported by research in neuroscience. According to the neuro-visceral integration model, there are direct and indirect neural pathways linking the heart and brain, which are involved in cognitive, autonomic and affective responses³²³. For instance, modified or reduced Heart Rate Variability (HRV) is associated with conditions like congestive heart failure, diabetic neuropathy, increased levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as has been recorded by Abildstrom, Jensen, Agner et al³²⁴; Brosschot, Van Dijk, Thayer³²⁵; and Cohen, et al³²⁶. Thus, the HRV is said to serve as an indicator for the health of the brain more than of the heart.³²⁷

³²² Sahih Al-Bukhari, *Book of Belief*, vol I, trans. Muhammad Mushin Khan (Riyadh: Dar-Us-Salam, 1994), 77.

³²³ Thayer, J.F. & Lane, R.D. (2009): 81–88.

³²⁴ S. Z. Abildstrom, B.T. Jensen & E. Agner, (2003): 168–73.

³²⁵ J. F. Brosschot, E. Van Dijk & J.F. Thayer, (2007): 39–47.

³²⁶ H. Cohen, M. Kotler, M. A. Matar, Z. Kaplan, U. Loewenthal, H. Miodownik & Y.Cassuto, (1998): 1054-1059.

³²⁷ J. F. Thayer et al. (2012): 747-756.

A recent meta-analysis of research linking cerebral blood flow to HRV demonstrated the importance of the heart in regulating cognitive, affective and autonomic response in the brain.³²⁸ Significantly, studies show that brain regions involved in the perception of danger and safety, such as the amygdala and medial PCF, are also connected with HRV. These findings provide support for the notion that HRV is a vital indicator of health, adaptability and stress. Thus, this also illustrates the seminal role the heart plays in the control of overall health. Moreover, it provides a scientific understanding of the heart's role, which lies at the very center of the Islamic perspective.

The Impact of Salah on the Brain: The impact of Salah on brain activity has been investigated in a study measuring alpha waves using EEG³²⁹. Nine Muslim participants performed four rounds of the afternoon (dhur) prayer and EEG measurements were taken in three conditions: before prayer, during prayer with recitation of Quranic verses, and during prayer without any recitation. No significant difference was found in alpha waves between the conditions of prayer with recitation and without recitation. In line with previous studies, significantly higher alpha waves were found in the occipital and parietal brain regions during prostration in both conditions compared to any other prayer positions and the resting state.

In examining different positions during the Salah on the brain, Ibrahim, Abas and Ng³³⁰ investigated the pauses prevalent throughout Salah, using EEG measurements in two separate studies. The first study measured the alteration of brain signals at the point of pauses during Salah. Specifically examined were the points of tuma'ninah, when there

³²⁸ J. F. Thayer et al. (2012). 747-756.

³²⁹ Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18.

³³⁰ Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111

is a brief pause before moving onto the next posture. Also measured was the pause during I'tidal, where the individual rises from the bowing posture and pauses briefly before going into the prostrate position. Pausing allows individuals to gather their thoughts, thereby creating a state of composure. The second study examined the effects of the complete act of Salah on the brain, with EEG measurements taken before and after the prayer. Results from the first study showed an increase in alpha frequency signals when participants assumed the pause positions, indicating a state of relaxation. Results from the second study indicated a higher frequency reading from gamma signals (activated when processing activity is present) compared to the state before Salah.

Meditation: In a rare study of meditation among Muslims, Aldahadha³³¹ examined the impact of Salah as a form of both Muslim Praying Meditation (MPM) and Transcendental Meditation (TM) on the mindfulness skills of university students. TM, a straightforward meditation practiced for 20 minutes twice a day, involves an individual seated in a relaxed position with eyes closed. This form of meditation is said to provide not only a restful state but one of awareness too. The experience of an increased state of awareness, lacking in the mental load that typically accompanies one's train of thought, has been termed 'transcendental consciousness'³³².

The above-mentioned study was carried out over a period of three months on 354 students, who were given the MPM questionnaire (Al Kushooa) and the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS) prior to training. Following the three-month training, the KIMS was re-administered. Findings indicated that MPM not only showed an increase but also predicted the impact of the KIMS. Furthermore, the additional

³³¹ Aldahadha, B. (2013): 668-676.

³³² M. Tanner, M. F. Travis, F. C. Gaylord-King & D. Haaga, "The Effects of the Transcendental Meditation Program on Mindfulness," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 65(6) (2009): 574-589.

practice of TM training produced a significant increase in self-reported mindfulness on the KIMS, compared to the group practicing MPM alone. These findings indicate that Muslim ritual prayer is not only predictive of mindfulness but also demonstrates enhanced effects when culminating with additional meditative practices like TM, which is akin to the Islamic practice of dhikr or remembrance of God.

Fasting: Fasting, whereby one refrains from food and drink from dawn till dusk, is the fourth pillar of Islam. It is obligatory during the month of Ramadhan. There are, however, voluntary acts of fasting that are recommended throughout the year; for instance, the Prophet used to fast on Mondays and Thursdays and fasting during the first 10 days of the month of Hajj is highly valued. Research into the impact of Islamic fasting on health has focused on physiological aspects, such as energy intake, lipid profile and body weight. A recent review of literature on the impact of Ramadhan on health and well-being concludes that while findings varied due to individual differences between subjects (for instance, health conditions, eating, lifestyle and cultural habits etc.), it remains safe for all healthy individuals³³³. Overall, studies seem to indicate that fasting can be beneficial for health, provided it is carried out with individual health in mind and in line with medical advice.

There have been very few studies investigating the impact of Islamic fasting on the brain. One study, a polysomnographic and quantitative waking EEG study, examined daytime sleepiness during Ramadhan³³⁴. An increase in daytime sleepiness was found both through subjective and objective measures, and this was correlated with metabolic changes, specifically a decrease in body temperature. These findings may provide an

³³³ Alkandari, Maughan, Roky, Aziz & Karli, 2012; Johnstone, 2006.

³³⁴ Roky, R., Chapotot, F., Bencheikroun, M.T., Benaji, B., Hakkou, F., Elkhalfi, H., & Buguet, A. (2003): 95-101

explanation for the decrease in psychomotor, learning and motor functioning during Ramadhan (Afifi 1997; Bigard et al. 1998³³⁵; Boussif et al. 1996; Roky et al. 2000³³⁶).

Clinical Implications of Fasting: Studies on fasting, both on rodents and humans, have demonstrated that it may postpone the aging process, help the prevention and treatment of certain diseases and reduce the side-effects of chronic dietary intervention (Longo & Mattson, 2014)³³⁷. A recent review on the implications of fasting on cellular metabolism and clinical applications showed that in lower eukaryotes chronic fasting improved longevity, partly by reconditioning metabolic and stress resistance pathways (Longo & Mattson, 2014)³³⁸. In rodents, intermittent or periodic fasting was shown to prevent heart disease, cancer, diabetes and neuro-degeneration. Fasting in humans decreases rates of hypertension, obesity, asthma and rheumatoid arthritis.

The Effect of Fasting on the Brain: Evolutionarily speaking, a preservation technique of mammals is to be active when hungry and inactive when satiated (Weindruch and Sohal, 1997)³³⁹. This is demonstrated in studies of mammals during food deprivation, when decreases organ size (except the brain) have been reported. This demonstrates the need for greater cognitive functioning in circumstances where food is sparse. Among rodents, intermittent fasting is shown to enhance cognitive function, learning and

³³⁵ Afifi, Z.E.M. (1997): 231-235.

³³⁶ Roky, R. Iraki L., HajKhida, R., Ghazal, N.L., Hakkou, F. (2000): 101-107.

³³⁷ V.D Longo & M.P. Mattson, "Fasting: Molecular Mechanisms and Clinical Applications," *Cell Metabolism* 19(2) (2014): 181-192.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ R. Weindruch & R.S. Sohal, "Caloric intake and aging," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 337(14) (1997): 986.

memory, as determined by behavioural enhancements in sensory and motor function tests (Singh et al., 2012³⁴⁰; Fontan-Lozano et al., 2007³⁴¹) [see Figure 2.4.6].

Fasting, Aging & Disease: Studies on humans have consistently supported animal data on the impact of fasting in delaying aging and related diseases. The most important factors in aging, accelerated by a gluttonous lifestyle, are: (1) oxidative damage to proteins, DNA and lipids; (2) inflammation; (3) accumulation of dysfunctional proteins and organelles; and (4) elevated glucose and insulin (Bishop et al., 2010³⁴²; Fontana and Klein, 2007³⁴³). Fasting two days a week for overweight women at risk of breast cancer demonstrated reduced oxidative stress and inflammation (Harvie et al., 2010³⁴⁴), while in elderly men there was a reduction of body weight and fat and elevation of mood (Teng et al., 2011³⁴⁵).

Other age-related effects of fasting observed in humans are the inhibition of the TOR motor pathways (a central regulator of cell metabolism, growth, proliferation and survival (Laplante & Sabatini, 2012³⁴⁶), the stimulation of autophagy (a physiological process involving the degeneration and recycling of cellular matter), and ketogenesis (the formation of ketone bodies, compounds resulting from fat metabolism) (Harvie et

³⁴⁰ R. Singh, D. Lakhanpal, S.Kumar, S. Sharma, H. Kataria, M. Kaur & G. Kaur, "Late-onset intermittent fasting dietary restriction as a potential intervention to retard age-associated brain function impairments in male rats," *Age* 34(4) (2012): 917-933.

³⁴¹ A. Fontán-Lozano, J.L. Sáez-Cassanelli, M.C. Inda, M. de los Santos-Arteaga, S.A. Sierra-Domínguez, G. López-Lluch, G. & A.M. Carrión, "Caloric restriction increases learning consolidation and facilitates synaptic plasticity through mechanisms dependent on NR2B subunits of the NMDA receptor," *The Journal of Neuroscience* 27(38) (2007): 10185-10195.

³⁴² N. A Bishop, T. Lu & B. A Yankner (2010): 529-535.

³⁴³ L. Fontana & S. Klein, "Aging, adiposity, and calorie restriction," *Jama* 297(9): 986-994.

³⁴⁴ M. N. Harvie, M. Pegington, M. P Mattson, J.B. Frystyk, B. Dillon, G. Evans & A. Howell, "The effects of intermittent or continuous energy restriction on weight loss and metabolic disease risk markers: a randomized trial in young overweight women," *International journal of obesity*, 35(5) (2007): 714-727.

³⁴⁵ N. I. M. F. Teng, S. Shahar, Z. A. Manaf, S. K., Das, C. S. C. Taha & W. Z. W. Ngah, (2011): 1059-1064.

³⁴⁶ M Laplante & D. M. Sabatini, (2012): 274-293.

al., 2010; Sengupta et al., 2010³⁴⁷). Thus, fasting is shown to conserve against aging and to help prevent related diseases.

Fasting & Neuro-generation: Much of the understanding of the effects of fasting on nervous and cognitive functions comes from animal data. Studies on calorie restrictions in humans have shown improvements of cognitive function in overweight women (Kretsch et al., 1997³⁴⁸) and elderly participants (Witte et al., 2009³⁴⁹). Likewise, participants with mild cognitive impairments who underwent a low glycaemic diet for a month demonstrated improved visual memory via cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers of metabolism and brain bioenergetics (Bayer-Carter et al., 2011³⁵⁰).

The evidence from animal and human data suggests that fasting can be beneficial in optimising health and reducing the risk of disease. Animal studies have demonstrated robust and replicable benefits on the health indices from fasting, such as greater insulin sensitivity and reduced levels of blood pressure, body fat, insulin, glucose, atherogenic lipids and inflammation. Furthermore, fasting is shown to have positive functional outcome in animal and some human models of disease like cancer, myocardial infarction, diabetes, stroke, Alzheimer's, dementia, and Parkinson's disease.

³⁴⁷ S. Sengupta, T. R Peterson, M. Oh, S. Laplante & D. M Sabatini, (2010): 1100-1104.

³⁴⁸ M. J. Kretsch, M. W. Green, A. K. H. Fong, N. A. Elliman & H. L. Johnson, "Cognitive effects of a long-term weight reducing diet," *International Journal of Obesity* 21(1) (1997): 14-21.

³⁴⁹ A.V Witte, M. Fobker, R. Gellner, S. Knecht and A. Floel, "Caloric restriction improves memory in elderly humans", *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 106 (2009): 1255–1260.

³⁵⁰ J. L. Bayer-Carter, P. S. Green, T. J. Montine, B. Van Fossen, L. D. Baker, G. S. Watson & S. Craft, "Diet intervention and cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers in amnesic mild cognitive impairment", *Archives of neurology* 68(6) (2011): 743-752.

Mind-Body Interactive and Global Well Being: The Contemplative Tree (Chapter 2, Figure 2.2.1) shows a wide spectrum of practices relating to worship, where contemplative or meditative practices are but one significant component. What is paramount within the religio-spiritual framework as outlined above, including ritual prayers, meditation, fasting and other related practices, is that they have been shown to have an effect on the mind and body. These practices provide meaning, direction, a sense of solace and, as neuro-science is now indicating, a sense of both physical and mental well-being. Well-being refers to the ‘absence of negative conditions or feelings, the result of adjustment and adaptation to a hazardous world’³⁵¹. Thus, it subsumes and goes beyond the physiological and psychological realm and from an individual to a community and societal level culminating in a global perspective.

The deliberations in this study within the context of well-being and relating to Islamic rites and rituals can be categorized into four main domains, namely, individual, community, societal and global as outlined in the table above.

Table 2.4.2 – Worship, Well-Being and its Implications

Domain	Type of Worship	Impact	Implications
Individual	Prayer, Meditation, Fasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decrease in heart and brain activities. - lowering of metabolism and better cellular functioning. - alert mind with a greater level of consciousness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having direction. - sense of being - generally having a peaceful state. - able to interact better
Community	Congregational prayers, Collective fasting; Group Meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - greater level of cellular and electrical activity. - societal cohesion. - inculcates greater community discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a sense of collective at a community level. - sharing of material goods.

³⁵¹ Corey Lee.M. Keyes, Social Well-Being, Social Psychology Quarterly, Vol. 61, No:2, 1998:121

Domain	Type of Worship	Impact	Implications
Societal	Worship on festive events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher level of energy. - collective sense of belonging. - greater level of giving/charity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sharing of spiritual events with wider society. - forging solidarity at societal level
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The collective togetherness termed as 'ummah'. - Collective rites and rituals (hajj and umra). - Inter-generational practices (calligraphy, poems-prose, song..) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Cohesion - Social Solidarity - Social Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a greater sense of global solidarity - collective sharing and giving, which is transnational. - sharing of common symbols, icons - societal inter-relations

At an individual level, worship in all its manifestation has a physiological, psychological and physical impact as several of the studies flagged in this paper have indicated. But, in a sense, it goes beyond the individual and enables one to relate to others better. When these types of individuals who profess faith with a tolerant attitude and who devoted to contemplative practices, interact with others, they are able to forge together groups that foster a sense of direction and meaning to life. This sense of togetherness at a community level can result in a platform for sharing and caring as seen in communities across the world.

At societal level, what Islam calls for is not only for prayers and fasting and the other rituals but a holistic way of life, where worship (ibadah) only forms one segment, while the other is the interaction with other being and one's conduct in any transaction (muamalat). In this light, religion and its traditions in its various forms have been instrumental in developing various contemplative practices³⁵² ranging from prayers, meditation, contemplation, repentance, supplication, voluntary support to others in need, to name a few. These, by and large, are seen to provide meaning to life, its direction,

³⁵² Contemplative Practices and define and a conceptual diagramme is presented in Section 4.2 and list out those within Islam.

optimism (having faith), infusing a sense of stillness and calmness through its contemplative practices (ibadah) and affording a sense and methods for socialization (akhlaq or morality including adab or code of conduct) based on faith and social justice, which is the bedrock of Islam. This societal framework that Islam provides with appropriate approach, concepts, tools, methods, and a framework, which underpins how they should lead their lives or should do so.³⁵³

Discussion: Overall, empirical evidence seems to resonate with the beneficial nature of age-old religious practices on the body and mind. While physical wellbeing is key to maintaining the mind-body balance, spiritual and emotional well-being seems to have a pervasive impact, not only on one's physical and mental states but on interpersonal connections too. The existing body of literature on contemplative practices within Hindu and Buddhist traditions has highlighted their valuable impact on health. Specifically, practices such as yoga and meditation are associated with effects such as lowered heart rate and blood pressure, increased activation of the autonomic nervous system, reduced stress and chronic pain, as well as neuro-plasticity.

Salah: Research on Islamic contemplative practices, despite its diversity, has been limited. Ibrahim et al. (2008) study demonstrated the beneficial impact of Salah on body composition. This has positive implications for the body's energy levels and immune response. These effects are specially accentuated when individuals fully comprehend the meaning of recitation during prayer or when prayer is performed in a congregation. Additionally, the combination of lengthy voluntary prayers done during fasting

³⁵³ Professor Manfred Seligman's (Prof of Psychology University of Pennsylvania, USA) extensive research on Happiness covering the past decades, clearly point out to 3 main ingredients leading to a sense of happiness-contentment, with the top priority being - People having a purpose and meaning to life and a sense of optimism, which the research author states as Faith in God for those who are religiously inclined. Source: BBC Interview, Hard Talk, Asia services, aired on 19/12/2007.

(Ramadhan), the taraweeh prayer and the long period of fasting, have been shown to be the equivalent of moderate aerobic exercise and a calorie-restricted diet. This can perhaps be used as a tool to gain a healthier body composition in the short-term but more importantly, it is the mental connection with the divine, and the ensuing physiological and psychological responses that have made it stand the test of time. Within Islam, Jabir ibn Abdullah reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said with regards to the five times prayer that:

“If there was a river at the door of anyone of you and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him? They said, “Not a trace of dirt would be left.” (Sahih Bukhari 354)

Thus, these findings provide a deeper insight into the nature of purification that is said to be gained through the process of the Islamic ritual prayer. In examining the impact of ritual prayer or Salah on the heart, Ibrahim and Ahmed (2008) found that the prostrate position was particularly beneficial since there was a significant increase in blood flow to the brain compared to other positions. Indeed, the act of prostration is revered within the Islamic framework; the Prophet (ﷺ) is reported as saying, “The closest that a servant is to his Lord is when he is in prostration” (Sahih Muslim³⁵⁵).

Furthermore, neuro-scientific research has demonstrated the heart-brain connections, emphasizing the vital role the heart plays in overall physiological and psychological health (e.g. Thayer et al, 2012). In this vein, the Prophet is reported as saying:

³⁵⁴ A prophetic saying narrated by a companion Abu Huraira, recorded in Sahih Bukhari, Al-Tanzil, http://al-tanzil.com/Excellence_of_Prayers.html; Edited from: <http://www.faithinallah.org/an-nawawi-on-the-excellence-of-prescribed-prayers/>. Accessed 6th May, 2015.

³⁵⁵ A prophetic saying narrated by a companion Abu Huraira, recorded in Sahih Muslim; Book of Prayer, No:979; <http://www.sahihmuslim.com/sps/smm/sahihmuslim.cfm?scn=dspchaptersfull&BookID=4&ChapterID=187>. Accessed 6th May 2015.

Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be sound, all the body is sound and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart. [Sahih Al-Bukhari,356].

Thus, such findings provide a scientific dimension to the act of worship and the nature of vital spiritual organs. Given this, an interesting area of investigation would be the heart-brain connection during Islamic worship, for instance, the effect of prostration during Islamic prayer on the brain using neuro-imaging technology.

Studies on the brain during Salah found significantly higher alpha waves in the occipital and parietal regions when the body was in the prostrate position (Doufesh, Faisal, Lim, & Ibrahim, 2012). No significant difference was found in alpha waves between the conditions of prayer, that is, with or without recitation. Additionally, Ibrahim, Abas and Ng (2008)³⁵⁷ found alpha waves during the pause position throughout Salah and gamma waves after Salah, compared to before Salah. Alpha frequency activation is correlated with spiritual activities like yoga (Vialatte, Bakardjian, Prasad & Cichocki, 2009; Arambula et al. 2001), tai chi (Field et al. 2010) and Zen meditation (Yu et al. 2011). These results demonstrate that the mere movement of Salah creates a state of relaxation, similar to that of meditation. Given that alpha waves are associated with a state of relaxation and gamma waves with processing activity, these findings are congruent with the Islamic concept of Salah. Here, prayer is seen as a space for contemplation, as well as one that offers a sense of calm; thus, offering a form of sustained meditation over time. One important aspect of Ibrahim et al. (2008) research is that the prayer is only as effective as the concentration with which it is carried out. This ties up with the concept of khushu or state of absorption during prayer.

³⁵⁶ A prophetic saying narrated by a companion An-Nu'man bin Bashir, recorded in Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol 1 Book of Belief, hadith 48, Summarised Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), Az-Zubaidi, Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, (Riyad, Saudi Arabia Maktaba Dar-us; Salam, 1994): p77

³⁵⁷ F. Ibrahim, A. B. W. Abas & S. C. Ng, *Salat: Benefit from science perspective* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Biomedical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Malaya, 2008).

Meditation: Aldahadha's (2013) study on Muslim prayer and transcendental meditation highlights the likeness between Salah and meditative states. It demonstrates the enhanced effects on an individual's state of mind of combining prayer and meditation. Much like meditation, Salah involves a shift in one's focus from the external materialistic world to the inward, spiritual realm. While the predominant focal point within Islam in the modern day seems to be on ritual prayer, meditation holds a special place within the Islamic tradition. This is epitomized in the narrative *by Aisha (RA)*, which captures the moment of Quranic revelation, which occurred while the Prophet (ﷺ) was on one of his meditative retreats:

The first revelation that was granted to the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be on him, was the true dream in a state of sleep, so that he never dreamed a dream but the truth of it shone forth like the dawn of the morning. Then solitude became dear to him and he used to seclude himself in the cave of Hirā', and therein he devoted himself to Divine worship for several nights before he came back to his family and took provisions for this (retirement); then he would return to Khadījah and take (more) provisions for a similar (period), until the Truth came to him while he was in the cave of Hirā...' (Sahih Al-Bukhari³⁵⁸). Thus, themes of seclusion, contemplation and meditation were very much a part of the Prophet's life, even before the birth of Islam as it is known today.

Fasting: The data from animal and human studies have elucidated the neuro-physiological underpinnings of fasting, its general benefits and certain cautionary measures (Longo and Mattson, 2014). These indicate that fasting can delay aging and the onset of related diseases and is shown to improve cognitive function. Within Islam, fasting forms an important tenet. On the surface, it involves restraint from food, drink and sexual pleasures. At a deeper level, restraint encompasses the restriction of the senses such as sight, hearing, speech, feeling and smelling from an unnecessary information overload. At the highest level, fasting involves the mind, thinking of God and the life after death. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is reported as saying "*Fasting is*

³⁵⁸ Reported in Sahih Al-Bukhari, Religious Facts; Islam, Library of Islamic Texts, <http://www.religionfacts.com/library/hadith/1>, Accessed 6th May 2015.

a shield”³⁵⁹ against much of the physical and psychological behaviour that can harm the particular person and himself. Through the above findings a much clearer picture can be gained of the mechanisms through which fasting purifies and protects the body.

Certain studies have found that fasting can increase daytime sleepiness and decrease psychomotor, learning and motor functioning during Ramadhan (Roky et al., 2003, Afifi 1997; Bigard et al. 1998³⁶⁰; Boussif et al. 1996; Roky, Iraki, Haj Khlifa, Ghazal, & Hakkou, 2000³⁶¹). While these findings can be viewed as providing support for the negative impact of fasting, fasting provides an important learning opportunity for Muslims from a religious standpoint. It highlights the finite nature of man when in a vulnerable position, such as a state of hunger, consequently producing a state of remembrance of God.

The neuro-physiological research presented generally highlights the beneficial nature to the overall health of Islamic contemplative practices of the ritual prayer or Salah, meditation and fasting. Findings demonstrate that caution needs to be exercised when fasting if it pertains to individual health. These studies do have certain limitations; for instance, the studies on Salah and meditation had small sample sizes and consisted of participants from the same region. Nevertheless, these have provided a foundation that future research can build upon with the use of larger and more diverse samples. Furthermore, these studies are pioneers in virtually unexplored territory, that is, the impact of Islamic contemplative practices on neuro-physiology. Thus, this presents scope for future research within the field.

³⁵⁹ Reported in Sahih Al-Bukhari, Narrated by the companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) Abu Huraira and reported in Sahih Bukhari, *Volume 3, Book of Fasting, Number 1894*. Accessed 6th May 2015

³⁶⁰ Afifi, Z. E. M. (1997): 231-235.

³⁶¹ Roky, R. Iraki L., HajKhida, R., Ghazal, N.L., Hakkou, F. (2000): 101-107.

While Islamic contemplative practices have demonstrated a valuable tool for self and spiritual development, the ruinous-blameworthy-virtuous-praiseworthy model of positive and negatives traits provides a viable framework for understanding key areas of development. In line with Goldman's insights gained from Tibetan meditative practices and psychology, Islam offers a rich tapestry of tools and methods, those that focus one's attention, like prayers and meditation, and those, including fasting, charity, supplication, sharing and caring for others, that if practiced can offer self-improvement.

In light of the above, a reversion to a more traditional form of Islam may be what is required in answer to the fast-paced lives that most of us lead. Following in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and more traditional societies, adapting meditative/contemplative practices in addition to the prescribed prayers may help to improve one's overall mindfulness, which in turn has numerous physiological and psychological benefits.

The research above has highlighted the beneficial nature of eastern, including Islamic, contemplative practices. While the empirical study of Islamic contemplative practices is relatively new, these findings provide another dimension to the understanding behind these practices from a scientific perspective. It demonstrates that Islam, for its followers, offers systematic methods and tools for self-development at a physiological, psychological and spiritual level.

At a clinical level, such findings offer the possibility of integrating Islamic contemplative practices into forms of psychotherapy, for instance, an Islamic form of Mindfulness CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). Aligning therapy with religious

beliefs may make it more acceptable for Muslims to seek and undertake therapy. This approach is of seminal importance in light of the turmoil within the Muslim world, which has resulted not only in a surge of refugees and displaced persons but also individuals channeling their frustrations in unconstructive ways. Thus, this highlights the importance for greater research into and understanding of Islamic contemplative practices.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 3 – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MORALITY (AHKLAQ)

This chapter deals with the right way to God (3.1), which sets the pathway to appropriate behavior and acts as a moral compass. The most appropriate in this light is the role-model of the Prophet (ﷺ), where his spiritual leadership and life of the Prophet (ﷺ) is duly portrayed (3.2).

3.1 *Riazat* or Efforts for Good Conduct in the Way of God

3.1.1 Introduction: The life of humankind and morality has been inseparable from the time life started acting as a compass to guide mankind. Morality, which is generally associated with religion, spirituality and ethics, is deep rooted within every religion and culture, no matter if it is different in its ideology and orientation. It contains prescriptions and narratives with its code on conduct. The wide scope within which morality is embedded is evident when one examines the traditions of the aboriginal³⁶² to the scriptural based religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

This chapter deciphers the topic *riazat* or efforts of good conduct in the way of God, attempting to understand its types and nature, while drawing answers from the body Islamic literature, and concurrently connecting, where relevant, with morality of other religions and cultures. The central focus of this thesis is that efforts towards good conduct are not only important for their own sake but are the bedrock for developing oneself both in this world and in the next life. In this light, it lends support to the thesis

³⁶² Belief, Oracle Think Quest Educational Foundation, <http://library.thinkquest.org/C0115620/text/Beliefs.html>, last visited 3rd January 2014. The aboriginal peoples belief system called 'Dreaming' has narrations, stories, art, music, all of which conveys the treatment of the family, the elders, the land, not being greedy, being in harmony with nature etc;

that both worship (*ibadah*) and *riazat* (good conduct) are both inter-woven into the fabric of developing excellence (*ihsan*), which is fundamental to Islam³⁶³.

From a point of review, the focus is on Imam Ghazali's (1058-1111)³⁶⁴ articulation of *Riazat* or efforts in the ways of God, while being complimented by the Moral Theology and Psychology of Ibn Hazm al-Andalusia (994-1064)³⁶⁵. There were several other texts, which were used in order to enrich the review and discussion including the work of Muhuyiddin Ibn Arabi³⁶⁶ on spiritual transformation.

As a prelude to this chapter, the key definitions and the dimensions of morality are explained. This is followed by the inherent qualities of human character, while trying to understand the formation of the character of the child. The question of whether human nature can be changed is then addressed, with the identification of vices and virtues and their accompanying traits. This is underpinned by the functions of Prophethood and its values and, finally, the types of religious training and exercises that are required to shape one's character are expounded. It ends with a detailed discussion followed by a conclusion.

³⁶³ This inter-link between worship and morality forms the main focus of the Doctoral thesis of the author and Ihsan also known as virtuous excellence derives from the famous encounter between the Prophets and Angel Jibril – AN-NAWAWI'S hadith, No:2. A Selection of Authentic (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths. Compiled by Muhammad. A. Adbul-Fattah & Reima Youssif Shakei (Egypt: Dar Al-Manarah, 2004), 107-108

³⁶⁴ Abdul Hamid Al-Ghazali. *Ihya Ulum-Din, Volume III, Translated by Maulana Fazul-Karim*. (New Delhi: Islamic Book Services. 1995, 1-351

³⁶⁵ Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *In Pursuit of Virtue: The Moral Theology and Psychology of Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, with translation of his book Al-Akhlaq wa'l-Siyar by Muhammad Abu Laylah*. 2nd ed. London: Ta Ha Publishers Ltd. 1998)1-214

³⁶⁶ Muhuyiddin Ibn 'Arabi , *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation: The Adornment of the Spiritually Transformed (Hilyat al-Abdal) Translated by Stephen Hirtenstein* (London: Anqa Publishing, London, 2008). 1-57

3.1.2 Key Definitions & Dimensions of Morality: By understanding the key terms and from references in the light of the Qur'an and Hadiths, one is able to build a picture of what Islamic morality means and its link to good conduct in the way of God, which is the essence of this paper. It is key to understand that there is an intrinsic link between good conduct and the state of the soul and its inclinations. Good conduct is half of faith, while bad conduct is the disease of the soul that affects not only this life but that which is beyond³⁶⁷. Here it is seen that behavior affects the soul and this becomes a core of human endeavor from an Islamic perspective given that the Lord Himself says, "To a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this (self) to grow in purity, and truly lost is he who buries it (in darkness)"³⁶⁸. Ibn Hazm³⁶⁹, while explaining what is good conduct, points out that the Arabic word *Khuluq*, with its plural *Akhlaq*, refers to "character, natural disposition or innate temper", where it has been also used to signify "customs or habits" or that which "becomes second nature" as a result of things becoming internalized. He says that *Khuluq* means "morality" and derived from the same root as *khalaqa*, referring to "He created or fashioned"³⁷⁰.

When the Messenger was asked about good conduct he cited in the Qur'an³⁷¹, "Make due allowance for man's nature, and enjoin the doing of what is right; and leave alone all those who choose to remain ignorant." The Prophet(~~ﷺ~~)³⁷² further elaborates that good conduct is to re-establish one's relationship with those from whom one has severed it, and to pardon the one who oppressed you. This is wrapped in with the

³⁶⁷ Imam Ghazali (1995), 51

³⁶⁸ Qur'an, Al-Shams, 9-10

³⁶⁹ Ibn Hazm, (1998):55

³⁷⁰ Ibid, 55

³⁷¹ Qur'an, Al-Araf, 7: 199

³⁷² Imam Ghazali, (1995), 51

statement where he says that “I have been sent to complete the best of conducts” and that the “best in faith of the believers is the best amongst you in good conduct”³⁷³.

Ibn Hazm³⁷⁴ points out that there are two explicit references to the term *khulaq* or moral behavior in the Qur’an. In the first case God makes reference to the people of Prophet Hud, when he says “This (religion of our) is none other than to which our forebears clung”³⁷⁵, where Muhammad Asad³⁷⁶ explains this as “the innate habit of the earlier people (al-awwalin).” The second case underlines the character of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) when the Lord says “for, behold, thou keepest indeed to a sublime way of life”³⁷⁷, where *kuhluq* refers to “a way of life” and which Aisha (r.a.) captures the character of the Prophet (ﷺ) when she said, “his way of life (*khuluq*) was the Qur’an”³⁷⁸, which has been reported by many of the Prophets companions.

3.1.3 Inherent Qualities of Human Character & Formation of a Child’s Character:

There is an intrinsic link between good conduct and the state of the soul and its inclination towards good or bad. This is framed within the context of creation, when the Lord created the Prophet Adam (peace and blessing) and then infused His spirit onto him. From this Imam Ghazali³⁷⁹ alludes that there is an inter-link of the body with the earth and the soul with the creator. This can be further supported by the Qur’an, where God says, “And they will ask about (the nature of) divine inspiration (*ruh*). Say “This

³⁷³ Ibid:52

³⁷⁴ Ibn Hazm, (1998), 56

³⁷⁵ Qur’an, Al-Shuara, 26:137

³⁷⁶ Muhammad Asad, The Meaning and Explanation of the Qur’an (Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur 2011), 678

³⁷⁷ Qur’an, Al-Qalam, 68:4

³⁷⁸ Muhammad Asad (2011), 1057

³⁷⁹ Imam Ghazali, (1995), 54

inspiration (comes) at my Sustainer's behest"³⁸⁰. Thus the human nature is anchored in the soul and actions flow out of it³⁸¹.

In order to understand the above statement, Imam Ghazali³⁸² provides the following categorization, where he says that the nature of the soul is divided into four kinds: i) power of discerning knowledge; ii) power of administration or anger; iii) power of greed; and iv) power of adjustment to the above three natures. Within this framework, when knowledge is able to develop and mature, then it can discern truth from falsehood and good from bad, and thus knowledge is the anchor for good conduct. This is supported by the statement "granting wisdom unto whom He wills; and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted wealth abundant"³⁸³.

Ibn Hazm³⁸⁴ says that when God created the soul there were several capabilities that were embedded in it such as, sense of justice, which acted as a rudder to seek for fairness and truth. He supports this by the statement from the Qur'an³⁸⁵ where God states, "Behold, God enjoins justice, and the doing of good and the generosity towards (one's) fellow-man; and He forbids all that is shameful and all that runs counter to reason as well as envy; (and) exhorts you (repeatedly) so that you might bear (all this) in mind". This is further augmented by a stronger statement: "O You, who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in upholding equity, bearing witness to the truth for the sake of God, even though it be against your own selves or your parents and kinsfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, God's claim takes precedence over (the claims of)

³⁸⁰ Qur'an, Al-Asra, 17:85.

³⁸¹ Imam Ghazali, (1995), 54

³⁸² Ibid, 55

³⁸³ Qur'an, Al- Baqara, 2:269

³⁸⁴ Ibn Hazm (1998),60

³⁸⁵ Qur'an, Al-Nahl, 16: 90

either of them. Do not, then, follow your own desires, lest you swerve from justice...”³⁸⁶

Inherent in the soul is the understanding and reason, which navigates and helps us find the path to virtue, enlightening the way of darkness and enabling us to find out what is right³⁸⁷. Perhaps one of the main dimensions of the Qur’an that non-Muslims, as well as some Muslims, may not readily notice is the emphasis on the use of one’s reason and mind and in this sense, it becomes a religion of inquiry and investigation rather than blind faith. This is illustrated by several verses of the Qur’an, where God says, “Or (dost thou deem thyself equal to) one who devoutly worships (God) throughout the night, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer), ever mindful of the life to come, and hoping for his Sustainer’s grace? Say ‘Can they who know and they who do not know be deemed equal.’”³⁸⁸

The above statement is reinforced by two other verses: firstly, “Give then, this glad tidings to (those of) My servants who listen (closely) to all this is said, and follow the best of it; (for) it is they whom God has graced with His guidance, and it is they who are (truly) endowed with insight!”³⁸⁹ Secondly, “In this behold, there is indeed a reminder for everyone whose heart is wide-awake – that is (everyone who) lends ear with a conscious mind”³⁹⁰. What comes forth from these above mentioned verses is being mindful and abiding by God’s command, which means being in the best of conduct.

³⁸⁶ Qur’an, An Nisa, 4:135

³⁸⁷ Ibn Hazm, (1998), 62

³⁸⁸ Qur’an, Al-Zumar, 39:9.

³⁸⁹ Qur’an, Al-Zumar, 39:17-18

³⁹⁰ Qur’an, Qaf, 50:37

Ibn Hazm³⁹¹ points out that the term *qalb* or heart refers to the mind and not the material heart or the organ, which pumps the blood throughout system. He states that the light of the mind, enables the soul to discern between right and wrong, for example through the avoidance of foolishness and bad desires, including anger, which trigger fanaticism and tribal values. He further points out that obedience to God is the key to all virtue and disobedience to all vices³⁹² and this forms the framework that can be the steering force for us to discern the right from the wrong.

3.1.4 Can Nature be Changed: Imam Ghazali³⁹³ poses the questions, can nature be changed? He goes on to state that it is a mistaken belief to think that it cannot and this he says arises from two main reasons. Firstly, if indeed nature cannot be changed, then stemming education and learning would be on no use, where the Prophet (ﷺ) said “make your conduct good”³⁹⁴. He argues that even the lower animals can be changed by training and in the same light humans can be changed by training, education and habits. In cases of the some of the strong elements, like passion, anger, and pride, which sway us from living aright, these aspects can be managed by applying rules, regulations and control and these can take you to the highest degree of development³⁹⁵.

The second reason³⁹⁶ is the mistaken belief that greed, passion, anger, and pride can be uprooted. These are needed for humans to live, where, for example, if there was no greed for food, this would affect one’s wellbeing. Khwaja Kalam-ud-Din³⁹⁷ lends support to this statement highlighting that the natural impulse in humans are part and

³⁹¹ Ibn Hazm, (1998), 63-64

³⁹² Ibid:63

³⁹³ Imam Ghazali (1995),56

³⁹⁴ Ibid

³⁹⁵ Ibid

³⁹⁶ Ibid

³⁹⁷ Khawaja Kamal-Ud-Din (1924). *The Threshold of Truth: Higher Studies in Islam Series 1* (The Islamic Review Office, The Mosque, Working, UK), 80

parcel of human nature and crushing this instinct, as in some religions, does not produce the balance that is required for life.

3.1.5 Vices & Virtues and its Traits: A powerful statement is made by Khawja Kamal-ud-Din³⁹⁸, where he states that “Nothing, in itself, is good or evil in the moral world.” This also resonates with Immanuel Kant who begins his treatise, *The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, with the famous statement that “Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will”³⁹⁹.

Before we proceed any further, it is necessary to define vice and virtue and normative definitions. Vice is defined⁴⁰⁰ as: i) immoral or wicked behaviour; ii) an open sewer of vice and crime; iii) criminal activities involving prostitution, pornography, or drugs; iv) an immoral or wicked personal characteristic; v) a weakness of character or behavior. Virtue on the contrary is defined as: i) behaviour showing high moral standards; ii) a quality considered morally good or desirable in a person; iii) a good or useful quality of a thing; iv) (archaic) virginity or chastity. The Islamic perspective and definitions of vice and virtue as derived from the Qur’an and the Sunnah, which are articulated by Imam Ghazali⁴⁰¹ and Ibn Hazm⁴⁰², are outlined in Table 3.1.1 below. What is noteworthy is that in some of the vices, which can be seen from a continuum perspective (see Table 3.1.2), where the two extremes are considered vices, while the middle is was considered a virtue.

³⁹⁸ Ibid

³⁹⁹ Kant, Immanuel, COMMENTS ON KANT'S ETHICAL THEORY. Available: <http://www.loyno.edu/~folse/Kant.html>. Last accessed 2nd November 2013

⁴⁰⁰ Oxford University Press. (2013). *Definition of Vice*. Available: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/vice>. Last accessed 8th November 2013.

⁴⁰¹ Imam Ghazali, (1995)

⁴⁰² Ibn Hazm, (1998)

Table 3.1.1 – List of Virtue and Vices

Vices	Virtues
Oppression	Justice
Greed	Patience
Lustful	Loving
Covetousness	Modesty
Deceitful	Truthful
Pride	Humble

Source: Imam Ghazali (1998); Ibn Hazm (1995)

Table 3.1.2 – The Continuum Virtue and Vice

Vices	Virtue	Vices
Hate	Love	Envy
Extravagance	Benevolence (Generosity)	Miserliness
Haughtiness	Bravery	Cowardice
Deception	Wisdom	Genius

Source: Imam Ghazali (1998); Ibn Hazm (1995)

Apart from the vices, Ibn Hazm⁴⁰³ points out seven cardinal or capital sins which are: i) Polytheism or associating others with God; ii) Magic; iii) Killing anyone; iv) Devouring the possessions of orphans; v) Practicing usury; vi) Fleeing from the dangers of war, when it is necessary to defend oneself; and vii) Spreading malicious gossip about an innocent, devout women. Apart from this, he adds others to this list, namely: viii) The utterance of falsehood or false witness; ix) unkindness to one's parents; x) Telling lies about the Prophet (ﷺ); xi) Exposing ones parents to other people's insult; xii) Ingratitude towards God and Others; xiii) Backbiting; xiv) To torture or kill animals except as necessary for food; xv) To deprive a thirsty person of water; and xvi) To steal. Hazarat Ibn Abbas had stretched this to include seventy things, which were categorized as sins.

⁴⁰³ Ibn Hazm (1998),71

In terms of virtue, the Imam Junaid al-Bhagdari as cited in Imam Ghazali⁴⁰⁴ says that there are four acts that will raise a person to the highest ranks and these include patience, modesty, generosity, and good conduct. Hazarat Ibn Abbas (ibid) asked what is honour and he cited the verse in the Qur'an: "Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him"⁴⁰⁵.

With regards to virtues, Ibn Hazm⁴⁰⁶ sees it as multi-faceted, which can be categorized into three major domains, namely, the religious, the intellectual, and the moral. The religious virtue includes religious duties and obedience to God, whereas intellectual virtue encompasses wisdom and good judgment, and moral virtue incorporates courage, prudence, justice, chastity and faithfulness. Having given virtue this broad and multiple scope, Ibn Hazm⁴⁰⁷ however points out that it stems from one main virtue, that is, the disciplining of one's soul to be obedient to God.

There is a clear distinction between vices and virtues and the two extremes result in a disease or a kind of addiction. Thus it is the middle course that brings about equilibrium in the personality. Ibn Hazm⁴⁰⁸ firstly points out that, "Virtue is a medium course between two vices" and provides an example of it where courage is a medium between fear and rashness. Courage in this sense, enables the fighter to stand up and have the courage to fight but not to throw himself into the line of fire, which is rashness. Perhaps, this is the reason for the Prophet (ﷺ) to state that Islam is a middle path, where the Qur'an points out, "And thus have We willed you to be a community of the middle-

⁴⁰⁴ Imam Ghazali, (1995), 54

⁴⁰⁵ Qur'an, Al-Hujurat, 49:13

⁴⁰⁶ Ibn Hazm (1998)

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 85-86

⁴⁰⁸ Ibn Hazm (1998), 86

way”⁴⁰⁹. Muhammaed Assad⁴¹⁰ expounding on this refers to a community that an equitable balance between extremes, while being appreciative of the nature of humans and their possibilities.

Imam Ghazali⁴¹¹ points out that the majority of the people are inclined one way or another, for the middle-way, which he says is a straight path “narrower than a hair and more sharpened edged than a sword”. In the light of this, Khawja Kamal-ud-Din⁴¹² statement’s puts things into perspective: “It is not killing of human passion which makes morality, but the balancing of them to certain measures, which creates healthy morals and produces spirituality.”

3.1.6 The Functions of Prophethood and its Values : Ibn Hazm⁴¹³ discusses the three crucial roles of the Prophets (ﷺ), which he says are required in terms of maintaining ethics and the morality of the soul: i) The teaching extended in terms of the rectification of the morals of the soul, including practicing of justice, generosity, chastity, truthfulness, courage, patience, meekness and mercy, while avoiding the opposites of these virtues; ii) Providing protection against oppressors and transgressors, who would otherwise impact negatively on their lives and property; iii) Guiding people in having a good life in this world and the next, and facilitating them towards achieving salvation. His conclusion in this regard is that God is the source of all knowledge and morality, where he has through various interventions taught man how best to communicate and behave with others, and this has been passed down the line. The Prophets coming from time to time to sustain the message and guide mankind.

⁴⁰⁹ Qur’an, Al-Baqara, 2:143

⁴¹⁰ Muhammad Asad, The Meaning of the Qur’an, (Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 2011), 36

⁴¹¹ Imam Ghazali (1995), 62

⁴¹² Khawja Kamal-ud-Din (1924) 80

⁴¹³ Ibn Hazm (1998), 65-68

3.1.7 Types of Religious Exercises and Training: There are many obstacles in the path of humans especially in terms of aligning with the guidance that God has provided us, so that we can gain nearness to Him. For the Lord himself says, “I have placed a screen in their front and a screen in their back and then I covered them and they do not see”⁴¹⁴. Imam Ghazali⁴¹⁵ points out that for religious persons there are four walls before them:

- i. wall of wealth – one needs to be satisfied with the bare necessities of life;
- ii. wall of honour – moving away from name and fame and all that it brings;
- iii. wall of Mazahabs⁴¹⁶ – differences of opinions in religious matters need to be tolerated and the blind following of a particular sect needs to be avoided; and
- iv. wall of sins – repentance of past sins, restraining from acts of oppression, and compensation to the oppressed should be adhered to, in order to remove one’s sins.

Once the above have been accomplished, then the concerned person needs to be secure within a type of a fort, which will protect him/her from evil or harmful things since the straight path in one and the other paths with their temptations are many. The fort of this path has four walls says Imam Ghazali⁴¹⁷: solitude; silence, which tends to increase the power of the intellect and encourages the fearfulness of God; hunger, which melts the fat of the heart resulting in softness and humility creeping in; and sleeplessness, which makes the heart bright, pure and radiant, while too much sleep makes it dead and hard.

⁴¹⁴ Qur’an, Ya Sin, 36: 9.

⁴¹⁵ Imam Ghazali (1995), 72-74

⁴¹⁶ Mazahabs, here, does not refer to the four Schools of Thought or Law within Islam (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali) but refers to sects and cults, which have grown within Islam where people say only theirs is true.

⁴¹⁷ Imam Ghazali (1995), 74

In a similar vein as Imam Ghazali, Ibn Arabi⁴¹⁸ points out that there are four dimensions of knowledge, which in-effect encompasses the path to God, which impacts on the soul:

- i. Silence (*Samt*) – here silence is meant within two contexts, firstly, the restraining of the tongue and not speaking except about God, and secondly, the silence of the heart, where one refrains from all thoughts of created things. He outlines the benefits of this, when he says that the one whose tongue is silent, even if his heart is not “lightens his burden”. Where both the tongue and the heart are silent, his innermost consciousness is made manifest and he/she becomes intimate with God⁴¹⁹.
- ii. Seclusion (*'uzla*) – as in silence, there are two kinds of seclusion, firstly, withdrawing from physical seclusion and associating with others, and secondly, having no contact with created things in one's heart, where the heart has no room for anyone except God.
- iii. Hunger (*Ju'*) – There are two kinds of hunger, first a voluntary hunger which is of the seeker and, second, the involuntary (obligatory) hunger. The first kind, the ordinary (physical) hunger does nothing else but brings forth a good temperament and body, while hunger in a spiritual sense can bring upon humility, submission, servility, lack of self-importance, indigence, discretion, tranquil emotions and an absence of base thoughts, which is a state of the seeker⁴²⁰.
- iv. Vigilance (*sahar*) – it is inter-linked with hunger and seen as a fruit of it. Two kinds of vigilance are highlighted: the vigil of the eye, where the heart pursues a spiritual intent, while the heart's vigil is awakening from the state of forgetfulness and seeking contemplation.

⁴¹⁸ Ibn Arabi (2008), 20-40

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 32-33

⁴²⁰ Ibid, 36-37

Imam Ghazali⁴²¹ makes an intriguing statement when he asserts that first one has to close the knowledge, which is gained through the five senses, so that clean and pure knowledge can arise to the surface from the bottom of the heart. He goes on to say that except when it is really necessary, there is no need to necessarily gain knowledge through the five senses. In this sense, perceptual reality as we know may or may not be correct, which we term as human error.

Imam Ghazali⁴²² concludes citing the preciousness of the traveller in the path of religion, where one needs to remove the obstacles in one's path, such as the love of wealth, name, and fame, attachment for the world, and the inclinations towards the realm of sin. All of these have to be given up from the heart, requiring a long, hard and sustained effort, in order to achieve a state of nearness to God. Another way he says is the silent *dhikr* or remembrance of God, where the focus on the utterance, where the tongue after much repetition becomes closed and his heart opened. As the Lord says, "Man find peace only in the remembrance of Allah."⁴²³

3.1.8 Discussion: Can humans find moral values or do we need divine providence to find it for us? Human life forms have existed for around 200,000 years⁴²⁴, and there is evidence from various scriptures that there have been Prophets and guides sent to humanity to steer their conduct towards God, thereby providing a moral compass. Even though there is much variation in cultures, some pre-dating the Abrahamic faiths including Islam, some key values of life that seem to be universal and cut across many fabrics of human society. This includes such things as not to kill, not to steal, not to take

⁴²¹ Imam Ghazali (1995), 75

⁴²² Ibid

⁴²³ Sura Ar'Rad: (13:28)

⁴²⁴ Dennis O'Neil. (1999-2012). *The Modern Homo Sapiens*. Available: http://anthro.palomar.edu/homo2/mod_homo_4.htm. Last accessed 9th November 2013

others property, respecting people, their rights and dignity etc. In this sense, there is an innate sense of justice and conduct that has been programmed into us as humans and there have been God-guided people known as Prophets and Sages, who have steered us through time in this direction.

Riazat, meaning good conduct in the way of God, is subsumed with the rubric of Akhlaq or morality, which is a broader concept. This is deeply embedded within the Qur'an and the way of the Prophet (ﷺ), for the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent as a 'mercy to mankind' in order to perfect morals, which is so crucial that even if you immerse yourself in Ibadah (worship) but do not have good conduct, your position becomes weak in the eyes of God.

A Prophetic supplication that inter-links the material with the sacred is, "You have fashioned my body well; please fashion my morality well"⁴²⁵. The description of Aisha (ra) when asked about the Prophet (ﷺ) was that the Qur'an is the conduct of the Messenger of God⁴²⁶, meaning that he translated into reality all of the concepts and practices mentioned in the divine book.

From these above statements it is evident that both virtues and vices are underlined by the Lord, which we are urged to follow to unburden ourselves from our egoist states, while giving due consideration to others being, where justice is spelt out as a key principle of equity and caring for the less fortunate, which forms the bedrock of Islam.

⁴²⁵ The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would supplicate, "O Allah, as You have made my appearance beautiful, make my character beautiful," (Allahumma kama hassanta khalqi fa hassin khuluqi). , Last retrived 15 June 2017, <http://www.virtualmosque.com/personaldvlp/character/beauty-body-image/>

⁴²⁶ Imam Ghazali, 1995),51

Nothing is inherently good or bad and it is the intention that makes it so, expect good will as articulated by Kant⁴²⁷. Here, the reference is to the intention of an individual, their being the prime mover in determining if an action is good or bad, and goodwill referring to universally accepted things, such as intelligence, wit, judgment, courage, resolution, perseverance, power, riches, honor, health etc; Even though the above statement is true within the context of varying environments, there does exist evil in this world, which results from the ways that people or jinns decide to play out the free will that God has given them and for which they are then responsible.

This, then, has implications for how one behaves and this poses the fundamental question, is good or bad conduct a result of one's character, which is derived from nature or can it be nurtured and developed? Even though there is a base character for everyone, Imam Ghazali says that through education and training one can change oneself, as well as through the company that one keeps, as stated by the Prophet (ﷺ).

The extremes of anything are not beneficial and can be harmful. This forms an axiom and it is said that Islam is a middle-path (*ummatan wasathan*). An example is cited, where for example, benevolence is a good trait and represents a middle course between extravagance and miserliness⁴²⁸. This is supported by the Qur'anic statement, "And neither allow the hand to remain shackled to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit) (of thy capacity), lest thou find thyself blamed (by the dependents), or destitute"⁴²⁹. Muhammad Asad⁴³⁰ explains this as a metaphor referring to miserliness, especially in the intent of not helping others. The other extreme of waste is also

⁴²⁷ Immanuel Kant (2003)

⁴²⁸ Ibn Hazm, 57

⁴²⁹ Qur'an, Al-Isra, 17:29

⁴³⁰ Muhammad Asad, (2011), 505

expressed: “Behold, the squanders are, indeed, of the ilk of the satans – in as much as Satan has indeed proved most ungrateful to his Sustainer”⁴³¹.

Within the context of the human realm, what do other theistic and non-theistic religions say about right and wrong conduct? It is important to examine this aspect since we live in a multi-cultural and religious world, and need to be mindful of varying perspectives that have a bearing on society at large. If you look at Buddhism, which is a non-theistic way of life, it lays down ten vices or what are called negative emotions, where there are three actions of the body, four of speech, and three of the mind. The ones of the body are: killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The four of speech are: divisive speech, harsh words, and senseless gossip; while the three mental actions are: covetousness, harmful thoughts and intentions, and wrong views⁴³². This shows that in terms of conduct, most religions outline more or less similar deeds, acts, or thoughts and, in this sense, it has a universal nature that points us to divine guidance and providence, which has somehow filtered through to most faiths.

Within the context of spiritual development, which is concomitant with self-development, perhaps one can assert that a greater level of awareness is brought about by the development of the soul through its various processes of ascension, namely, from its beastly self, to that of the blaming self, to the soul at peace, as cited in the Qur’an and as articulated by Imam Muhasibi⁴³³ and Imam Ghazali⁴³⁴. Why this is so paramount is that good conduct and striving towards God is inter-linked not only with good behavior, but also with the evolution of the soul to better states in achieving nearness to

⁴³¹ Qur’an, Al-Isra, 17:27

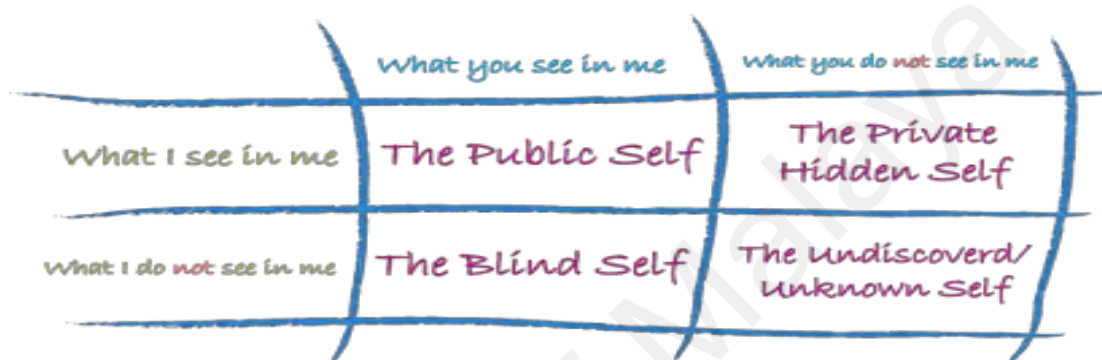
⁴³² Dalai Lama, *The Four Noble Truths: Fundamentals of Buddhist Teachings*, Translated by Geshe Thupten Jinpa; Edited by Dominique Side. 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers, New Delhi, 1998). 80

⁴³³ Margaret Smith, (1935)

⁴³⁴ Imam Ghazali, (1995)

the Lord, where one finds peace.

In psychology the “Johari Window⁴³⁵” as developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham⁴³⁶ outlined below is an inter-psyche and interpersonal communication grid, which provides a basis of creating a greater sense of awareness about oneself as did the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions.



Source: Samuel Lopez de Victoria (2008)

Figure 3.1.3 – Johari Window

This above tool draws out the conscious and the sub-conscious areas of one’s life, what you see about yourself, and what you do not see about yourself or that of which one is not aware, which is also called the blind self. The latter can be known by asking others about yourself, and determining what they observe and which you may not. This is exactly what Hazarat Omar and Hazarat Daud Tai have referred to. In this sense there was a high level of awareness of the self and its goal of development during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), which is lacking today.

⁴³⁵ Samuel Lopez De Victoria, PhD. (2008). *The Johari Window*. Available: <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2008/07/08/the-johari-window>. Last accessed 7th November 2013.

⁴³⁶ Joe Luft and Harry Ingham were researching human personality at the University of California in the 1950's when they devised their Johari Window. Using a form of word derivation normally reserved for suburban house names, they based the title on their two first names. Rather than measuring personality, the Window offers a way of looking at how personality is expressed.

There is a whole system of good intentions, behaviour, and acts of worship, which have been well articulated by several Islamic scholars of repute based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, including Imam Muhasibi⁴³⁷, Imam Ghazali⁴³⁸, Imam Abdullah Ansari⁴³⁹, Imam al-Mawlad⁴⁴⁰, Imam Jilani⁴⁴¹, Ibn Ataullah Iskandari⁴⁴², and several others. Their work deals with the vices of greed, miserliness, wantonness, hatred, envy, ostentation, vanity, anger, fraud, rancor, heedlessness etc, as well as virtues of developing repentance, magnanimity, chivalry, devotion, patience, intention, striving, discipline, refinement, self-examination etc. The Prophet (ﷺ), the Companions, and the Sages who followed them have set up a solid framework, which when combined with proper guidance, good company, and an effort leading one to inner peace has positive implications both for this life and the next.

Bad conduct is not only related to spiritual development but has wider implications as witnessed in the recent global financial crisis⁴⁴³ that had a significant negative impact in many parts of the world. This, for example, was attributed to greed on the part of the lending institutions and rating agencies, which did not follow the rules and encouraged or tolerated fraud on the part of the borrowers falsifying documentations, this being seen as a major causation factor, in addition to the failures of government policies and management.

⁴³⁷ Margret Smith (1935)

⁴³⁸ Imam Ghazali, (1995)

⁴³⁹ Abdu'llah Ansari of Herat, Stations of The Sufi Path: The One Hundred Fields – Sad Maydan, Translated and Introduced by Nahid Angha, (Archetype, Cambridge, UK, 2010), 1-175

⁴⁴⁰ Imam al-Mawlad's Matharat al-Qulub: Purification of the Heart: Signs, Symptoms and Cures of the Spiritual Diseases of the Heart, Translation and Commentary by Hamza Yusuf (Sandalia Inc., USA, 2012) 1-206

⁴⁴¹ Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani, Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth, Al Ghunya li-Talibi Tariq al-Haqq, Translated from Arabic by Muhtar Holland (Al-Baz Publishing, Inc. Hollywood, Florida, USA, 1997) 1-170

⁴⁴² Ibn Ataullah Iskandari, Ikhmaalush Shiyam: Perfection of Morals, Commentary by Muhammad Abdullah Gangohi, Translated by Mujilul Ulama of South Africa (YMMA, South Africa, 2006), 1-352

⁴⁴³ *Richard W. Rahn*; What Caused the Financial Crisis? (15 November 2010, Washington Times). <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/nov/15/what-caused-the-financial-crisis/>, Last visited 3 January 2014.

What is most intriguing when one examines virtues and vices from a perspective of a continuum, the middle position is seen as the most suitable one, where for example, extravagance and miserliness are both vices and benevolence including generosity is considered a virtue. This was also found to be the case with other concepts, which are reflected in the Table 2.5.1. This in a sense, reinforces the view of taking a balanced approach and lays credence to the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement of Islam being a middle-way (*ummatan wasathan*). This position has also been echoed by the Buddha, where he experimented with the extremes and then came to a conclusion of the middle-ground even though the orientations of the religions are different.

One needs to look beyond *riyat* or efforts of good conduct in the way of God and see the bigger picture within the framework of *ahklāq* (morality), which subsumes *riyat*. Thus, the moral compass derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah including *riyat* are instruments to get near to God, and this should form a holistic way within the Islamic perspective. Thus, it needs to be understood that it is not confined to normative definition of *ibadah* (worship) alone, and it combines virtuous conduct towards other human beings and God, which tends to elevate one's soul. It is striking the balance or the middle way (*ummatan wasathan*) that affords one the ability to sail through this life and the next, rather than taking the path of extremes.

There are specific practices within the tradition, which provides a solid psychological basis for checking oneself and re-asserting the state of our morality, including our conduct such as mirroring or emulating others, checking one's faults, the constant remembrance of Allah, seeking forgiveness and forgiving others etc. Thus, one needs to be cognizant that good attitude and behavior is not the *raison d'être* for existing in this

world but is a vehicle for the development of oneself. In this light, it is inter-connected with one's soul and its attributes since good conduct combined with worship (*ibadah*) provides a basis for developing one's spiritual state and stations, in moving on to a higher state of consciousness or nearness to God, which is the essence of our existence.

3.2 - The Spiritual Journey and the Leadership of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ):

Integrating Morality with Worship

3.2.1 Introduction: This section demonstrates through the use of traditional sources that the Prophet (ﷺ) was human being of high caliber and a role-model, who changed the face of humanity. 'Are people truly following his footsteps?' is a question to be reckoned with. Martin Lings aptly portrays the evolving situation, which captures our modern state of life: "One of the functions of the Word-made book, with a view to the primordial religion that Islam claimed to be, was to reawaken in man his primeval sense of wonderment, which with the passage of time, had become dimmed or misdirected"⁴⁴⁴.

3.2.2 The Prophetic Code of Conduct & his Morality

3.2.2.1 His Early Life & its Environment: The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was born in the 6th Century into one of the notable clans in Makkah, an epicentre⁴⁴⁵ from time immemorial, with the focus being the Kaaba where the faithful circumbulate. The religion of Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) with its focus on one God or monotheistic creed had been lost by the 6th Century and the people had turned to many Gods. This was

⁴⁴⁴ Martin Lings reflection of the Al-Qu'ran, Sura Al-Rum, XXX, 30 cited in Muhammad his life based on earliest sources, (Suhail Academy Lahore, 2005), 68

⁴⁴⁵ Mecca it is said was called Bakka, and was seen to have been a place with a sense of justice, where if anyone committed injustice even during the pagan times were expelled from the area. It was called Bakka, it is said "...because it used to break the necks of tyrants when they introduced innovations therein" in Ibn Ishaq, The Life of Muhammad, Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah, Trans. with introduction and notes A. Guillaume (Oxford University Press, 1967, first published in 1955, reissued in 1967 in Pakistan, 27th Impression 2014), 47.

translated into a variety of idols, where people made sacrifices and prayed to them. Figure 3.2.1 provides a spiritual time-line, as well as some key events in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The love of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) reigns high amongst the Muslims, where he is seen as the role model to be emulated. But do Muslims emulate both the Prophet's (ﷺ) inner and outer states? This is a question to be responded to and the answer would lie in their attitude and behavior as will be seen in the ensuing discussion. The shahada or declaration of the Islamic faith itself requires one to testify the Oneness of God and that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Prophet. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) is tied into the fabric of the faith, for he has authenticated the divine message and is thus the Messenger (rasul) who carried the message, as well as a Prophet (nabi) who delivered a new one superseding the older scriptural messages and/or confirming it.

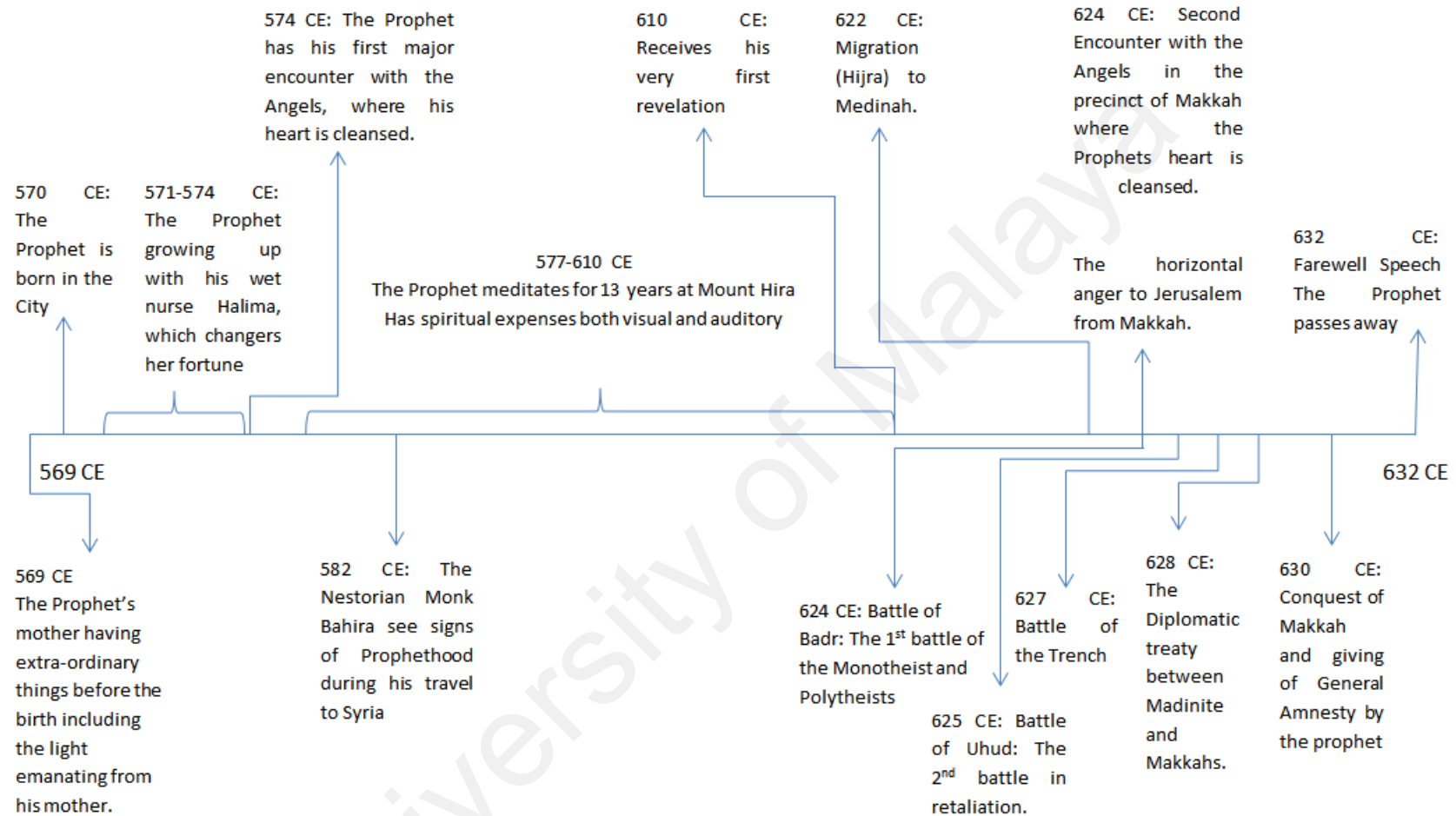


Figure 3.2.1 – Spiritual Time Line & Key Events in the Life of the Prophet (ﷺ)

3.2.3 The Prophet's Code of Conduct & Sense of Morality: The approach in this section, will be to identify the traits of the Prophet (ﷺ), which essentially falls within the framework of Ahklaq (morality) including his code of conduct, outlining its definition and providing supporting evidences to back it up. As the table below 3.2.1 shows the Prophet's (ﷺ) character was infused with virtuous qualities, which manifested in his code of conduct and which is a part of his spiritual legacy. The Islamic ethos is to role-model and to emulate these virtues, to follow the Prophetic model. One of the better ways to capture the behavior of people is in various active situations and the table below presents the character of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his code of conduct at the assemblies (see table 3.2.2). What is apparent from his conduct in assemblies is that he was a person who was very considerate and civil, as contrasted with rulers and leaders who exercised undue authority on their subjects.

Table 3.2.1 - Identifying Some Key Traits of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Adab	Definition	Supporting Evidence
Compassion ⁴⁴⁶	A strong feeling of sympathy for peoples who are suffering and a desire to help them.	Anas bin Maalik says "I remained in the service of the Prophet for ten years. He never once told me 'Oof'. When I did something, he never asked me why did you do that? When I did not do certain task, he never asked me why I did not do it. He had the best of character amongst all people" ⁴⁴⁷ .
Loving ⁴⁴⁸	A feeling or showing love and affection for somebody/ something.	The Prophet's loving nature is manifest in his interaction towards Children, as well as his wives: He used to bring his granddaughter Umama, where "Once or twice he brought her with him to the Mosque perched on his shoulder kept her there while he recited the Qur'an, putting her down before the inclination and prostrations and restoring her to his shoulder when he resumed his upright position" ⁴⁴⁹ .

⁴⁴⁶ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/compassion>; Last accessed 8th October 2014

⁴⁴⁷ Al-Tirmidhi (2002), (328) Hadith Number 3, 362

⁴⁴⁸ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/loving>; Last accessed 8th October 2014

⁴⁴⁹ Ibn Ishaq, VIII, 26

Table 3.2.1 (continued) - Identifying Some Key Traits of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Adab	Definition	Supporting Evidence
Gratitude ⁴⁵⁰	The feeling of being grateful and wanting to express your thanks.	The companion of the Prophet Mughira bin Shu'bah and Abu Huraira said that the Prophet performed lengthy optional prayers (nafl) that his leg became swollen and Mughira said "You undergo such great difficulties, whereas Allah has forgiven your past and future sins." The Prophet responded, "Should I not be a grateful servant?" ⁴⁵¹ .
Equity ⁴⁵²	A situation in which everyone is treated equally.	One of the Prophets' helpers had an issue with a Jew regarding the status of the Prophet vis-à-vis Prophet Moses, where the Prophet cited the Qur'an "We make no distinction between any of them" ⁴⁵³ .
Generosity ⁴⁵⁴	The fact of being generous (willing to give somebody money, gifts, time or kindness freely).	The Prophet on one of his expeditions becoming aware of the situation of poverty of Jabir son of Abdallah from the Ansar's asked to buy his camel and then paid him an ounce of gold and then also returned his camel to his surprise. ⁴⁵⁵
Steadfast ⁴⁵⁶	Not changing in your attitudes or aims.	"Even if you do a little worship be steadfast in it".
Modesty ⁴⁵⁷	The state of being not very large, expensive, important, etc	Abu Sa'eed Khudari says that the Prophet was more bashful than a virgin in her veil. When the Prophet did not like something, it could be seen on his face (Because of the excessive modesty he did not mention it). ⁴⁵⁸
Brave ⁴⁵⁹	(of a person) willing to do things, which are difficult, dangerous or painful; not afraid.	When the Quraysh were preparing a large army to confront the growing but yet small band of Muslims, most opinions were not to leave Medina but the Prophet articulated thus "It is not for a Prophet, when he hath put on his armour, to take it off until God hath judged between him and his enemies. The victory is yours, if ye be steadfast" ⁴⁶⁰ .
Freedom ⁴⁶¹	the right to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you.	When the Prophet's Uncle Abbas sent his slave Aby Rafi as a gift to the Prophet and he set him free instead of making him work for him ⁴⁶² .

⁴⁵⁰ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014 <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/gratitude>; Last accessed 8th October 2014

⁴⁵¹ Al-Tirimidhi (2002), (248) Hadith Number 1, 269; (249), Hadith Number 2, 270; (250), Hadith Number 3, 271

⁴⁵² Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/equity&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>, Last accessed 8th October 2014,

⁴⁵³ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al-Baraqa - 2, Verse 136 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 1, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 410

⁴⁵⁴ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014 <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/generosity>; Last accessed 8th October 2014.

⁴⁵⁵ Lings (2005), 208-209 derived from Ibn Ishaq, 664

⁴⁵⁶ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014 <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/steadfast>; Last accessed 8th October 2014.

⁴⁵⁷ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014 <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/modesty>; Last accessed 8th October 2014.

⁴⁵⁸ At-Tirimidhi (2002), (341) Hadith Number 1, 377

⁴⁵⁹ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014 <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/brave>; Last accessed 8th October 2014,

⁴⁶⁰ Lings (2005), 176 derived from Muhammad Ibn Umar al-Waqidi, 214

⁴⁶¹ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/freedom>; Last accessed 8th October 2014,

⁴⁶² Lings (2005), 168

Table 3.2.1 (continued) - Identifying Some Key Traits of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Adab	Definition	Supporting Evidence
Justice ⁴⁶³	[uncountable] the fair treatment of people.	<p>A pact was established to do away with injustice, when the Prophet was young, where he said "I was present at the house of Abd' Allah bin Judan and so excellent was the pact that I will not exchange my part in it for a herd of red camels, and if now, in Islam, if I was summoned unto it, I will gladly respond"⁴⁶⁴</p> <p>When the Prophet first entered Medina and his Camel alighted at a particular place, he bought the piece of land from the two orphans Sahl and Suhail even though they wanted to give it to him free⁴⁶⁵.</p> <p>After the first battle called Badr, the Prophet gave orders to treat well all captives even though they had to be bound⁴⁶⁶.</p>

3.2.4 The Prophet's Worship & his Spiritual Nature:

3.2.4.1. Knowledge at the Forefront of Spirituality: Knowledge is the central tenant that the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized in his discourse as well as in his actions. The divine revelations form the fountainhead of knowledge and this is best captured in the message that, "And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea, with seven seas behind it to add to it, yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise"⁴⁶⁷. Table 3.2.3 encapsulates the importance of knowledge both for this life and the next. Within the Islamic cosmology knowledge is divided into three main domains, namely, the divine directly from God; the rationale and the intuitive.

⁴⁶³ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/justice>; Last accessed 8th October 2014.

⁴⁶⁴ Lings, (2005), 32 derived from Ibn Ishaq, 86

⁴⁶⁵ Lings (2005), 124

⁴⁶⁶ Lings (2005), 151

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Qur'an, Sura Luqman - 31, Verse 27 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 7, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 590

Table 3.2.2 - Behaviour of the Prophet (ﷺ) at Assemblies

Snapshot	Situation	Supporting Evidence
Profile of the Prophet	Prophet's behaviour in assemblies and his mode of interaction.	Imam Hassan stated that his younger brother Imam Hussain asked about the conduct of the Prophet in his assemblies from his father Imam Ali, who thus described it: i) Was always happy and easy mannered. ii) There was always a smile and sign of happiness on his blessed face. iii) He was soft natured and when people wanted his approval, he easily gave consent.. iv) He did not scream while speaking, nor was he rude or spoke indecently. v) He never over-praised anything nor exceeded in joking, nor was he a miser. vi) He kept away from undesirable language and did not make as if he did not hear something. vii) He completely kept away from three things: from argument, pride and senseless utterance. viii) He did not disagree or insult anyone, nor look for faults of others, he only spoke from that which merits and rewards was attained. ix) When he spoke those present bowed their heads in such a manner, as if there was a bird sitting on their heads. ix) Whenever one spoke to him, the other will keep quiet and listen till he would finish. x) He exercised patience at the harshness and the indecent questions of a traveller. xi) If someone by way of thanks praised him, he would remain silent. xii) He did not interrupt when someone was talking and did not begin speaking when someone was busy speaking.” ⁴⁶⁸ .

Knowledge (*‘Ilm*) and the intellect (*aql*) form core elements within Islamic epistemology or the theory of knowledge and has a much wider scope and connotation than in the Western context, for it has given the “Muslim civilisation its distinctive shape and complexion”⁴⁶⁹. Rosenthal⁴⁷⁰ asserts that there is no other term which has been more pervasive within Islam as *‘Ilm*, in terms of its “depth of meaning and wide incidence of use.”

Within the Islamic context, the Qur’anic narrative was a precursor to the development of knowledge, which was orally learnt and then transformed into a written form. The frequency with which the term *‘Ilm* occurs in the Qur’an, as well as the emphasis given to it by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, without doubt are evidence its prime importance. In

⁴⁶⁸ At-Tirimidhi (2002), Hadith number 9, 369-370

⁴⁶⁹ Franz Rosenthal, Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam, with an Introduction by Dimitri Gutas (Brill, Leiden, Boston, USA, 2007)

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, 2

this context, Rosenthal states that the Prophetic concept of knowledge “set intellectual life of Islam on its basically unchangeable course”⁴⁷¹.

This laying down of the concept, tools and objective enshrined within divine revelation and operationalized by the sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), which laid the platform for the development of the Islamic civilisation⁴⁷². The height of Islamic civilisation took place in what can be termed historically as the medieval period, and it is a misnomer that this period is perceived as backward given the significant contribution Islam made to science, society and the intellectual tradition.

Table 3.2.3 - Knowledge as a Central Tenant of Islam

Type of Knowledge	Supporting Evidence	Reference
Rational	Reason is arrived at by giving attention to things, by developing a surmise or an experience or based on a premise and in some cases reasons is supported by sense perceptions.	Imam Sadr-ad-din al-Qonawi ⁴⁷³
Revelatory	The Qur'an is “the form of knowledge that comprises the variety of possible conditions affecting existing things”, which is also implied as a ‘form of divine attribute of knowledge’ directly from God.	Imam Sadr-ad-din al-Qonawi ⁴⁷⁴
Illumination	Illumination (<i>al-ilham</i>), which is defined “...as the casting of an idea into the intellect (<i>al-aql</i>) by means of overflowing (<i>al-Fayd</i>)”	Imam Sadr-ad-din al-Qonawi ⁴⁷⁵
Intuition	The light that God casts into the breast of humans, which has not derived from rational arguments or rational proofs.	Imam Abu Hamid al Ghazali ⁴⁷⁶
Action Based (Prophetic Sunnah)	The sunnah’s formed the operationalization of this Qur’anic knowledge to every day life by the Prophet. The former was recorded immediately and transmitted through time, while the latter was orally sustained and later on recorded as text.	These are encapsulated in the six major traditional works including: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirimidhi, Ibn Majah, An Nasai, Dawood.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid, 19

⁴⁷² Ibid, 18

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 18

⁴⁷⁴ Imam Sadr-ad-din al-Qonawi, I’ja al-bayan, 48, 54, 57, 219 quoted in Franz Rosenthal, Knowledge Triumphant: the Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam (Leiden: EJ, Brill, 1907), 219

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, 27

⁴⁷⁶ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, Al-Ghazali and Intuition: An Analysis, Trans. and Text of al-Risalah al-Ladunniyyah, Che Zarrina Sa’ari (Department of Aqida and Islamic Thought, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 2007), Malaysia.

Table 3.2.3 (continued) - Knowledge as a Central Tenant of Islam

Type of Knowledge	Supporting Evidence	Reference
Dreams	This refers to the Prophetic dreams that he had, which were visions, which unfolded over time.	Imam Ahmed recorded that Ai'sha stated that "The first thing that began happening with the Messenger of Allah from the revelation was dreams that he would see in his sleep that would come true. He would not see any dream except that it would come true just like the (clearness of) the daybreak in the morning" ⁴⁷⁷ .

This Islamic platform, with its body of knowledge, accompany rules and regulations and mission expanded not only in terms of territory but in increasing the knowledge base of society resulting in a height of intellectual civilisation. This has influenced both Eastern and Western societies and left its mark in history. Knowledge, which took varied forms in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), is evident in every sphere of his life from mundane to the sacred. However, the Prophetic knowledge was pitched at different levels and articulated depending on the level of understanding and the trust of the person concerned. This is evident as outlined below:

- i. Only a part of the spiritual journey was shared with the community, where the Prophet (ﷺ) shared the al-Isra part, which was from Makkah to Jerusalem, while his ascension to the celestial zone, the seven heavens and the meeting with the Lord was only shared with his very close companions and thereafter articulated as a question and answer dialogue.
- ii. Narrated (Abu Huraira – RA): "I have memorized two kinds of knowledge from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). I have propagated one of them to you and if I

⁴⁷⁷ This is a commentary from Ibn Kathir's Tafsir (2003:532) about what followed after the Prophet (ﷺ) received his first revelation.

propagate the second, then my pharynx (throat) will be cut off” (i.e. killed)⁴⁷⁸.

- iii. “Allah will exalt in degrees those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.”

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- iv. Is one who is obedient to Allah, Ana a Al-Layl prostrating and standing fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord? Say: “Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only men of understanding who will remember.”⁴⁸⁰

Having underlined some human nature of the Prophet (ﷺ), there are many dimensions that underscore his spiritual nature and that brings out his uniqueness and sanctifies his mission and journey.

3.2.5 Ibadah (Acts of Worship) : This section deals with some of the key tenants of Islam, which the Prophet (ﷺ) practiced and became his way of life. It also highlights some of the mental states that embodied the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) and that are key in terms of sustaining one’s state of worship and enhancing spiritual progress. The contents in the Table 3.2.4 highlights the five pillars or principles in Islam – The Oneness of God; the ritualistic prayer, the obligatory payment (zakat), fasting and the performance of the journey to Makkah (Hajj).

⁴⁷⁸ Al-Bukhari; Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), Book of Knowledge, Ibid, Chapter 32, 100:103; Compilation Al-Imam Zia-ud-Din Ahmad bin Ahmad in Abdul-Lateef Az-Zuaidi; Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, Riyadh, 1994), 87-88

⁴⁷⁹ Al-Qur’an, Sura Al-Mujadilah - 58, Verse 11 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 9, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 525

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Qur’an, Sura Az-Zumar - 39, Verse 9 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 8, Second Edition, Darussalam, Riyadh, 2003), 366

Table 3.2.4 - Identifying Key Acts of Ibadah (Worship) of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Ibadah	Description	Supporting Evidence
Salah	<p>A ritual set of words and actions taught to the Prophet by Angel Jibril, and sanctioned by God during the Prophet's ascent to heaven.</p> <p>A type of movement and still meditation, with word chanting and silence laced into one.</p>	<p>- The Angel Jibril showed the Prophet how to purify for worship, as well as the various movements in prayer including standing, the inclining, the prostrating and the sitting, with its repeated magnification⁴⁸¹.</p> <p>- In addition to evening and dawn payers, there were voluntary prayers performed following the same pattern.</p> <p>- The Prophet mentioned that one third of the night was blessed "Each night, when a third of it has yet to come, our Lord – the blessed and exalted be He! – descendeth unto the nethermost heaven, and He saith; 'Who calleth onto Me, that I may answer him? Who prayeth unto Me a prayer, that I may grant him it? Who asketh my forgiveness, that I may forgive him?'"⁴⁸².</p> <p>- Abu Hurayrah asked the Prophet, what do you say during the silence between takbir (the start) and the recitation? He said: "I say – O Allah, remove my sins from me as far as You have the East from the West. O Allah, purify me from sins as a white garment is purified from filth. O Allah, wash away my sins with water, snow and hail"⁴⁸³.</p>
Recitation of Quran	The divine scriptures sent to the Prophet, which are to be recited and reflected upon. The celestial sound itself serves as a form of meditation.	<p>- God says, "Or a little more. And Rattil the Quran Tartil (recite slowly to help understanding). Verily, rising at night is better for understanding and more suitable for speech (recitation)"⁴⁸⁴.</p> <p>- The Qur'an enjoined long recitation of its own verses, while the Prophet recommended various litanies of repentance and praise.⁴⁸⁵</p>
Fasting	Abstaining from taking food and drinks but also refers to the restraining of the five senses. A detox for the mind and body.	God says, "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may acquire Taqwa (piety)" ⁴⁸⁶ .
Zakat	An obligatory charity for those who can afford it from their annual savings.	"Islam is erected on five cardinals; bearing witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is God's Messenger; establishing prayers; paying the poor-due (zakat); making the pilgrimage, and fasting the days of the month of Ramadhan" ⁴⁸⁷ .
Hajj-Umra	A ritualistic pilgrimage of Abrahamic tradition, which was formalized and to be done but those who can afford it.	The Prophet only performed two Hajj (one when he was in Makkah and one from Medina), which was combined with his last sermon in Arafat, which was historical since it laid down the rights of different races, as well as women and children. There was only 3 Umra's that he had performed.

⁴⁸¹ Lings (2009), 46

⁴⁸² Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, XIX, 12

⁴⁸³ Al-Muslim, 1245 cited in The Muslim Prayer Encyclopedia: A Complete Guide to Prayers As Taught by the Prophet Muhammad by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, (Goodword Books, 2001), 50

⁴⁸⁴ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al- Muzzammil- 73, Verse 4 and 6 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 10, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 217 and 219.

Muhammad Asad's, Message of the Qur'an (2011:1081) renders the following meaning to the same verse "or add to it (at will); and (during that time) recite the Qur'an calmly and distinctly, with they mind attuned to its meaning.

⁴⁸⁵ Lings (2009), 210-211

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al-Baqarah- 2, Verse 183 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 1, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 494.

Muhammad Asad (2011:46) in his Message of the Qur'an uses the word 'remain conscious of God instead of Taqwa or piety.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibn Daqiq al-'Id (2014) , A Treasury of Hadith: A Commentary on Nawawi's Forty Hadith, Hadith XL, The Cardinals of Islam, 29

Table 3.2.4 (continued) - Identifying Key Acts of Ibadah (Worship) of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Ibadah	Description	Supporting Evidence
Sadaqah	A voluntary act of charity not only referring giving money but also other acts to help people in need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Abu Huraira narrates that the Prophet said “My heirs must not distribute Dinars and Dirhams. From my assets, after deducting the expenditure of my women (family), and the aamils (workers), whatever is left over must be given as sadaqah”⁴⁸⁸.- Rubayyi bint Mu’awwidh bin Af’raa said, “I bought to the Prophet a tray full of dates, and some small cucumbers. The Prophet gave me a handful of jewellery”⁴⁸⁹.

The Prophet (ﷺ) performed these obligatory rites but went much beyond it in the performance of optional acts, which he intensified in most cases beyond the normal call of duty.

3.2.6 States of the Prophet (ﷺ)

One of the most crucial aspects of the Prophet’s life, which is not often discussed and practiced is his reflective inner, as well as the outer states that he maintained (see Table 3.2.5). These are explained below. Imam Ali Ibn Abi Thalib states when asked about the silence of the Messenger of God said, “He was silent for four reasons: forbearance, caution, appraisal and reflection. His appraisal lay in constantly observing and listening to the people. His reflection was upon what would endure and what would vanish.” He had forbearance in his patience. Nothing provocative angered him”⁴⁹⁰. Then he added “He was cautious about four things: in adopting something good which would be followed, in abandoning something bad which would be abandoned, in striving to determine what would be beneficial for his community and in establishing for them what would combine the business of this world and the next”.

⁴⁸⁸ At-Tirmidhi (2002), (386), Hadith number 5, 441

⁴⁸⁹ At-Tirmidhi, (2002), (339), Hadith number 14, 374

⁴⁹⁰ Qadi ‘Iyad Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, Muhammad: Messenger of Allah: Ash-Shifa of Qadi Iyad; Aisha Abdarrahman Bewley (Madhinah Press Granada, Spain in association with Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1991), 83

Table 3.2.5 - Identifying the State of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Ibadah	Description	Supporting Evidence
State of Poverty	Simplicity of living and an austere state of life, with the bare minimum. Involuntary as well as voluntary states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The People of the Bench (Ahl-as-Suffah), were the poor and the refugees, who had their bench at the end of the Prophets dwelling and mosque, where he and his household took responsibility for their welfare⁴⁹¹. - Aisha, the wife of the Prophet reports, “We the family of Muhammad did not light a fire for months in our homes. We sustained ourselves on dates and water”⁴⁹². - Abu Talha says “We complained to the Prophet about the severe pangs of hunger and showed him the stones fastened to our stomachs. A stone was fastened on the stomach of very one of us due to severe hunger. The Prophet showed us two stones fastened onto his stomach”⁴⁹³. - Anas reported that “The Prophet did not store anything for the next day”.

⁴⁹¹ Lings (2005), 167

⁴⁹² At-Tirmidhi (2002), (352) Hadith number 4, 394

⁴⁹³ At-Tirmidhi, (2002), (353), Hadith number 5, 395

Table 3.2.5 (continued) - Identifying the State of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Ibadah	Description	Supporting Evidence
Dhikr	A deeper immersion into mediation, which is both through sounds, as well as done in silence, with focus on the names and attributes of God. The focus on the words, the presence of yourself and on the breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abu Ma'bad, the freed slave of Ibn Abbas said, "In the lifetime of the Prophet, it was the custom to remember Allah (dhikr) by glorifying, praising and magnifying Allah aloud after compulsory congregational Salat (Prayers). Ibn Abbas further said, "When I heard the Dhikr, I would learn that the compulsory congregational Salat (prayer) had ended"⁴⁹⁴. - God says, "And remember the Name of your Lord and (Tabattil - totally) devote yourself to Him with complete devotion. Lord of the East and the West; La Ilaha Huwa, so take Him as a trustee"⁴⁹⁵. - God says, "So when you have accomplished your Manasik (rituals) remember Allah as you remember your forefathers or with far more remembrance"⁴⁹⁶. - God says, "So bear with patience all that they say, and glorify the praises of your Lord, before the rising of the sun and before (its) setting. And during a part of the night (also) glorify His praises also (so likewise) after the prostration"⁴⁹⁷. - Asim ibn Humaid asked Aisha what words would the Prophet begin his prayers and she said that you have asked me a question that no one as asked before and said, "When he stood up he uttered takbir (Allah is great) ten times, then uttered 'Praise be to Allah' ten times, and 'Glory be to Allah' ten times, and 'There is no God but Allah' ten times, and said 'O Allah, forgive me and guide me, and give me sustenance, and keep me well; and he sought refuge in Allah from the hardship of standing before Allah on the Day of Judgment"⁴⁹⁸. - Abu Huraira narrates that the Prophet stated that, "The example of the one who remembers (glorifies the Praises of) his Lord (Allah) in comparison to the one who does not remember (glorify the Praises of) his Lord, is that of a living creature compared to a dead one"⁴⁹⁹.

⁴⁹⁴ Al-Bukhari; Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), Book on the Characteristics of Salah, Ibid, Chapter 43, 478; Compilation Al-Imam Zia-ud-Din Ahmad bin Ahmad in Abdul-Lateef Az-Zuaidi; Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, Riyad, 1994), 257-258

⁴⁹⁵ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al-Muzazamil - 73, Verse 8-9 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 10, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 218. Muhammad Asad's (2011:1082) translate it as "But (whether by night or by day) remember thy Sustainer's name, and devote thyself unto Him with utter devotion. The Sustainer of the east and west (is He): there is no deity save Him: hence, ascribe thy fate".

⁴⁹⁶ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al-Baqara - 2, Verse 200 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 1, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 567

⁴⁹⁷ Al-Qur'an, Sura Qaf - 50, Verse 39-40 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 9, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 242

⁴⁹⁸ Abu Dawood, 765, who also cited that this was narrated by Khalid ibn Ma'dan from Rabi'ah al-Jarashi on the authority of A'isha in The Muslim Prayer Encyclopedia: A Complete Guide to Prayers As Taught by the Prophet Muhammad by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, (Goodword Books, 2001), 49-50

⁴⁹⁹ Al-Bukhari; Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), Book of Invocations, Ibid, Chapter 20, 2089; Compilation Al-Imam Zia-ud-Din Ahmad bin Ahmad in Abdul-Lateef Az-Zuaidi; Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, Riyad, 1994), 979

Table 3.2.5 (continued) - Identifying the State of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Ibadah	Description	Supporting Evidence
Silence	Remaining without speaking and does not confine itself to words only but also the silence of the heart, without all its cluttering.	God says, “Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord. In fear and hope, and they spend out of that We have bestowed on them.” ⁵⁰⁰
Non-Attachment to Material things	Not craving for material things and only confining oneself to essential needs, while accepting losses with magnanimity.	<p>- Ibn Abbas reports on the Prophet that, “At the time of great need a women presented him with a sheet and he wore it as he was in need for it. A person came and asked him for it, he presented the sheet to the person”⁵⁰¹.</p> <p>- Ibn Abbas reports on the Prophet, “Taking of loans and fulfilling the needs of something others when the creditors came, and if something had come from somewhere, he would pay the debts, and did not go home till everything was given to the needy”⁵⁰².</p> <p>- On the authority of Abu'l Abbas Sahl Ibn Sa'd al-Sa'idi narrates that a person came to the Prophet and said, “O Messenger of Allah, tell me about an act that if I were to perform it, God will love me and also people will love me.” The Prophet said, “Be unattached to this world, and God will love you; and be unattached to what people possess and they will love you”⁵⁰³.</p> <p>- On the authority of the Son of Umar, the Prophet took him by his shoulder and said, “Be in this World as a stranger or a traveller passing through”⁵⁰⁴.</p> <p>- Ali Ibn Abi Thalib sums up Prophet's guidance, “Do for this world as if to live for ever and for the next world as if to die upon the morrow”, and “To be always ready to depart is to be detached” and “Be in this world as a stranger or as a passer-by”⁵⁰⁵.</p>
Keeping Vigil ⁵⁰⁶	A period of time when people stay awake, esp. at night, in order to watch a sick person, say prayers, protest, etc.	<p>- God says, “O you wrapped up! Stand (to pray) all night, except a little. Half of it or less than that, a little...”⁵⁰⁷</p> <p>- The Companions of the Prophet took the above commandment as applying to themselves and they would keep long vigils⁵⁰⁸.</p> <p>- The Prophet stated an ideal to be followed: a third of the 24 hour cycle should be for worship, work and family, with the last third including time spent in sleep and at meals⁵⁰⁹.</p>

⁵⁰⁰ Al-Qur'an, Sura As-Sajdah - 32, Verse 16 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 7, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 614

⁵⁰¹ At-Thirimidhi (2002), Hadith 336, Number 11, 371

⁵⁰² Ibid

⁵⁰³ Ibn Daqiq al-'Id (2014), Hadith XXXI, Genuine Non-Attachment, 125

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, Hadith XL, This World is a means and a plantation for the afterlife,; 161

⁵⁰⁵ Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhar in Lings (2005), 327

⁵⁰⁶ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/vigil>; Last accessed 8th October 2014,

⁵⁰⁷ Al-Qur'an, Sura Al- Muzzammil – 1-3, Verse 200 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 10, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 217.

Muhammad Asad's (2011:1081) points out that the term wrapped can be understood as in a literal sense as wrapped up in a cloak or in a metaphorical sense as being wrapped up in sleep or even wrapped up in oneself. He goes on to state that what ever may be the linguistic sense “it implies a call to heightened consciousness and deeper spiritual awareness on the part of the Prophet (ﷺ)”.

⁵⁰⁸ Lings (2009), 49

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, 210

Table 3.2.5 (continued) - Identifying the State of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Type of Ibadah	Description	Supporting Evidence
State of Mindfulness	Being in a state of awareness of the things that one does without being judgmental. Within the Islamic context is means concerted focus on God, without any other forms of thought.	When Hanzalah was describing the different states of the mind, when he was in the presence of the Prophet and then going out into the world. The Prophet stated, “Verily this day ye are at a station which is rich in reward and rich in treasure, for him who is mindful of what he is about and who is devoted to this soul thereunto in patience and certainty and earnestness and effort” ⁵¹⁰ .
Contentment	A feeling of happiness or satisfaction	The Prophet insisted that, “All is well with the faithful whatever the circumstances” ⁵¹² .
Physicality ⁵¹³	The quality of being physical rather than emotional or spiritual.	Fit and well set with a flat stomach. He commented on one of the companions, “the bulge would look better on someone else”.
Cleanliness ⁵¹⁴	The state of being clean or the habit of keeping things clean.	- God says, “O you enveloped in garments! Arise and warn! And magnify your Lord! And purify your garments! And keep away from Ar-Rujz (idols)! ⁵¹⁵ ” - The companions did not only perform the ablution but also ensure that their garments were free of defilement.

Some key aspects are outlined in the tables 3.2.5 above, namely, state of poverty; keeping vigil (especially night vigil); maintaining silence unless required; non-attachment to things or being non-materialistic; being in a state of mindfulness or heightened sense of awareness; being contented or satisfied with states and situations; maintaining a state of cleanliness and being physically fit and working, as well as practicing martial arts. What is apparent is that apart from the obligatory and ritualistic

⁵¹⁰ Lings (2005:178) derived from Al-Waqidi, 221

⁵¹¹ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/contentment; Last accessed 8th October 2014,

⁵¹² Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasa'i, a traditionalist and one of the six major hadith collectors in Lings (2005:)), 290

⁵¹³ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/physicality>, Last accessed 8th October 2014.

⁵¹⁴ Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary; Oxford University Press, 2014; <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/cleanliness>; Last accessed 8th October 2014.

⁵¹⁵ Al-Qu'ran, Sura 74, Al-Muddaththir, Verse, 1-5, (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 10, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003, 239

acts of worship, the Prophet (ﷺ) maintained certain states especially of the mind and a healthy physical constitution, which were a part of his inner and outer states.

3.2.7 Spiritual Leadership and the Prophet (ﷺ): It will be useful to outline two dominant leadership styles⁵¹⁶ to enhance our understanding and this includes the following:

Transactional Leadership: i) Contingency Reward: the leader in this case provides the follower with rewards as per the contract or energy expended and ii) management by exception, where the leader does not provide direction so long as goals are being met. This type of leadership is based on series of exchanges and is contingent on reward.

Transformative leadership in contrast is based on i) charisma, where the leader instills respect and has a mission in hand, ii) Individual consideration, whereby space is provided for followers to develop themselves and iii) Intellectual stimulation, facilitating new avenues of thinking to go beyond current norms.

Louis Fry's spirituality⁵¹⁷ in the workplace forms a good fit for exploring and building the causal model for the spiritual order under study. Fry sums up his position in this regard:

“Spiritual leadership is a causal leadership theory for organizational transformation designed to create an intrinsically motivated, learning organization. The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity. Spiritual leadership comprises the values, attitudes, and behaviors

⁵¹⁶ John D. Politis, QFD: The Role of Various Leadership Styles, *Leadership and Organisational Management Journal*, 24, 4, (2003), pages 183

⁵¹⁷ Louis Fry T, Steve Vitucci, Marie Cedillo, Spiritual leadership and army transformation: Theory, measurement, and establishing a baseline, *Leadership Quarterly*, No: 16 (2005), p 836

that one must adopt in intrinsically motivating one's self and others so that both have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership—i.e. they experience meaning in their lives, have a sense of making a difference, and feel understood and appreciated”.

One key reason for examining spiritually oriented leadership is that the leaders have been found to be more effective and transformational in nature than leadership in other settings⁵¹⁸. Motivation, which is spiritually oriented and faith based is identified as a ‘distinguished variable’, which is the cause of much of the transformational leadership⁵¹⁹. The sense of commitment of these types of leaders are said to be derived from their ‘own conscience and internalized values’ derived from a spiritual sense of connectivity with a higher power⁵²⁰. As seen in the discussions as articulated above, the best illustration has been the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who was able to transform the people from their state of ignorance to a more enlightened state.

In Ibn Khaldun's⁵²¹ articulation, work or craft is seen as a metaphor, whereby one personally grows both his/her social roles and technical skills. Within the Islamic context, worship and services are intrinsically linked, where as we have seen in the example of the Prophet, that good works and right conduct (see chapter 2.5, 2.6) are seen as that which shapes the soul or the inner self towards good and leads to better connectivity with God. The rapidly expanding societies of the world, with its global outreach have called for a re-examination of organizational structure and its roles and responsibilities. In this sense, a more holistic leadership is called for, which “integrates

⁵¹⁸ V.U. Druskat discussing about transformational and transactional leadership cited in Laura Reave, Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16 (2005), 664

⁵¹⁹ Laura Reave, 2005, 664

⁵²⁰ B.M. Bass discussing about transformational leadership in Laura Reave, Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16 (2005), 664-665

⁵²¹ Ibn Khaldun was the 13th Century Sociologist with several works to his credit, with the most famous being *Mukkadima* cited in Mark Kriger and Yvonne Seng, Leadership with inner meaning: A contingency theory of leadership based on the worldviews of five religions; *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16 (2005), 779

the four fundamental arenas that define the essence of human existence – the body (physical), mind (logical/rational), heart (emotions, feelings), and spirit”⁵²².

It is argued that spiritual leadership is necessary for the transformation, as well as the success of learning organisations, and in this light “spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs to both leader and follower for spiritual survival so they become more organizationally committed and productive”⁵²³. In this context, spiritual leadership is defined as “comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviours that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership”⁵²⁴. The qualities that are often associated with spiritual leadership pertaining to Louis Fry spirituality in the work place model are outlined in the Table 3.2.6 below, which subsume the characteristics of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Table 3.2.6⁵²⁵ – Qualities of Spiritual Leadership

Vision	Altruistic Love	Hope/Faith
Broad appeal to key stakeholders Defines the destination and journey Reflects high ideals Encourages hope/faith Establishes a standard of excellence	Forgiveness Kindness Integrity Empathy/Compassion Honesty Patience Courage Trust/Loyalty Humility	Endurance Perseverance Do what it takes Stretch goals Expectation of reward/Victory

⁵²² R.S. Moxley paper on Leadership and Spirit cited in Towards a theory of spiritual leadership, Louis W. Fry, The Leadership Quarterly, 14, (2003), 694

⁵²³ Ibid, 694

⁵²⁴ Ibid, 694-695

⁵²⁵ Ibid, 695

3.2.8 Discussion: The Prophet (ﷺ) by virtue of his ‘triad relationships’ (see Figure 3.2.2), was able to transform himself, others, as well as society at large, through reverberating his message as an ‘art of living’ globally. Some have taken this message and fully transformed themselves and others, while some have taken the minimum or else have misunderstood it. In this light, the Prophet (ﷺ) who the Qur’an says “We have sent but as a mercy to mankind”⁵²⁶, forged within Islam the outer and the inner tradition of self-development, with its varying tools and methods. This led to the transformation of the pagan society⁵²⁷ into a unified whole, with its emphasis on building moral character and developing one’s inner consciousness.

This is best understood in merging together of three essential components as outlined in Figure 3.2.2, namely the intra-relationship with oneself, the inter-relationship with one’s community, and the supra-relationship with one’s God. This can be called the triad relationships.

⁵²⁶ Al-Qur’an, Sura Anbiyaa, 21: (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 6, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 107

⁵²⁷ Reza Aslan in his work on ‘No God but God’ (Arrow Books, London, 2011), 8 states that ‘paganism has not been properly articulated citing Max Muller’s definition of henotheism: the belief in a single High God, without necessarily rejecting the existence of the other, subordinate gods. He states that 6th Century Arabia that henotheism had become a central belief of the majority, who not only accepted Allah as their High God but equated it with the god Yahweh of the Jews’. The pagans were polytheist and it is said that there were about 360 idols in and around the Kabaa.

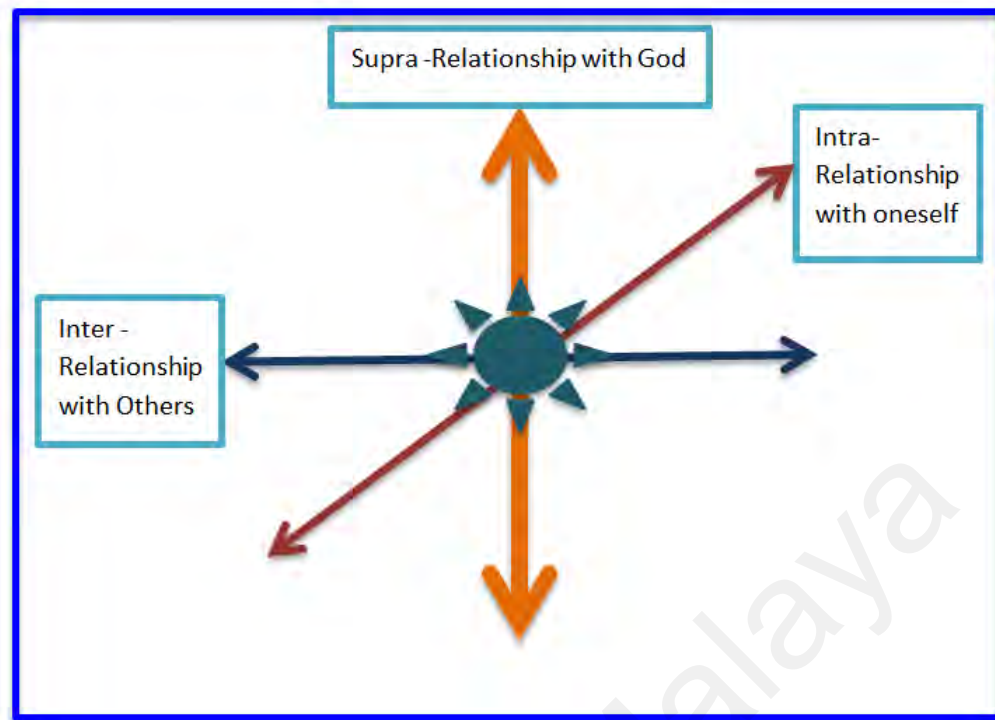


Figure 3.2.2: The Triad Relationship with God, Man & Community

This above mentioned Triad is most crucial for the self-development since if you do not develop yourself how can you develop others? This is a challenge, a struggle (jihad), which goes on and that needs to be well-managed for otherwise the inner self could lead one to destruction. In a similar vein, there is the challenge of the relationship with others including communities, enabling one to go beyond one's selfish self and help those in need and preventing social conflict and disruption of society, for example, as in the 'Arab Spring'. Then the finale is one's relationship with and sustained dialogue with God, which enables one to connect and strengthen oneself. This is the concept of the triad that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught that led to a shift in the paradigm of human development, which transformed individuals and societies.

Tarik Ramadan⁵²⁸ encapsulates the essence of the above: “a teaching method relying on gentleness, on common sense of individuals, and on their understanding of commands, the Prophet (ﷺ) also strove to teach how to put their instincts to sleep, so to seek, and how to resort to diversion to escape evil temptations...that a moral sense should be developed not through interdiction and sanction but gradually, gently, exactly, understandingly and at a deep level.”

3.2.8.1 The Status of the Prophet (ﷺ) from an Islamic Perspective: The Prophetic journey is a spiritual one, where ones intention, orientation, thoughts and practices were adhered to resulting in a pristine state, enlightening his soul and demonstrating how one prepares for traversing into the next domain or life. The life processes, its manifestations and the impact the Prophet (ﷺ) had on life and society points to an extraordinary personality, who was highly spiritual, who reached the highest stage with the rare occurrence of his meeting with the Lord (al-isra wal mihraj). The Prophet (ﷺ) was above normal human standards. This is testified by the divine scriptures itself, where God states that, “And verily you on an exalted character”⁵²⁹ and as evidenced in his extraordinary life.

3.2.8.2 A Shift in the Human Development Paradigm: The key principles that are derived from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) are outlined in Figure 3.2.3, which changed the course of history and caused a shift in the paradigm of human development. This is then followed by expounding on each of the traditions that has had an impact on human well-being.

⁵²⁸ Tarik Ramadan’s *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad* (Penguin Books, London, 2009), 16-17

⁵²⁹ Al-Qu’ran, Sura 68, Verse 4, (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 7, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 100

The Prophet (ﷺ) stated, “Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (i.e., reformed), the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart⁵³⁰.” The heart is inter-changeably used with the soul in the Qur’an. This forms the essence of the inter-link of all of these traditions, that is, to mould and shape the outer and specifically the inner states of our being, which has a vital carrier the Soul, and which is prone to both good and bad, tilting towards one’s orientation and action. Thus, dealing with one’s ego states and inner conflicts needs an array of methods and tools and the infusion of the spiritual and psychological-emotional, with the intellectual, inter-relational and the physical enables one to do so and move towards a more balanced life.

Each of the below mentioned (see Figure 3.2.3) are what can be called a tradition, given that each one has a range of tools and its own narrative. This is drawn from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) and is expounded below.



Figure 3.2.3 - Key Dimensions of Human Well Being

Intellectual Tradition: Knowledge was a basis of action: as Rosenthal (2007) points out in his thesis ‘The Triumphant of Knowledge’, the emphasis on knowledge in Islam changed the whole course of history, and resulted in a civilization that contributed to many facets of endeavor, both human and scientific. What is apparent in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the transmission of knowledge in its myriad forms including:

⁵³⁰ As narrated by An-Nu’man ibn Bashir and recorded in Sahih Bukhari.

Revelation (Wahi - Qu'ran); Illumination (Hadith Qudsi – inspired), Intuition (Ludunniah), Sunnah (Prophetic words and actions), Dreams (Visions) and Rational (Ijithihad – by way of reasoning). These dense layers of knowledge embedded themselves within the fabric of Islam and laid the foundation and the pathway for its development. Thus, the faith does not ask one to follow it blindly but with understanding of its purpose and content.

Spiritual Tradition: Righteousness (Birr) and Piety (Taqwa): Both of these traits were central to the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) be it in the light of worship (Ibadah) (see Table 3.2.4) or code of conduct (adab) (see Table 3.2.5) and it is key to understanding what it enshrines. Sheikh Al-Qayyim⁵³¹ defines them as Birr representing integrity and excellence of a human being, where one cannot achieve any virtue without it, while Taqwa is a means and a way leading to birr, that is, obeying Allah with iman and ihtisab (counting on Allah's promised reward for, a given deed). He points out that deed or actions should emanate "from pure iman and not from customs, desires or pursuit of (worldly) praise or status"⁵³² in order to be counted being acts of obedience that brings one close to God. He point out too the difference between them, as Birr is the goal and Taqwa is the means to it.

Contemplation and Mindfulness: The obligatory prayer being one such spiritual act, which the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed with complete absorption or 'khusu', which is a state of mindfulness, where as the Jibril Hadith stated in the context of Ihsan: "Worship God as you see Him (mushahada), while you see him not, He sees you (muraqaba)"⁵³³. This is a state of witnessing within the movement meditative practice, namely, the prayer. This is

⁵³¹ Ibn-Qayyim (2007), 6-10

⁵³² Ibid, 8

⁵³³ Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, (2014); 20-22

then done with concentration and stillness in its various states and graceful movements, while contemplative on sounds of prayer and focusing on the spot of prostration. Chapter 2.3 outlines the tangible health benefits of worship including on the body composition⁵³⁴, the heart⁵³⁵ and the brain⁵³⁶. In this light a whole new science has emerged called Neurotheology.⁵³⁷

The Prophet (ﷺ) referred to prayers as “the coolness of my eyes”⁵³⁸. His combination of the obligatory prayers with the optional prayers, which he did intensively devoting a third of the night for this devotional, so much so that his leg used to swell from it and when queried by his wife he responded, “Should I not be a grateful slave?”⁵³⁹ It is stated that, “When anything distressed the Prophet (ﷺ) he prayed”⁵⁴⁰ as a recourse to align himself with the Lord and seek his guidance.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used the term mindfulness, which is now frequently used in relation to meditation and neuro-science when he articulated according to his companion Al-Agharr al-Muzani when he said, “My heart is invaded by unmindfulness, and I ask Allah’s pardon a hundred times in the day”⁵⁴¹. This effectively implies the focus that we need to have on being mindful, that is, God consciousness, which forms the quintessential of worship and one’s state of being.

⁵³⁴ Ibrahim, F., Abas, A. B. W., & Ng, S. C. (2008).

⁵³⁵ Ibrahim, F., & Ahmad, W. W. (2008, January). Study of heart rate changes in different salat’s positions. In *4th Kuala Lumpur International Conference on Biomedical Engineering 2008*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 687-690.

⁵³⁶ Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18.

⁵³⁷ Andre Newberg and Eugene D’Aquili, *Neuropsychology of Religious & Spiritual Experience*, in *Cognitive Models and Spiritual Maps*, Eds Jensine Andersen and Robert K.C. Forman (Imprint Academic, United Kingdom, 2000), 255

⁵³⁸ Hadith recorded by Ahmed and Nasa’i

⁵³⁹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim cited in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Uddat as-sabirin wa dhakhirat ash-shakirin*; Patience and Gratitude, Nasiruddin al-Khattab Trans. (TA-HA, UK Publication, 1997), 64

⁵⁴⁰ Abu Dawood (1314) and cited in *The Muslim Prayer Encyclopedia: A Complete Guide to Prayers As Taught by the Prophet Muhammad* by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, Goodword Books, 2001, 24

⁵⁴¹ Abu Dawood 1510 and cited in *The Muslim Prayer Encyclopedia: A Complete Guide to Prayers As Taught by the Prophet Muhammad* by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, Goodword Books, 2001, 38-39

Fasting or Abstinence as a method of restraint: Fasting of the Prophet (ﷺ) was not only confined to the obligatory fast but to optional fasts that was undertaken twice weekly combined with other fasts that occurred during the special months of the Islamic journey. Food as a general rule was only eaten when hungry and as required by the body and there was a general level of consciences not to over-eat. He followed the divine injunction of “Fasting as been ordained for you as it as been for those before you, so that you may be conscious of God”⁵⁴².

Ritual practices as a point of raising God Consciousness: The Hajj, which is an obligatory pilgrimage, with the proviso if one could afford it, and Umra, the lesser pilgrimage being optional. The Prophet (ﷺ) performed only one Hajj and two Umras during his lifetime, an act in which all pilgrims wear the most basis attire, all in white, which is effectively a shroud. This act itself is where one effectively leaves all material possessions behind and gathers to seek oneness, while purifying oneself of all of the sins and psychological baggage that one carries during the lifetime. All of the duas or supplication of the Prophet (ﷺ) during the Hajj, as well as Umra signifies this, for example, the unitary focus to the exclusion of all else: “Here I am, O Allah! Here I am! There is no one who is Your partner, here I am! Surely all praise and blessings are Yours, and dominion. You are without companion”⁵⁴³. This then is a state of mindful contemplation of the Lord of the East and West, the Universal; the God of all.

Inter-Relationship Tradition: Being Chivalrous: The Prophet’s (ﷺ) profound generosity of both obligatory and voluntary giving was to such an extent that all that he received was exhausted by nightfall. This characterises him as being non-materialistic

⁵⁴² Al-Quran, Sura Baqara, 2, Verse 184 (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 1, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003),

⁵⁴³ Talbiya, the often recited phrase during both Hajj (bigger pilgrimage) and Umra (smaller pilgrimage).

and someone who did not live for this world but the next. Chivalry, which forms a quintessential part of Islam, was signified by the Prophet (ﷺ) by his generosity, the courage to do things including non-fearing of poverty and hospitality, which is embodied in his statement “what you love for yourself you should love for your brother”⁵⁴⁴, in order to have proper faith or imaan. In this light, it denotes parting with your wealth, with what you love, debasing your ego and greed, so that you do not hoard or become miserly, which is one of the ruinous traits that affect negatively one’s soul.

Combining Worship and Morality: Good Code of Conduct: All of the above mentioned acts, which forms the pillars of the faith, are done routinely but yet in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), we see the depth as well as the breath of his worship. His life is laced with acts of worship and devotion. However, one sees that this is not confined to strictly acts of worship, where even the ‘muashaaka’ or the interactive actions with humans, as well as daily actions of life, are churned into a state of art by the virtuous characteristics. Thus, it is not only appropriate to worship but also that one’s conduct and behavior should be aligned or in harmony, not harming or hurting people or other beings unnecessarily.

As evidenced in Tables 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.5, there were spectrums of virtuous traits. In this light, the nexus between ibadah-worship and ahklaq-morality, which subsumes one’s code of conduct is the key, as seen in the model of the Prophet (ﷺ). What has been outlined is a combination of an extensive range of devotional acts done with intensity and commitment.

⁵⁴⁴ An-Nawawi 40 Hadiths in Ibn Daqiq al-‘Id (2014) , Hadith XXI, The Perfection of Faith;66

Psychological Tradition: The Mental States of the Prophet: While recognizing the value of proper worship and its inter-link with one's virtuous code of conduct, one of the most crucial aspects of human existence, which is increasingly backed up by hard scientific and empirical data, is that 'the reaction that you receive and the coping of life is based on how you react to people and situations'. In this light, the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) lays down the mental and the conscious states that underpinned his life, which are most crucial if one is to emulate him and prepare for the next life:

- i. God consciousness: This is the thread that wove through the Prophet's (ﷺ) life, which pervaded his being and thoughts, be it in prayer, meditation, human transaction, life with his family, and in the battles that he had to overcome.
- ii. State of Poverty: This was not only a state when there was no food but a conscious state that he chose to have that facilitates both spiritual and material life. The Prophetic formula that he used was "one third food, one third water and one third empty."
- iii. Being contented: A smile on the face of the Prophet (ﷺ) was commonly seen and he participated in conversation and joined in the laughter but not excessively. He was satisfied with what he had and frequently thanked God in all situations without complaining.
- iv. Being Mindful: Whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) did be in a state of worship or in his daily routine, he was mindful of what he did. This is manifest in his prayer, where the concept of "Kushu" or absorption in partaking of food or drinks, which is laced with prayers and being one with oneself.
- v. Being Grateful: He said, "If one is not grateful to a human being one cannot be grateful to God" and whenever something significant happened he went down in prostration to God.

- vi. Having Fortitude: His patience knew no bounds and this can be termed as ‘sabrūn jāmeelun’ or beautiful patience, which characterized the Prophet Jacob (عليه السلام), who trustingly waited for his lost son the Prophet Joseph (عليه السلام). This is manifest in the agreements that he forged with his enemies, minority groups, and in his general dealing with people from all walks of life.
- vii. Cultivating Silence: It is known that the Prophet would speak only when necessary and otherwise maintained and cultivated silence. The highly recommended night vigil and early morning prayers and dhikr is characteristic of this, as well as not talking up until ‘fajr’ or morning prayers was a sunnah or practice of the Prophet (عليه السلام).
- viii. Being Non-Materialistic & Non-Attached: One aspect that is repeatedly seen in the life of the Prophet (عليه السلام) is his sharing of material wealth and his spiritual rites and blessings. When he received money or goods, he would distribute it all before he returned home, while never accepting charity. His non-attachment is evident in this orientation of ‘being a traveler or a stranger in this World’, whereby, underlining the transient nature of life and things. This is backed by the rendition of his Companion Anas, where he said that the Prophet (عليه السلام) drew a line on the sand and said, “This is man, this is his hope and this is his the moment of death. As he is in the process of hoping that the closest line gets to him, which is his moment of death surrounding him⁵⁴⁵.” The Prophet (عليه السلام) said that, “The Love of this World is the beginning of every sin”⁵⁴⁶, which is backed up by a recipe for a non-stressful life, where “The person who is unattached to this World puts his heart at rest in this world and in the next, while the one who desires this world tires his heart in this world and the next”⁵⁴⁷.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibn Daqiq al-‘Id, (2014) Hadith XL, This World is a means and a plantation for the afterlife, 164

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid, Hadith XXXI, Genuine Non-Attachment, 2014; 126

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid, Hadith XXXI, Genuine Non-Attachment, 126

Physical Tradition: Being Physically Fit: One of the things that has gone amiss these days is that there is little focus on physical wellbeing and sense of physical fitness that was seen in the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. This was characterized by him having a flat stomach, his participation in martial arts including archery, swordsmanship, and him racing his wife. This aligns with the dictum ‘a healthy body is a healthy mind’ and vice versa, which needs careful reflection in this day and age of excessive consumption and lack of exercise.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Objectives & Context: This research aims to gain first hand insight into a spiritual Order by investigating the framework of practices with a focus on the Sheikh and the seekers. This research will attempt to model the excellence of their leaders and discern the various practices, as well as the code of conduct, which impact on the wellbeing of the seekers. The claims, counter-claims, as well as the primary and specific objectives, have been outlined in chapter 1.

The above type and nature of research will require building a sensitive approach and methodology that is able to effectively capture data, analyses it, as well as interpret it, within the different theoretical domains. In order to accomplish this, a general approach to this research is firstly outlined in order to set the framework within which this research will be carried out. This is followed by presenting the various methodologies that this research will utilize, while elaborating on the methods, tools and type of sample. Then, the sampling frame and the criteria for selecting relevant organizations are outlined. The section that follows, deals with how is the data analysed and finally the ethics pertaining to this research are articulated.

4.2 General Approach & Methodology: Within the religious-scientific nexus.

4.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach: Qualitative research “can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations”⁵⁴⁸, before the theory is built based on field research. It enables to investigate and generate a phenomenon grounded within a theoretical reality. Factoring in the nature and the complexity of the research on spiritual oriented

⁵⁴⁸ An Expanded Source Book: Qualitative Data Analysis, 2nd Edition, Matthew B. Miles and Micheal. A. Huberman (Sage Publications, London, 1994), 1

Organisations; such approaches are “used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about little is yet known”⁵⁴⁹.

4.2.2 The Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA): The predominant approach for the purposes of this research will be the IPA, given the nature of the research, which calls for mapping out subjective experiences and thinking patterns of people within the spiritual Order. Smith and Osborne⁵⁵⁰ capture the essence of IPA:

“The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings, particular experiences, events, states hold for participants. The approach is phenomenological in that it involves detailed examination of the participant’s life-world; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. At the same time, IPA also emphasizes that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process.”

There is no social world beyond people’s perceptions and interpretations. It is subjectivist, that is, subjectively understanding the actions based on which social reality is defined. A critique that should be borne in mind in this type of research is that there is an inclination to use loosely structured emergent, inductively grounded approach to data gathering⁵⁵¹. Thus a tighter design is called for which enables one to delineate constructs with clarity and focus on that which is able to be verified and validated.

It is expected that the combination of research methods involving IPA, which subsumes ‘Clean Language and Symbolic Modeling’ and NS-NLP (Neuro-Semantics–Neuro

⁵⁴⁹ Corbin and Strauss, 1990, 19

⁵⁵⁰ Jonathan.A. Smith and Mike Osborne’s exposition of the Interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA). They point out that IPA uses hermeneutics (understanding how language is used) and symbolic interactionism (making sense of the personal and social world of others and how meanings are constructed). They, however, caution to not accepting all what they individual says but being critical in understanding things as they transpire, chapter 4, 2003:53

⁵⁵¹ An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis, Matthew, 2nd Edition, B. Miles and Micheal. A. Huberman (Sage Publication, London), 17

Linguistic Programming), in addition to the use of Survey methodology, which is more positivist in its approach. This will enable it to yield data, which has multiple viewpoints and is therefore well grounded within its reality and constitutes a form of methodological triangulation. These types of approaches are outlined below. This, however, is cast within the Islamic tradition, whereby it is compared and contrasted against this framework of the divine scriptures and the sayings and the words of the Prophet, which largely covers universalities, albeit also some specificities.

4.2.3 Research Design and Strategy: The research strategy for this study was to combine both the survey method (Sample Questionnaire in Appendix 1A), as well as in-depth interviews (Appendix 1D), thus using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The focus was on measuring frequencies and cross-tabulation (Appendix 1C for charts-graphs), while qualitative analysis and qualitative coding used included priority ranking and Venn diagramming.

4.2.4 Methodologies: Four methodologies, which are ‘discreet but inter-related aspects for a thorough going methodology on religion⁵⁵²’ are: doctrinal analysis (based on divine writ from the Prophets-Messengers); Social Expression (tradition, rituals, faith based, and cultural norms and behavior); Subjective Experience (religious and spiritual experiences) and Scientific (Objective) Research.

This research adapts a combined approach, namely relevant doctrinal analysis of the Qur’an and Sunnah, social expressions of the Sheikh and the seekers, subjective experiences of the seekers, and in a limited way scientific (Objective) survey research

⁵⁵² Methodological Pluralism in the Study of Religion: How the Study of Consciousness and Mapping Spiritual Experiences Can Reshape Religious Methodology’, Jensine Anersen and Robert K.C. Forman (Journal of Consciousness Studies, 7, 11-12, 2000) 7-14

on the seekers. This research uses the thematic analysis approach, which subsumes the interpretivist-phenomenological (also called the constructivist), thus covering the social expression and the subjective experience on one hand. On the other, that is, the scientific (objective) research is the positivistic approach (subsumes empiricism and realism), with its limited use, which is built on the qualitative data generated by the former.

The four-fold methodology, with its predominant IPA approach includes related models and methods as outlined in the Table 4.1 below. The first is the Prophetic Model based on the divine writ and the way of life of the Prophet, which has been fully covered in Chapter 2.6 of this thesis. The second two methods reflected in the Table 4.1, namely, Symbolic Modeling & Clean Language (see Appendix 1B for its related directional questionnaire) and Meta Programme Modeling (Appendix 1C) originates from cognitive sciences, systems theory and NS-NLP.

Except for the first and the last models and methodologies, all of the others can be categorized under the general rubric of ‘grounded theory approach’ since they rely on data being generated from the subjects or clients based on which theories, concepts, and principles are built. Only the survey method can be classed as being positivist and a different method from the other three, with this providing a varying perspective on the same research. Each of these approaches and methods are briefly outlined.

Table 4.1 – The Models Used for this Research

Meta-Models	Approach/Psychologies	Purpose
The Divine Writ & the Prophetic Model	Religio-Spiritual Psychology	Comparing and contrasting against the divine writ (the Qur'an) and the sayings and actions of the Prophet.
Symbolic Modeling (SM) & Clean Language (CL)	Interpretative-Phenomenological – Constructivist	Modeling the Leader-Sheikh and the Seekers-Followers in the respective Organisations
Meta-Profiling-Neuro-Semantics-Neuro-Linguistic Programme	Interpretative-Phenomenological – Constructivist	Modeling some key aspects of the Leader-Sheikh
Quantitative - Survey	Positivistic (Empiricism & Realism)	The survey is constructed based on the key concepts/themes derived from the comprehensive literature review to elicit independent views of the seekers.

4.3 Islamically guided Methodology: The divine scriptures (Qur'an), the actions and saying of the Prophet (Hadiths), as well as eminent Islamic Scholarship on the subject of spirituality and development of the self, will be used to guide this research. Apart from the divine transmission of knowledge (revelatory – wahy), which were confined to the Prophets, from an Islamic viewpoint there are two fundamental domains of knowledge transmission, namely, the senses through which we receive and then translate this into action, which includes the cognitive faculties, and secondly, the heart (qalb) and the soul (nafs) through which knowledge is unraveled the inspiration, intuition and illumination falls with this domain. These are cited in the scriptures and sayings of the Prophet. as outlined below: “And God has brought you forth from your mothers’ womb knowing nothing – but He has endowed you with hearing (sama), and sight (basar), and minds (fuad), so that you have cause to be grateful”⁵⁵³. The objective of purifying the heart-soul is rekindling of divine knowledge, where “Could then, one whose bosom God has opened wide with willingness towards self-surrender unto Him, so that he is illuminated by a light (that flows) from his Sustainer....”⁵⁵⁴.

⁵⁵³ Chapter (Sura) 16, Al-Nahl, Verse 78, The Message of the Qur'an, Translated and Explained by Mohammed Asad, Islamic Book Trust, Malaysia, 2011

⁵⁵⁴ Al-Qur'an, Chapter (Sura)...., Al-Zumr, 39:22

4.4 The Process of Modeling: Some key pointers from the clean language approach on modeling were used as outlined below:

Modeling Human Excellence: The question that is prompted is what is modeling? It is a process that happens over a period of time and involves two key aspects⁵⁵⁵: observing someone who is achieving something and establishing a map or sequence (a model) of what they are doing. There are three fundamental types of modeling of human experience, namely, sensory, conceptual and symbolic.

Sensory⁵⁵⁶: In sensory experiences, the senses scan both the internal and external environment and record their different states. This is done through the visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), and gustatory (taste), as well as through kinesthetic and internal bodily movements.

Conceptual⁵⁵⁷: Concept, categories, and classes are ways of understanding abstract and complex ideas. It is a method of making sense of the world and the environment around us and this is done through constructing things in our minds. They are perceived as a higher order state than the sensory and the material world that surrounds us.

⁵⁵⁵ Symbolic Modeling; Penny Tompkins and James Lawley; <http://www.cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/5/1/Symbolic-Modelling-an-overview/Page1.html>, last accessed on 16th February 2015

⁵⁵⁶ Metaphors in Mind: Transformation through symbolic modeling, James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, (The Developing Company Press, UK, 2000), 4

⁵⁵⁷ Metaphors in Mind, 4

Symbolic⁵⁵⁸: This is a way that the mind is able to draw from the material-sensory to represent the conceptual and abstract forms, which is shared with others in order to make them understand a state of mind. In this light, it uses symbols and does not only relate to symbols as such but to ‘connecting with a pattern that has personal significance’.

Deriving from the work of Robert Dilts of ‘logical levels of experiences’⁵⁵⁹, modeling is categorized into six levels, with similarities being paired together for the following reasons:

- i. Environment and behaviour given that they are observable through the five senses – seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting, which pertains to sensory modeling;
- ii. Beliefs and capabilities are mental processes perceivable through inference and therefore required conceptual descriptions, thus this related to conceptual modeling;
- iii. Spirituality and identity form into a pair given that the most common way of realizing this is through metaphors and symbols and thus symbolic modeling.

Table 4.2 - Relationship between Levels, Modeling and Models⁵⁶⁰

Logical Levels	Types of Modeling	Models
Spiritual & Identity	Metaphoric Modeling	Metaphoric Model
Beliefs & Capabilities	Conceptual Modeling	Strategies of Genius
Behaviour & Environment	Symbolic Modeling	Meta-Models

⁵⁵⁸ Metaphors in Mind, 4-5

⁵⁵⁹ Symbolic Modeling, Levels of Modeling, Robert Dilts work, Clean Language Connection; Penny Tompkins and James Lawley; <http://www.cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/5/2/Symbolic-Modelling-an-overview/Page2.html>. Last accessed 16th February 2015

⁵⁶⁰ Symbolic Modeling, Levels of Modeling, Robert Dilts work, Clean Language Connection; Penny Tompkins and James Lawley; <http://www.cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/5/2/Symbolic-Modelling-an-overview/Page2.html>. Last accessed 16th February 2015

This research will attempt to use all three-paired categorization above, where the sensory and the conceptual being derived from the use of NS-NLP, while symbols modeling being generated through the use of a process called SM (Symbolic Modeling) and CL (Clean Language). Each of these is elaborated below.

4.5 Symbolic Modeling: Lawley and Tompkins⁵⁶¹ based on the work of David Grove on CL, developed the concept of SM, which included CL – a questioning model designed for working with the metaphoric and symbolic behavior domain of experience. This enables ones to “facilitate people to identify, develop, explore, and evolve their metaphors using the basic Clean Language questions”⁵⁶². Appendix 1B provides basic questions that are fundamental to CL and that facilitates the process of eliciting data from those who are interviewed.

Research has shown that “we not only speak and gesture in metaphor, we think and act on the basis of our metaphors”⁵⁶³. Metaphors are known to be a source of creativity, but they could be an obstacle for productive behavior and help build self-destructive patterns. SM⁵⁶⁴ has been found to be very effective in working with diverse fields but is particularly suited for the bigger issues of life. i.e. finding a sense of purpose as well as identity and spiritual levels, as in the case of this research.

In SM⁵⁶⁵, as in any change process has the medium i.e. metaphor, a method i.e. modeling, and a means i.e. clean language. In conjunction with each other they can be

⁵⁶¹ Symbolic Modelling: Emergent change through Metaphors and Clean Language; James Lawley and Penny Tompkins in *Innovations in NLP For Challenging Times*; Eds. Michael Hall and Shelle Rose Charvet, (Crown House Publishing, UK, 2011), 61

⁵⁶² Ibid

⁵⁶³ Ibid, 62

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, 63

used for the following purposes: i) To model successful strategies and states of excellence or to identify potential harmful states; ii) To facilitate change; iii) To facilitate individuals and groups to create new metaphors.

SM is different to other forms in that it firstly focuses on modeling people's metaphors, secondly uses CL to do it, and thirdly enables the clients to self-model. In essence, this type of modeling is "an exploration of the client's metaphoric model of the world from their perspective, within their perceptual time and space, using their words and non-verbals"⁵⁶⁶.

4.5.1 Sampling Methods & Tools: SM Process: As the Figure⁵⁶⁷ 4.1 below indicates the three essential components of the SM are Metaphors, Modeling and CL itself. Each of these is outlined below:

A. Metaphor (The Medium): Metaphors are medium of expressions, which is easy to understand but which are complex in themselves. "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another"⁵⁶⁸. It is a deep mode of explaining things but presented in a simplistic form, for example, reaching for the stars means that one is aiming very high, while stating that we feel like a fish out of water implies that we are out of place. It is a way of "carrying across our experience of the physical into the abstract mental realm"⁵⁶⁹. Metaphors are composed of a number of inter-related components, which combine to form it and where they can be a whole or a

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, 64-65

⁵⁶⁷ A Symbolic Modelling Outline; <http://www.cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/266/1/Modelling-Robert-Dilts-Modelling/Page1.html>

⁵⁶⁸ Metaphors We Live By; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in James Lawley & Penny Tompkins, *Metaphors in Mind: Transformation Through Symbolic Modelling* (The Developing Company Press, London, 2000), 6

⁵⁶⁹ James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Symbolic Modelling: Emergent Change through Metaphor and Clean Language*, in *Innovations in NLP: For Challenging Times* by Michael Hall and Shelle Rose Charvet Eds (Crown House Publishing, UK, 2010), 64

part of it – words, objects, mental images, and the like⁵⁷⁰. Metaphors can be classified into four domains as shown in Figure 4.1.

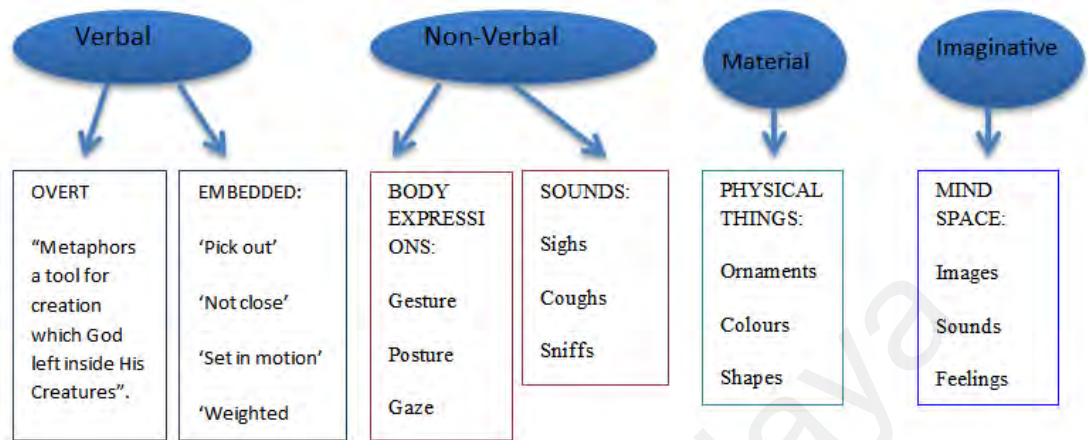


Figure 4.1 - Ways to Express Symbolic Domains⁵⁷¹

These four domains and six varying categories represent a spectrum of the way humans communicate and the faculties that we are endowed with. The symbolic expressions together with the subject-clients metaphors converge to form the 'Metaphor Landscape'⁵⁷². In the light of SM the interest is "in the personal nature of symbols and metaphors... [where] where "this idiosyncratic symbolism connects a person to their history, their spiritual nature, their sense of destiny and to the 'unknown or hidden' aspects of their life"⁵⁷³. Metaphor "makes the intangible tangible, it embodies relationships and patterns, and captures the essential nature of experience"⁵⁷⁴. There are things that cannot be expressed simply as they involve relationships organized in a certain way and thus its unique features are captured in "inexpressibility, vividness and compactness"⁵⁷⁵, giving the mind a way of dealing with complex experiences.

⁵⁷⁰ James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Metaphors in Mind*, 7 and see footnote 4

⁵⁷¹ James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Metaphors in Mind*, 10

⁵⁷² Ibid

⁵⁷³ James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Metaphors in Mind*, 7

⁵⁷⁴ James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Symbolic Modeling*, 64

⁵⁷⁵ Andrew Ortony cited in James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Metaphors in Mind*, 9 and see footnote 9.



Figure 4.2 - A Symbolic Modeling Outline

The criticality of metaphors to life is best expressed in the sense that “we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously by means of metaphors”⁵⁷⁶. Metaphors could be one of the many ways that we organize and structure our thought processes.

4.5.2 Modeling (The Method): Research in general tries to draw out generalities and this forms a deductive process of starting from the big picture and then generating data in order to arrive at a conclusion about it. On the other hand, SM within the grounded theory perspective “seeks out the distinctive and idiosyncratic organization of each individual’s map of the world”⁵⁷⁷ and from this perspective, it is a process of inductive research, where data is derived from the individual or organisations aimed at building the bigger picture, or generalizing to the sample or the subject in question.

The key focus of SM is the exploration of the client’s metaphoric world as seen from their perspective, within the context of their sense of time and space, which is manifested using their own words and non-verbal aspects. This is best represented in David Grove’s articulation of the process, where he called it “a trialogue between

⁵⁷⁶ George Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* cited in James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, *Metaphors in Mind*, and see footnote 10

⁵⁷⁷ James Lawry and Penny Tompkins *Symbolic Modeling*, 63

facilitator, client, and their metaphor landscape”⁵⁷⁸. In this process of understanding the world of others, it is essential to set aside one’s own perceptual space⁵⁷⁹, in order to be able to empathize with that of the client, and not to mix it with one’s own.

There are four fundamental modeling processes⁵⁸⁰ that have been identified and that are used in the modeling process. These are outlined below:

Identifying: To begin mapping out aspects that are important from a client’s perspective, which can be an attribute, a symbol, a relationship, a pattern, a context. It is appropriate to give an identity to it so that it becomes distinguishable.

Develop Form: To explore and deepen one’s understanding of what has been identified, which makes it more amenable, so as to gain a more comprehensive insight. This will mean elaborating on its attributes, so that it emerges more fully.

Relate over Time: To put it into context, whereby one is able to discern the sequence of events – before-during-after – as well as examine the temporal relationships, namely, cause, effect, contingency, pre-condition, provenance (place of origin) and expectancy.

Relate across Space: To come to an understanding of the relationships or intra-relationships vis-à-vis separate things, places, frames, contexts etc.

The illustration of this process and how elements inter-relate is given in Figure 4.3.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid, 65

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid

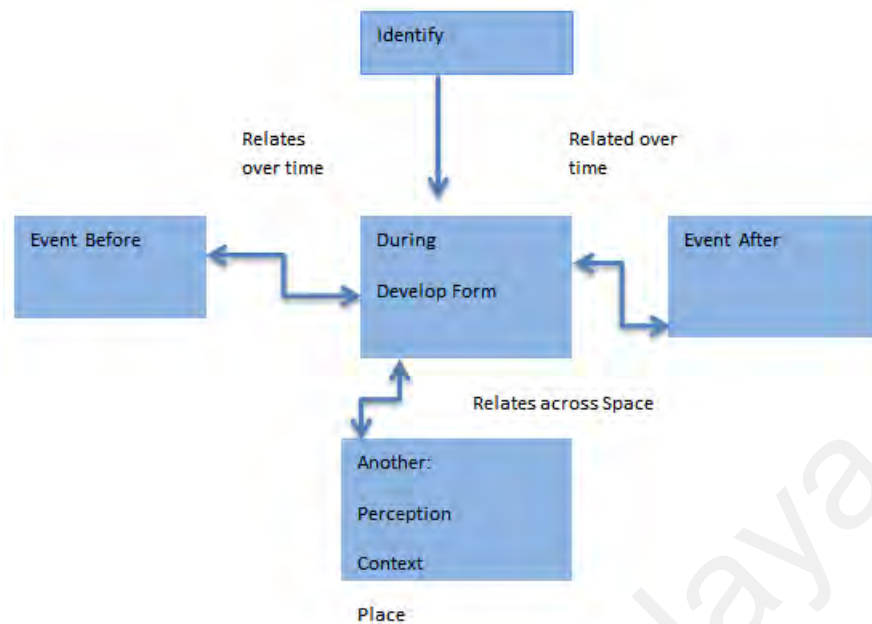


Figure 4.3 – Basic Process of Modeling

4.5.2.1 Clean Language (Means): Three functions of CL have been identified, namely, to acknowledge, orient, and send the client on a quest, with its four components – the syntax, vocal qualities, gestures, and clean questions. It is noted that CL “influences and directs attention”⁵⁸¹, and importantly it is termed as ‘clean’ since “it is sourced in the client’s exact vocabulary, it is consistent with the logic of their metaphors.” (Appendix 1B). CL⁵⁸² has been found to: ‘enhance the rigour and authenticity of interview-based qualitative research’. “This can enhance confidence in the validity of the findings of qualitative research and promote ethical research practice by reducing the risk of misrepresenting participants” and has further “demonstrated the potential of Clean Language as a specific, systematic methods for eliciting naturally occurring metaphors in order to provide in-depth understanding of a person’s inner symbolic world.”

⁵⁸¹ Ibid, 67

⁵⁸² Ibid: 642

4.5.2.2 Sampling Models & Templates: SM & CL Questionnaire Model: The clean language questionnaire is a non-intrusive technique of questioning, which facilitates the interviewee to reflect on their responses and build on it iteratively. In this sense, it does not interject the thinking of the interviewer and bring related biases into the process of information flow. In Appendix 1B, it will be noted that there are basic questions, which have been categorized under the four modeling process. These are the key questions around which the interviews, the focus group discussions, and the key informant interviews have taken place. Thus SM and CL were used as a means through which communication was carried out with the Leader-Sheikh, as well as with the Members of these Organisations, in order to map out their perceptions, as well as the impact that these practices are having on their wellbeing. Some key questions and pointers for the Leader-Sheikh and the Members are in Appendix 1B respectively.

4.5.2.3 Outcome Vector: Having the outcome in mind during the course of the interview was vital for the researcher in the light of the research. However, given the non-intrusive nature of the SM and CL process⁵⁸³, there can be a tendency to explain the facilitator's experiences or metaphors rather than the subject-clients. There is methodology to bring the subject back on-course through a series of questions, called vectors⁵⁸⁴. It is for the researcher to bring the information flow back to the content of the topic by connecting to the process that is ongoing.

It is by asking a series of purposeful questions that one is able to develop the subject's perception to the full⁵⁸⁵. Given the evolving situation, when one has gained knowledge of the name, location, spatio-temporal characteristics of the symbols of the subject, then

⁵⁸³ Clean Approaches for Coaches, 104

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, 106

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, 106

a new vector or route can be prompted with a series of questions. In other cases, the subject himself/herself after having exhausted the description of the symbol or wanting to take on a new symbol will trigger a new pathway, which the researcher needs to be aware of.

The researcher bore in mind the question, ‘whose outcome is it?’ The researcher had the purpose of putting the subject in the driving seat but facilitating the course towards the outcome, which in this case are the research objectives. Once the subject becomes ‘psychoactive, then they will begin to self model and take over the driving’⁵⁸⁶. It is a fine line, between tapping into the experiences and outcome of the subject modeling and experience and keeping the researcher’s objectives in mind.

4.6 Neuro-Semantic & Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NS-NLP)

NLP is the “study the structure of subjective experience”⁵⁸⁷ underlined by NS⁵⁸⁸, which deals with the underpinning values, belief systems, and the meaning of life. The use of NS-NLP has a repertoire of meta-programmes especially for Modeling individuals (see Appendix 1C). These spectrum of categorises have been developed through original research by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, who identified an approach to examine ‘the deeper structure of human behavior, and a set of explicit models, applications, and tools derived from this approach’⁵⁸⁹. This was further elaborated by Michael Hall to include Neuro-Semantics. This four meta-programme domain enables a higher level categorization from the primary state of thinking, emotion, choice or meanings to

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, 104

⁵⁸⁷ Figuring Out People, Reading People Using Meta-Programme, 2nd Editions, Michael Hall and Bob G. Bodenhamer (Crown Plaza Publishing, UK, 2009)

⁵⁸⁸ Figuring Out People, Reading People Using Meta-Programme, 2nd Editions, Michael Hall and Bob G. Bodenhamer (Crown Plaza Publishing, UK, 2009)

⁵⁸⁹ Robert Dilts cited in Innovations in NLP for Challenging Times, L. Michael Hall and Shelle Rose Charvet Eds (Crown Plaza Publishing, UK, 2011)

another state called the meta-state, which effectively becomes the perceptual filters through which one views the world.

4.6.1 Sampling Methods & Tools: One of the programmes within NS-NLP is called Meta-Profiling. This is a process of understanding the thinking patterns of individuals. It is categorized into four main areas, namely the cognitive (thinking), emotional (feeling), conative (choices) and semantics (meanings). The aim in the case of this research model was the excellence of the Leader-Sheikh and then on the members utilizing the NS-NLP reflected in Appendix 1C. For the purpose of the research, the eliciting of data for the meta-programming outlined below was only confined to the Sheikh-Exemplar suggesting that NLP-NS was used in a limited sense as compared to the complexity involved in the whole modeling process.

4.6.2 Sampling Models & Templates: Template of Meta-Programmes (Appendix 1C)
– The purpose of this framework of meta-programmes is to understanding the repertoire of perceptual filters and patterns that one utilizes, when one communicates, encodes and decodes information. These will be used as benchmarks for the purpose of understanding and categorizing the dialogue with the Leaders-Sheikhs of the Order.

There could be cross-cultural issues given that both the meta-programme and CL was developed within a Western context and is in this case being applied to the Malaysia-Muslim context. This research is therefore one of the few, if not the first research, which used both of the above methods to elicit data at least in the Malaysian context.

4.6.3 Overall Format for Modeling Template for the Leader-Sheikh: Through the dialogue developed with the interviewees, their relevant perceptual filters or meta-programmes were identified, in addition to mapping their motivation patterns including values, beliefs and assumptions, as well as their strategies of communication. This was translated into a workable format as shown in Appendix 1D, which enables the provision of a summation and sequencing of the process of modeling. This was the basis for developing the Meta modeling for the Leaders-Sheikhs based on their meta-programmes (see Appendix 1C and Chapter 5 for its discussion) and the different processes involved.

4.7 Survey Approach: In the positivist approach, the core assumption is that facts can be collected on the social world independent of how people would interpret them, and can be assessed using a positivistic instrumentation or methodology⁵⁹⁰. In this research, the researcher is detached from the topic under investigation, thereby presuming an objective position, whereby data is collected aimed at drawing out generalisations and explaining human behavior through the use of theories⁵⁹¹.

The survey methodology derived from the positivistic approach will be used once the data collected from those under the IPA approach has been conceptualized. This will enable the researcher to have greater clarity of the concepts, categories and traits. The survey methodology will be built using the responses from the subjects-clients, for it will be more relevant having been generated inductively. It is anticipated that this will strengthen the data generated (see Appendix 1A).

⁵⁹⁰ Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process, 2nd Edition (Open University Press, UK, 1997), 10-11

⁵⁹¹ Ibid, 9

The interviewees only had a few introductory questions, and then the interviewee's narrative was used to build the data, thus maintaining the originality and minimizing the biases of the researcher. The questionnaire (Appendix 1A) formulated for the survey was constructed based on the comprehensive literature review carried out from chapter 2.1 to 2.6. The questionnaire was initially constructed by the researcher and pre-tested with a few colleagues and thereafter finalized. The initial questionnaire was undertaken in the English language and then translated into Bahasa Melayu. This was then re-checked with a senior member of the Order, revised, and then finalized before being dispensed.

4.8 Sampling Method, Frame & Criteria of Selection of Organisations: The Focus will be on selected seekers of the Spiritual Order as per the criteria given below and their Leaders-Sheikhs.

4.8.1 Sampling Method & Sampling Frame:

4.8.1.1 Method: The method used in this case is 'selective sampling' from qualitative research, whereby a sample due to its inherent nature is selected for study. In this case an Islamic based Spiritual oriented Order is selected: that is, one within the Islamic framework, or related faith based, and one that practices what it preaches. Given that these Orders operate in a low key manner and are not commercially oriented (nor in general want to market themselves), the introduction to it was through key intermediaries, who are known to the Orders or who are otherwise seekers in it. However, selection criteria have been developed, in order to ensure that these Orders have a history and are a functional entity, having the characteristics as shown below.

4.8.1.2 Selection Criteria for the Order: The Order will be selected based on the following criteria, in that it: i) should be an Order of the Islamic faith, which should be both preaching as well as practicing its message - a Community of Practice (CoP)⁵⁹²; ii) should not be confined to one area, and be from different geographic areas, thus having a spatial dimension; iii) should be a functional organisation, which has been in existence for at least one generation, thus representing a stable organization; iv) should have an outreach based on its ability to function and attract members, thus being a functional and an effective organisation.

4.8.2 Sampling Frame: Level of the Order: The approach to identifying and gaining access to the selected spiritual Order for the study was through a key informant who presented two spiritual Orders having different lineages and orientations. Initially the researcher approached two Orders in Malaysia, but it was only possible to gain access to one, namely, Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah, given that there was no response from the other (chapter 5 presents full detail of the Order). In this sense, it was a qualitative sample but it was not purposeful, as the researcher himself had no choice in the selection of the Order.

4.8.3 Level of the Self-Individual: There are two groups of seekers, namely, the general seekers who belong to the Order and the residents of the rehabilitation center, which has become a part of the Order, and which has a group of resident seekers within it. The resident seekers are drug addicts/ex-drug addicts and HIV patients: a couple of these were trans-gender. The interviews and the survey were administered to both

⁵⁹² This ties in with the concept of 'situated learning' an important theoretical treatise pioneered by Jean Lave, anthropologist, and Etienne Wenger, computer scientist. They push forward the notion of situated learning, that is, learning is fundamentally a social process and not solely in the learner's head. The authors maintain that learning viewed as situated activity has as its central defining characteristic a process they call legitimate peripheral participation. Lave, J. & Wenger, E. *Situated Learning*, Cambridge University Press, 1991

groups within the Order, with particular attention paid to the resident seekers. In terms of the interaction and the interview process, the IPA was essentially adapted in order to explore the personal and spiritual world of the seekers and the Sheikh. The survey data constructed from the literature review augmented the data generated from the interviews. Section 5.3.9 provides more details on the sample size and related details within the Order.

The researcher took part in selected acts of ritual worship with the resident seekers, taking part in two of their general dhikr (remembrance of God) ceremonies, and attending one lecture, while having intense discussions with the seekers who were members. Apart from this, three of the books written by the Sheikh were obtained and relevant sections marked out. These were translated from Bahasa Melayu to English and then used for referencing where relevant.

4.8.4 Sample Size & Geographical Distribution: There was one very detailed Case Study carried out in geographical locations in one country, Malaysia. A relevant Case Study format was developed for this purpose, in order to represent the conceptual themes generated from the data set.

4.8.5 Sampling & Data Collecting: There was a total of 60 questionnaires (see Appendix 1 for sample) handed out, with 32 being completed and returned, which represents a response rate of over 50 per cent. The original questionnaire was in English and this was translated into Bahasa Melayu, and then on its completion re-translated into English. EXCEL was used to input the survey data and then relevant charts and figures were developed (Appendix 1A). In-depth interviews were held with the Sheikh

and 10 other respondents, of whom 5 were center residents and 5 were general seekers or murids. A total of 18 hours of interview recordings were made, all of which were in English and in one or two cases from Bahasa Melayu to English. All of these were carefully transcribed and re-checked by the researcher. The qualitative data analytic package called Nvivo was used to qualitatively code the interviews, develop queries, and draw relevant models, with cross tabulation being done for some data and concepts.

4.8.6 Data Analysis Methods and Techniques

4.8.6.1 Qualitative Research Software: Deciphering Qualitative data: In order to facilitate the analysis of the qualitative data, the INVIVO software package was used to identify concepts, themes and codes. This then was used to build the thematic analysis. Interviews, survey data, as well as other observations that are generated from the field were inputted into it and then used to identify commonalities and differences, as well as particularities. It enabled the drawing of maps, figures, tables etc. which could then be used for textual analysis, as well as building relevant narratives. A dashboard overview is given in Appendix 1D, for the ease of the reader.

4.8.6.2 Approach to Analysis: The following approach was followed in collectivising, processing and analyzing the data developing as outlined below⁵⁹³:

- i) Identification of Respondents: The respondents were identified by asking the key informant in the Order who to interview in terms of their knowledge, while for the survey the questionnaires were given without any pre-selection.

⁵⁹³ Guided by the work of Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). pp. 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887, Last retrieved 24th November 2016. The publisher's URL is: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- ii) Clean Language Approach: Given that the approach to eliciting information was following the CL approach, the questions were kept to a minimum, while trying to build the conversation based on their own narratives.
- iii) Documentation: While the audio recording was on going, the researcher took detailed notes of the conversations and maintained a memo for theoretical notes.
- iv) Comprehension of data: The audiotapes were transcribed and doubled checked by re-listening to the audiotapes. Audio tracks that were inaudible were left out.
- v) Generating Codes: The transcripts were read in detail and then relevant codes were identified in the light of the respondent's narratives, while also benefitting from the discourses in the literature review.
- vi) Building Data & Codes: Relevant data extracts from the interview data set were segmented into each of the codes.
- vii) Identifying & Naming Themes: The codes were then collated into higher-level categories or themes.
- viii) Thematic Analysis & Voices of the Respondents: Analysis was carried out where relevant after most data extracts, which was largely paraphrased so as not to lose the originality and the accuracy, where relevant concepts and theories were woven into the analysis.
- ix) Factoring in Literature Review⁵⁹⁴: While doing the analysis, including coding and building thematic categories, the concepts and data from the literature review was used to support the data, where required.
- x) Synthesis of Data, Codes and Themes: After having done the above, a separate chapter was developed synthesizing the data and developing

⁵⁹⁴ Classical Grounded Theory combined both its rigour and flexibility is allowing the literature review be factored into the data analysis; Deadly (2011) cited in A Novice Researcher's First Walk Through the Maze of Grounded Theory: Rationalisation for Classical Grounded Theory, Evans, G.L. *Grounded Theory Review*, Issue 1, June 2013:6

thematic illustrations, as well as drawing out a causal model for the spiritual leadership and self-development, which is the crux of this thesis.

- xi) Reflexivity⁵⁹⁵: Given that the author himself has keen interest in tasawwuf and is a member of the tarika (albeit outside Malaysia), there is a need to look at the data set critically, as well as be aware of the inherent personal bias that exists in collection and analysis of data.

4.8.6.3 Survey Data Analysis: Once the questionnaire has been dispensed and relevant data collected, EXCEL was used to landscape the data. Thereafter, the data was segmented according to the different concepts and categories, and relevant charts and graphs developed based on frequencies. This was then selectively ranked to derive priorities. Appendix 3 provides a sample of outputs represented as charts-graphs.

4.8.7 Ethics & Triangulation:

The use of all of the above approaches and methods will enable a form of triangulation, where the data generated are seen from different angles with the aim to strengthen the reliability of the data. The data collected from the organisation's was cross-checked with them to establish internal validity, while external validity was derived from cross-comparison. This strategy will also ensure that the ethics of the whole process are maintained since the clients-subjects have verified the accuracy of their responses.

⁵⁹⁵ A Novice Researcher's First Walk Through the Maze of Grounded Theory: Rationalisation for Classical Grounded Theory, Evans, G.L. *Grounded Theory Review*, Issue 1, June 2013:5

CHAPTER 5 - CASE STUDY OF A SPIRITUAL ORDER, MALAYSIA

5.1 Introduction

The case study has been developed based on an in-depth research study of a spiritual Order in Malaysia. The data set consists of interviews and a survey methodology. The emerging data set has been qualitatively coded and clustered into categories where relevant, and these form the main sections and sub-sections of this chapter. Under each of these categories the qualitative interview data has been integrated with the quantitative data generated from the surveys. The aim here is to capture the data in its original form, interpret it and integrate it where and when necessary with Qur'anic and hadith literature citation. This chapter is divided into the following main sections:

- i. General Overview: The evolution of spiritual orders in general is outlined. The development of the Naqshabandiyah Tariqa is sketched out, followed by outlining the Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah, the Order under study.
- ii. Organisational Overview: This includes outlining the tariqa's objective, management, and inherent characteristics of the seekers, as well as their motivation and expectations.
- iii. Spiritual Dimensions: This includes its creed (aqidah), the process of self-realisation of the seeker, and the nature of role of the Sheikh, as well as the process of spiritual modeling of the Sheikh.
- iv. Key Approaches, Methods, and Tools: This is elaborated under Tarkiyah (spiritual grooming), Tarbiyah (education), and Tazkiyah (spiritual purification).
- v. Well-Being and the Worshipper: This includes elucidating on a key concept identified by this research, namely, the Heart-Brain connection. This is followed by ascertaining the impact of worship on its seekers and finally touching upon their related spiritual experiences.

The detailed discussion and its theoretical implications, which flow out from this chapter are presented in chapter 5, where the data set is synthesized and the causal model for spiritual leadership and self-development is crafted to encapsulate the workings of the Order and the key variables, as well as the impact it creates on the seekers various permutations.

5.2 General Overview of the Spiritual Orders and Naqshabandiyah Tariqa (Order)

5.2.1 The Evolution of Spiritual Orders: Movements, Orders and Organisations form the fulcrum around which human life is organized and evolves for the better or for the worse. This study is about one such Order⁵⁹⁶ or commonly termed as ‘tariqa’, meaning a spiritual path. The name of the selected Order is Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah, located in Malaysia. These types of spiritual Order focus on the inward science of Islam known as ‘tasawwuf’ or inward contemplative practices, while observing the ‘sharia’ or the body of knowledge governing largely the outward aspects of Islam.

Deriving from a general critique within certain quarters of Islam, the question can be posed as to whether ‘tasawwuf’ or what is commonly called Sufism⁵⁹⁷, is a concept alien to Islam or not? This is best responded to by gaining a historical perspective. Imam Malik⁵⁹⁸ in his famous saying said, "Whoever studied Tasawwuf without Fiqh is a heretic, and whoever studied Fiqh without Tasawwuf is corrupted, and whoever studied Tasawwuf and Fiqh will find the Truth and Reality of Islam." Perhaps the

⁵⁹⁶ Religious order - a subdivision of a larger religious group, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Religious+Orders>. Last retrieved 26 June 2016

⁵⁹⁷ The term Sufi is said to first have been adopted by Abu Hashim, a Syrian (780CE), who went on to build the first takyah (convent), The Awarif-ul-Ma'arif, Sheikh Shahab-ud-Din Umar B. Muhammad Suhrawardi, Trans from Persian into English by Lieut-Col. H. Wilberforce Clarke, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, Lahore, 1991:2

⁵⁹⁸ Tassawuf, Shaikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani <http://www.sunnah.org/tasawwuf/sufidef.html>, last retrieved 29 May 2016

current situation is summed up best by a saying a millennia ago that during the time of the Prophet ‘tasawwuf’ was a reality with a name and now it is a name without a reality⁵⁹⁹. Hujwiri⁶⁰⁰ supports this position that during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his immediate predecessors, the name ‘tasawwuf’ did not exist but its essence or reality was a part of everyone. In the same vein Ibn Khaldun⁶⁰¹ says that in the first three generations, tasawwuf was too general to have a specific name: however, when the dislocation occurred between people becoming worldlier and less spiritual, those devoting themselves to worship become known as Sufis.

The 2nd century hijra (800 CE) witnessed a paradoxical movement, where Islam expanded exponentially during the Ummayyad period, while witnessing ‘the rift in the ideal community and the emerging state institution’⁶⁰². This trend underlined the emerging bifurcation, which formed one of the causes to try and circumvent the fear of the loss of the spirit of Islam. This spurred the forming of these types of spiritual Orders focusing both on the exoteric and the esoteric aspects of Islam, which became later known as tariqas, meaning the path.

Imam Qushayri⁶⁰³ encapsulates this changing trend: “people began to differ and levels of development became distinguishable”, which led to a shift in perception, where those totally devoted to God became known as ascetics and devotees, as opposed to ‘simply being Muslims’. The first such circle was of the eminent scholar and ascetic Imam Hasan al-Basri⁶⁰⁴ (r.a) and his followers, who passionately emulated the Prophet (ﷺ).

⁵⁹⁹ A saying by Abu-‘l Hassan Fushanji (10th Century) cited in What is Sufism, Martin Lings, Sohail Academy Lahore, 2005: 45

⁶⁰⁰ Imam Hujwiri in his famous work Kashf al-Mahjub, Chapter III cited in Martin Lings, 2005:45

⁶⁰¹ Ibn Khaldun in his most famous work Muqaddimah, chapter XI cited in Martin Lings, 2005:45

⁶⁰² Wensinck in The Risalat: Principles of Sufism, Abu-l-Qasim ‘Abd-L-Krim bin Hawazin al-Qushayri, Trans. Rabia Haris, Ed. Laleh Bakhtar, Kazi Publications Inc. Chicago, 2002, xviii

⁶⁰³ Ibid

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid

They translated the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) into the traditionalist movement called ‘ahl alhadith’. He had a unitary conception of both the inward and the outward aspects of Islam anchored within the ideal community⁶⁰⁵, as was during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

There were several orthodox and traditional Sufi orders⁶⁰⁶ with their origins in various regions. A list of some selected Orders includes: Qadiriya led by Abd al-Qadir (d. 1166 - Iran, Iraq and Middle-East), Shaddilliyah led by Abu-Hasan Shadhili (d. 1258 - Morocco and expanded to Africa), Chistia led by Mu’in ad-Din Chishti (d.1273 - Iraq), Mevlavi led by Jalal ad- Din Rumi (d.1273 - Turkey), Ahmad ar-Ri’fa led the Rifa’iyya (d. 1320 –Iraq and Middle-East ,Turkey, Eastern Europe and Spain), Naqshabandiyah led by Bahhudin Naqshbanddi (d. 1389 - Central Asia and Europe). There were others such as Ni’matullahiya led by Nur al-Din Ni’matallah Vali (d. 1431 - Iran) and Khalwati⁶⁰⁷ led by Umar Al-Khalwati (d. 1397 – Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran).

5.2.2 An Overview of Naqshabandiyah Tariqa & Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah: The Naqshabandiyah Order⁶⁰⁸ was founded by Sheikh Baha al-Din Naqshaband (800AH/1400CE), who came from Bukhara, Uzbekistan, which then was a part of the Persian speaking world. The Order rapidly spread into Asia and Europe, and was very influential both as an esoterically oriented movement, as well as being socio-politically active and a part of some of the resistant movements⁶⁰⁹ in Asian (Mogul India), Ming

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, xix

⁶⁰⁶ Sufi Order and their Sheikhs, Last Retrieved 29 May 2016, <http://islam.uga.edu/sufismorders.html>

⁶⁰⁷ The Khalwati Order and the Khalwati Takkes in Bosnia, Mehmet Cemal Ozturk, Last Retrieved 26th June 2016, https://www.academia.edu/25274172/THE_KHALWATI_ORDER_and_SOME_KHALWATI_TEKKES_in_BOSNIA

⁶⁰⁸ The Naqshbandi Sufi Way: History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain, Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, Kzai Publication Inc, Chicago, 1995, xxii

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid

and Ch'ing (China, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Turkey) and Europe (Balkans and during the Czarist period in what was the Russian Empire).

Currently, Naqshbanddi⁶¹⁰ is a worldwide movement covering the East and the West having a number of orientations and branches, including Naqshbanddi Haqqani, Mojjadijiya, As-Sufia, Khalidiyah, Awaisiya etc. The Naqshbanddi is unique in terms of its methodology of dhikr and it is said that, "it is a way closest and easiest for students to get to some degree of unity with God, even though the pupils lack the properties and had not fully prepared to receive a rank this high in esteem"⁶¹¹. Its main focus is on silent dhikr (sirr or dhikr qalb – remembrance in the heart), even though some tariqas have also included the louder forms of dhikr (jahir or dhikr lisan – remembrance of the tongue).

5.2.2.1 Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah & Tasawwuf and Self Development: The Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah has similar roots to most Naqshbanddi tariqas, starting with the Prophet (saw) at the helm, with its silsila (chain) coming through Abu Baker Siddique (r.a), Salman al Faris (r.a) through several generations to Sheikh Khalid Al-Baghdadi. This Order is similar to the Naqshbanddi Haqqani in its 'Silsila'⁶¹² (chain of lineage), before then branching off to four other splinters of tariqas. This chain then converges again, culminating in Sheikh Sulaiman Al-Zuhdi through to Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokan (Indonesia) with two other Sheikhs before the current Sheikh Jahid Sidek. Appendix 2 gives the full silsila or lineage.

⁶¹⁰ Naqshbandi is a shortened version of the Naqshbandiyya

⁶¹¹ Membentuk Jiwa Sufi, Jahid Sidek, (Al Falah Publications, Selangor, Malaysia, 2014), 317

⁶¹² Silsila (Arabic: سلسله) is an Arabic word meaning *chain*, often used in various senses of lineage. In particular, it may be translated as "(religious) order" or "genealogy", Last Retrieved 26th June 2016, <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Silsila>

In the context of Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah and tasawwuf, the key is its position within the Islamic orthodoxy, which will be explored as the discussion proceeds, and its core practice and methodology of remembrance of God (*dhikr*). A recent inquiry into this order by Syed Hadzrullathfi and Che Zarrina⁶¹³ sums up some essential features within which the order in general within which the Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah is grounded:

- i) The practice of *wuquf qalbi* (witnessing the presence of God) is one of the eleven pillars of the Naqshabandiyah Order, which is the main guideline to achieve *ma`rifah* Allah.
- ii) Eight of the eleven pillars has been presented by Shaykh `Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani (d.575/1179), while the other three pillars were perfected by Shaykh Baha' al-Din Naqshaband (d.791/1388) (Abu al-Zahra' 2002, pp. 37). The former is the Shiekh of the latter.
- iii) The *wuquf qalbi* practice is a pillar introduced by Shaykh Baha' al-Din Naqshaband, where he described *wuquf qalbi* as mandatory for it is the essence of every *dhikr* practice (Abu al-Zahra' 2002, pp. 39).
- iv) It is seen as an empty movement of the tongue and heart, where the presence of God by the seeker is not observed and devoid of any benefits to the chanters (Abu al-Zahra' 2002, pp. 63). Therefore, *wuquf qalbi* must be maintained throughout the *dhikr* process, as well as in those activities outside the *dhikr* hours (Nizar 1994, pp. 30).

⁶¹³ The summation of the points from i) to viii) is cited from research of Syed Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar and Che Zarrina Sa'ari, (International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol 2, No:4, 2011), 93, The Centre for Promoting Idea USA; Last Retrieved 25 October 2016, http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_4_March_2011/11.pdf. I have cross checked the pillars and the general principles of the Naqshabandi Tariqa and it is similar as above outlined in Hisham Kabbani's The Naqshbani Sufi Way History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain (Chicago, Kazi Publication Inc, 1995)

v) Wuquf al qalb is a practice that is closely related to other pillars introduced by Shaykh `Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani prior to Shaykh Baha' al-Din (`Abd al-Majid 1997, pp. 355).

vi) The pillars previously mentioned were firstly; disciples must remember Allah (*hudur*) in each exhalation of breath (*hush dardam*); second, the mind and thoughts are not influenced by other than Allah (*nazar bar qadam*); third, migration from condemned behavior to commendable behavior (*safar dar watan*); fourth, the heart must always *hudur* with Allah even when being with the community (*khalwah dar anjuman*); fifth, perpetual *dhikr* using prescribed *dhikr* (*yad kard*); sixth, constant supplication to Allah using a special prayer i.e. *Ilahi Anta Maqsudi wa ridaka matlubi* (*bazkusht*); seventh, protecting the heart from any intruding thoughts other than Allah (*nakah dashat*); eight, to be in constant *hudur* with Allah without being forced (*yad dashat*).

vii) Whilst the other two pillars introduced by Shaykh Baha' al-Din Naqshaband other than *wuquf qalbi* are *wuquf zamani* and *wuquf `adadi*. The meaning of *wuquf zamani* is a disciple must constantly check his beings every one or two hours, whether he is in the state of remembering Allah or otherwise. *Wuquf `adadi* is when any disciples performing the *dhikr al-Nafy wa al-'Ithbat*, it must always be in odd numbers (`Abd al-Majid 1997, pp. 355).

viii) *Wuquf qalbi* representing the meaning of perpetual remembering of Allah (*dawam al-hudur ma'a Allah*). Therefore, it is not surprising if it is deemed as a pillar of the Naqshabandiyah Order.

Syed Hadzrullathfi and Che Zarrina⁶¹⁴ conclude their research inquiry by stating that the Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyahs tasawwuf based practices, especially the wuquf al qalb, is not divergent from the point of view of the Order's past. Thus, the practices are within the pillars and principles of the Naqshabandiyah tariqa in general and that any technical variations or interpretations are grounded within the context that is its best fits for Malaysia.

5.3 Results and Analysis: This section uses largely primary data, as well as secondary data where necessary, and thus forms the main data set for the research.

5.3.1 Case Study on the Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah Tariqa (Order)

5.3.1.1 Context: The Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah Order represents the main case study selected for the field research. The Order was 'selectively sampled' based on specific criteria within the methodology of the study, namely, that: i) it should be an indigenous organisation, which is ii) both functional and has been operational for over a generation (see chapter 4 – methodology for more details).

It needs to be reiterated that the central question of the study revolves around: Is there architecture for the development of the self in Islam? as well as the sub-set of questions that are derived from this (see Chapter 1). This includes the role of the Sheikh as well as modeling him, the methods and tools used in the process, and mode of transmission of knowledge. The research also aimed to find out about the relationship between worship (ibadah) and morality (akhlaq), as well as the impact that it has on the seekers. This is examined within the context of emerging data from neuro-science and humanistic studies (see chapter 6 for its link and discussion).

⁶¹⁴ Ibid (2011), p 96

5.4 General Organisational Framework

5.4.1 Organisational History: The organization selected has for its leader a Malaysian academic and Sheikh, Dr. Jahid Sidek. This tariqa is headquartered in Klang, Selangor, which is south of Kuala Lumpur. The researcher spent a total of three weeks undertaking the collection of interview data from the Sheikh, the management of the Center, its residents, as well as with its general murids or seekers, while reading up some of the literature written by the Sheikh.

The tariqa has several sub-centers of the organisations spread across the various regions including in the north, south and center of Malaysia. The number of murid or seekers runs into several hundreds, with some estimates of around 500 core students, largely based in Malaysia. As a part of the tarika, an NGO has been established called ‘Istana Budi’ so that it can take care of some of the social and legal functions of catering for a group of special people, including drug addicts, HIV-AIDS patients and Trans-gender persons. These residents, who at any one time numbers around 30, have either been abandoned by their families or are seekers of a spiritual path.

This NGO acts as a welfare home and a shelter home. As the Manager explains:

“It is a welfare home of course but mainly we cater for people with HIV because this is a fardh kifaya (communal obligation). We started in 2009, before then there was no Muslim organization that had this sort of setup. So most of these people who have HIV are taken up by the Christians missionaries and the Buddhist association, Hindu temples but there was no Muslim organization....we are pioneers actually.” (Appendix 4A).

It is to be understood that the predominant organization is the tariqa, which is the spiritual Order, while the NGO itself caters for the special needs of the residents and gives it the legal status.

5.4.2 Tariqa's Objectives: The objectives of the tarika, which is the core organization, are summed up by a very senior seeker, who is also the Manager for the residential center, as follows:

- i. The first one is dawah (propagation), focusing mainly on aqidah (creed), which is trying to bring back people to believe in only one God. People still believe in black magic, in talisman, in a lot of other things, which they think give them a lot of benefits but in actual fact it is shirk or blasphemy.
- ii. The second is treatment of diseases, spiritual, mental and physical. These are done under the Manara Treatment Center, where Islamic reflexology⁶¹⁵ technique is practiced. Treatment is for both ordinary and conventional diseases, even people with heart failure, hypertension to migraine and all sorts of diseases. It is said that they treat the common diseases successfully.
- iii. The development of the self through multiple methods as cited here, which represents the road to 'self-actualisation'⁶¹⁶ where the human traverses through progressive levels.

5.4.2.1 Management & Funding of the NGO: The management of the tarika itself has been decentralized by the Sheikh, where each of the peripheral centers of the tariqa takes care of their own sub-organisation and collection of their funds. They are able to mobilise funds from their respective geographic regions and membership, which

⁶¹⁵ Islamic reflexology has been developed by the Sheikh of the Order. its a type of apu-pressure technique, whereby a slender from the branch of a particular tree is used at the different locations of the body depending on the type of illness, where it is lightly and repeatedly beaten on the specific location or around about it, with the dispensation of prayers from the Qu'ran. The duration various from 5-10 minutes or more and once this is completed, then a very cold water bath is administered with prayers once again and the process if complete. The researcher himself underwent this therapy to gain experiences of the process and treat himself to an aliment of his feet.

⁶¹⁶ From an Islamic perspective it can be said to reach the knowledge of God or 'marifa' and this can be interpreted within a Psychological sense as what Maslow calls 'self-actualisation' or a higher level of understanding and realization, even though the philosophical and theological basis of the former is well articulated in a greater depth as evident in numerous traditional Islamic sources.

enables them to take care of the functioning of the organization. This forms part of the efficiency of the Center, while the effectiveness is maintained by the Sheikh himself, who visits these centers on a regular basis to impart knowledge, as well as perform the dhikr or meditation. This enables the main goal of the tarika to be sustained.

The funding for the NGO, where many of the residents themselves are an active part of the tariqa, is explained by the Manager: "Funding is mainly... with our own fund but then we had back up from the Selangor Religious Council, Malaysia. This council channel their zakat or obligatory contribution through us."

One of the many challenges is the health conditions of the residents and there is a concerted effort to find solutions:

"....the death rate is very high... about 5-6 per year out of the 30 (around 20 per cent) of the residence. So our mortality is very high; treatment and rehabilitation services is given to deserving residence, to provide residence with counseling motivation, guidance services and sustaining way of life, to foster good relationship with general public and acceptance by family members. Because we encourage the family members to come and visit them. Self-actualisation of one's potential to explore one's talent and abilities, seeking for employment; they do get well and go outside again. They do get well and once they get ill again they come back here." (Appendix 4A).

It is thus a Center that essentially provides a space for these types of residents to continue their medical treatment. It enhances learning and putting into practice spiritual methods and tools in order for them to work towards self-actualisation.

5.4.3 Organisational Perspective

5.4.3.1 Seekers and their Characteristics

Number and Types of Seekers: There were two main groups of seekers or respondents, namely: those who were resident in the main center, and the general membership of the Order. In terms of the survey (Appendix 1 for sample questionnaire), there were 32 respondents, out of which 18 (56 per cent) were residents, while 14 (44 per cent) were general members of the order. In terms of the interviews, there were nine seekers interviewed out of which five were center residents, while four were general seekers, with three of them working in the Center, with one of them being a female.

The residents were mainly drug addicts, HIV patients and a couple who were transgender. They are seekers who want to transform their lives or who were referred by the hospital. The majority of the residents was also active members of the Order and involved themselves in the various acts of worship and remembrance of God. The data analysis generated by the questionnaire was done collectively, that is both for the residents and the general seekers, given the relatively small sample size, so that a consolidated perspective can be elicited.

The Age of the Seekers: As seen in Appendix 3 Figure 4.1, the largest group of seekers, were between the ages of 40 to 50 years (28 per cent), followed by the age group 50-60 (25 per cent), then 30 to 40 years (16 per cent), 60 to 70 years (13 per cent), with smaller numbers belonging either the younger category (20 to 30 years) or the much older (70-80 years). In sum, the majority of the respondents were middle-age to elderly.

Educational levels of Seekers: The Appendix 3 Figure 4.2 shows that the largest group of the seekers, that is nearly 43 per cent, had either High School-level education, or University Degrees or were Diplomas holders (28 per cent), followed by a minority who had completed primary school (12 per cent) or had a vocational certificate (3 per cent).

Occupational Status of the Seekers: The residents of the center formed the largest group (28 per cent), who on account of their drug addiction or being HIV patients had given up their respective careers, even though the majority of them had been to High School. This is followed by those who were in the technical field (19 per cent) and professionals (13 per cent), while a minority were either self-employed (9 per cent), had a private business (9 per cent), and those who were retired (6 per cent - see Appendix 3 – Figure 4.3).

Gender of Seekers: The seekers were predominantly male (87.50 per cent), with a minority being female (6 per cent), while some of seekers had not stated their gender (6 per cent) as reflected in Appendix 3 Figure 4.4. There was some difficulty getting to the female seekers given the religio-cultural situation, as perhaps the time was not sufficient to gain trust and gain access.

Duration with the Organisation: As indicated in Appendix 3 Figure 4.5, the largest group (41 per cent) did not state the duration that they had spent with this organization, followed by those who had been up to 6 months (38 per cent). There were those who were there for 1 to 4 years (16 per cent), with a minority, that is, two of them having been with it for 15 years and 18 years (3 per cent respectively).

Motivation and Expectation

Motivation for Joining: The motivations of the seekers to join this organization, as well as their expected outcomes are captured in Appendix 3 Figure 4.6. The most significant motivations were found to be: to prepare for the next life (65 per cent) and to learn better behaviours (50 per cent). This is followed by service to others (31 per cent) and being in the company of like minded people (28 per cent), to learn spiritual practices (16 per cent), and having wide access to others (13 per cent) and ‘others’, that is to get closer to God, while trying to gain ‘ma’rifa’ or knowledge of the divine (13 per cent).

Expectations for Joining the Organisation: As indicated in Appendix 3 Figure 4.7, the most significant factor was ‘to change myself for the better’ (30 per cent), followed by the same score of 17 per cent each for ‘becoming calmer’, ‘gaining blessing’ and to ‘learn more spiritual practices’ respectively. This was followed by ‘to learn more about faith’ (15 per cent) and with other expectations being 6 per cent.

5.5 The Spiritual Dimension of the Order:

5.5.1 Spiritual Dimensions: This section starts off with the foundational aspect of the faith, which is required for ascertaining if the Order is within the Shari'ah given the challenge from certain quarters that Sufi Orders have a corrupted aqida or creed of Islam. This is followed by underlining the concept of self-realisation, which was found to be a key trigger element for the seekers, combined with the role modeling of the Sheikh, which then follows.

5.5.2 The Foundational Aspects of Faith (Tawhid): The most fundamental aspect in Islam is tawhid or unity of God and all else rests on this concept. In this regard, it is

important to see the perspective of the Seekers, as well as the Sheikh and some of these are given below. The resident Imam (see Appendix 4B) says relating to the power of God in Sura ⁶¹⁷Ankabut at 29:41:

“The parable of those who seek protectors from other than Allah is that of a spider who builds a house; but indeed, the weakest of houses is the spider’s house – if they but knew.”

He adds “Allah’s power is like that. Nobody hurts Allah. Allah can agonize this entire world alone... powerful.” When asked about the change of his past life, he outlined: “It has changed because I hope that when Allah loved me very much, whatever I do is because of Allah (sic).” He said in the Quran, where he cites Sura Al-Nisa (4)⁶¹⁸:

“And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself but then seeks forgiveness of Allah will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful”.

The above seeker continues:

“In your heart you must do what you can to get it. He says that his change was triggered through tauba (repentance) or through dhikr (remembrance of God). To do dosa or sins? For me it’s very simple, to let people know why you perform salah (ritual prayer)? (sic). He responds to his own question “I perform salah because of Allah, that’s why I appreciate my Rasulullah - the Prophet (sic). If Rasulullah did not get this love, nobody can know Allah jahili; of course in the Quran Allah says, Allah waladhin waaman inshallah waleiwasalin thasliman....” (Appendix 4 - B).

As referred to above, there are many factors that have come together for the resident imam through the process of repentance and dhikr, including permanent trust (tawakkul) in God. The resident Imam (Appendix 4E) and his friend outlined their concept of ‘tawhid’ of God and by his reference to the Prophet (ﷺ):

“That’s why in the Quran Allah said, are you... listening, are you hearing...(sic). Allah teaches you how good you are; your eyes, ears and your mouth, which all has its rhythm (sic). This process is faster and better than light...”

⁶¹⁷ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 7, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 491-492

⁶¹⁸ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 2, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 579

The citation to the divine writ here is for humans to become aware of themselves, their surroundings and the cause behind it all being God. The Head of reflexology discusses about ‘tawhid’ (Appendix 4C):

“You mention about more dhikr putting ourselves down so that Allah .. can fill the.. empty glass. We remember... the words in the Quran. How to say, we are together... That’s the first thing how do you honor the tawhid (the oneness of God). it’s a very interesting question. It is by mentioning Allah, Allah, Allah. The tawhid is a kind of a belief. How to improve, glorify... only practically”.

The above reference is to the methodology of getting to know God by becoming humble (putting ourselves down) emptying one’s mind and filling it with the name of God, which in effect is essence of tawhid. The Center Manager (Appendix 4D), articulates his understanding of ‘tawhid’:

“The holy place... praise of God, the attributes of God, Allah..Allah kaayum – He is everything and all those things. At least if you sing or lie down, you sing about the ninety-nine attributes of God. That is better than just dreaming away nothing or at least you want to Salawah – praise of the Prophet. That is even better because God says and he cites Sura Al Azhab (33):56⁶¹⁹.

"Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect.”

The above seeker continues:

“That is a command at you; you are living salum alleh salumtalisman. Yes so, I say God has commanded you to say it and you just do not care a dame. At least if you prayed 17 rakah (one complete daily prayer cycle), you would be saying the salawah - praise on the Prophet.”

The point of reference here is the replacing of unwanted rumination of thoughts not by ‘dreaming away’ but by a state of worship that brings about a focus of God, the oneness (tawhid).

⁶¹⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 30

From the above rendering it is evident that the members of the Order have belief in the One of God and testify to the Prophet of Islam, which is firmly rooted within the Qur’anic context as seen above with the seekers citing the divine writ. More than this grounding within the tawhid is their focus on the remembrance of God and their deep understanding that everything emanates from God. My own observation testifies that they resident seekers with whom I spent time with not only observe the obligatory aspects of worship but are seeped into the voluntary acts, while a number of them are up during the early morning hours to pray the night prayers and do their dhikr. In this sense, I felt that they were better than myself. In this sense, they observe the various practices including generative, movement, stillness, ritualistic and relational practices outlined in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.3.1 - Tree of Contemplative Practices).

5.5.3 The Seekers, their Self-Realisation and Reflections: One of the fundamental elements that emerge from the data set is that most of the residents who were drug addicts and HIV patients wanted to change. This served as their trigger to find an exemplar and a place for this purpose. The professional banker shares his process of self-realization (Appendix 4N):

“You know sometimes, this thing is all from God, Allah is giving me something that makes me stop. ... you know Allah teaches us a lot of things that humans don’t know and we do not how Allah teaches us actually (sic). Because when you are on the road and people overtake you and you grow angry, so actually Allah is teaching you how to be patient. But you do not see, but when you dhikrullah sooner or later... it’s not that today you take Bai ‘ya - oath, you dhikrullah you know today or tomorrow you will get something from Allah. No, sometimes it takes a longer time..... So we have to think more about Akhirah (next world). Last time I was a hot tempered person and Alhamdulillah (praise the Lord) this has stopped”.

Here, he is outlining his process of change and the gradual resolving of the ruinous trait - in this case anger - which takes time to change. As already noted, anger was the worst ranked of the ruinous traits (Appendix 3 Figures 4.13, 4.14). It links up with the

analysis presented by Imam Ghazali as anger being the center of the ruinous traits, as presented in chapter 2 (see figure 2.2.4). The orientation of the afterlife and its frequent reminder seems to anchor oneself about the existing reality and makes way to prepare for the next life.

The above seeker then shifts his discussions to the obstacles that the seeker faces in his path of spirituality:

“And get away from all the distractions. We humans are attracted to money, attracted to properties... or the other obstacle that distracts you from dhikrullah (sic). When you see money, you are thinking about money and you have already forgotten about Allah (sic). The focus is that you don’t think too much of the things that will stop you from dhikrullah (sic)” (Appendix 4N).

Then he moves his discussion to an historical perspective:

“You know I was with my Sheikh in 1990, and you know there was some improvement on my side (sic). I realized that it takes a long time. it’s not immediate say one year or two years... (sic). You know from 1990, until now I keep on following the first one. My Sheikh was Imam Issak somewhere in 1990-1992 after my Sheikh passed away, I followed Dr. Jahid Sidek (the current Sheikh) from then onwards till today. it’s a long period.” (Appendix 4N).

There are two aspects that can be deciphered here, first, in relation to the Prophetic⁶²⁰ saying of ‘we have now completed the smaller jihad (struggle), and have a bigger jihad (struggle)’. When asked by his companions what is the bigger, he said it was the ‘struggle with nafs or self’. Second, that it takes time to unlearn and re-learn things and empty oneself of all of the unwanted chattering that goes on in one’s mind.

⁶²⁰ This hadith even though has been cited by Imam Bayhaki and Imam Ghazali, there are many sources, which deem it as weak (da’if) with a weak isnad. However, there is a context to jihad al-nafs as cited in, Ibn al-Qayyim said: “Jihad is of four stages: jihaad al-nafs (striving against the self), jihaad al-shayaateen (striving against the shayaateen or devils), jihaad al-kuffaar (striving against the disbelievers) and jihaad al-munaafiqeen (striving against the hypocrites), 2/421 cited in Fataawa Manaar al-Islam by Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him), Last retrieved on 21/10/2016, <https://islamqa.info/en/10455>

Here the above seeker turns his discussion in highlighting the heart-mind link, and the spiritual oath of allegiance:

“Turning towards Allah actually you know to make ourselves, to make our hearts and minds always to be thinking of Allah, dhikrullah. If you don’t dhikrullah then you know how to make your whole being. You know staying alive to remember Allah. ... before 1990, before I joined this Tariqa and I was praying but you know during prayer, I was thinking who am I praying to? Who is Allah? All kinds of questions arose (sic). For three times, I wanted to see him but I couldn’t but sometime I can’t see him because sometime he is so far and I look for him... During that time we don’t have highway route but now there is highway route and it’s very fast. In one hour time and we can restart, last time it was not (sic)... So there is a difference between before bai’ya and after bai’ya”.

He adds about the ruinous traits, “No you know sometimes when you see outside there is still pride.” (Appendix 4N). The reference here is to finding a guide, who can fast-track one’s self-development and the positive difference it makes to take the oath of allegiance with the Sheikh. The above rendition ties in with the development of the nafs struggling from its lowly state (nafs ul lawwama bi su) and evolving into a higher state of self-critical (nafs ul lawamma), which are capture in the diagrammes in chapter 2 (see figures 2.1.1 and 2.1.2).

The Sheikh himself talks about having hope (amal) by citing the Qur’anic verses (Appendix F) “Reference is made to Sura Talaq (65), 3⁶²¹:

“And He will provide him from where he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed has set a measure for all things”.

The Sheikh is flagging that it is the level of trust or iman – the faith that one’s has in God and for those who fully turn to Him, for it is said that God alone is sufficient. Ibn

⁶²¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 39

Kathir⁶²² comments on the word ‘taqwa’ or trust, which incidentally has been underlined in the interview data, where he states: “‘taqwa’ of Allah is what He has commanded and avoids what He has forbidden. Then Allah will make a way out for him from every difficulty and will provide for him from resources he never anticipated...”

The Centre Manger outlines the obstacles of the evolving self and some aspects for its development (Appendix 4O):

“Your stations (makam) to states (hal).. If you don’t perform it, you feel you have the feeling of guilt that you have not performed. Not a guilt—what do you call it, it is, not like performing or doing a sin, it is the feeling that you have lost something, and then like it is gone forever (sic), it is not like prayers (sic), where, you miss the prayer you can kadah or delay it (sic). But once it is gone it is no longer there...”

The reference to the makam (stations) is a certain state of mind or consciousness, which the seeker experiences from time to time, and this is a temporary state. The stations over time and with the mercy of God become hal or states⁶²³, which is more of a permanent nature, like reaching a state of contentment. It is one of the hallmarks of a person who is positively changing in a spiritual sense, that he/she is attracted to prayers and feels a loss if one misses it. Thus, this is a nourishment to the soul. The above seeker adds that:

“No it is different (sic) but you will do it, if you see it is something very bad. If God dislikes this thing to be performed then this is a sin to a person who practices... So anyway coming back to that is like a business. There is no loss, no gain and if you perform well—because even in prayer you make a lot of mistakes, and a lot of things coming in between... prayer. And you instead of getting back your capital, you actually have a loss (sic).... And so to the one which is loss, you have to perform a lot of things ... your fasting So if you

⁶²² Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 41

⁶²³ The discussion of the states of makam and hal and their nature cited in The Awarif-ul-Ma’arif, Shaikh Shahab-ud-Din Umar B. Muhammad Suhrawardi, Trans from Persian into English by Lieut-Col. H. Wilberforce Clarke, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, Lahore, 1991:5

only do the part.., you don't get your capital, you lose, because during the performance, there is a lot of loop holes here and that is where you lose (sic), and that is the reason you cannot depend on the compulsory obligation.” (Appendix 4O).

The necessity of doing the optional prayers is reiterated here as a supplementary reinforcement for any gaps or deficiencies in the ritual or obligatory prayers. The above seeker was told that “you very nicely described the change before and after, especially the feeling in your heart as you said and is there anything else which happened?” to which he elaborates:

“Well I feel that my life is better arranged. I mean before that—this is in realm of faith, the inner faith, and things happening to you those days, for example; you're happy, you get a lot of money. I mean money comes and goes at those times we did not realise or see it, but it is not in the heart that this is given by God or it is rewards or things from God (sic). But now we know this is God's 'kadhhar kadar' (fate), that thing happened and a lot of things happened like this morning.” (Appendix 4O).

The resident Imam discusses his current state of mind and heart, where he told his “parents, my sister, if you want me to live you take me here, I don't want to go back to my old life. Need somebody to escort? So feel very.. secure.” It was asked whether he maybe wanted to build up his strength so that he could one day go out without anybody, to which he replied: “Yes! So..not too strong to go outside, you need time. So if I stay here.” Stating that he had been there for almost two years, he was asked about the reason for joining. He responded that: “I was not close to religion. Bad friends and Empty mind.” He explained this further: “When you take drugs, you think you are better than other people.” (Appendix 4T). It is something that has been stated earlier by the ex-sailor that one needs to build up sufficient strength to go outside into the wider world once again amidst all of the attractions and dependencies, which would be a true test of faith and change in one's behavior.

The above seeker was asked, “so what else would you like to happen for the future? and

are you strong enough to go out? Or you still trying to cope?”, to which he says “Not yet.” Another resident, who was with the resident Imam, was asked, “so how about you is it different or same?” To which he says “the same”, where he also has HIV. When asked why he started on drugs, he points out that “the reasons are friends and an empty mind...” and now he “wanted to change my life.. just step by step.” He said, “I was 15 years old and was involved on and off with drugs...” and when asked what made him stop, he points out that “I feel sick. Thinking hard about dying.....” (Appendix 4T).

Both, the resident imam and his friend underline this symbolic concept of ‘empty minds’, where there is no sense of belief or direction or constructive engagement, combined with the influence of bad friends, which had previously lead them to drugs and other dependencies. The crux of the matter is getting out of these dependencies through spiritual methods, with related guidance and support. When asked how the above seeker had heard about this Centre, he says it is from “My sister”. When asked about his experience of spiritual acts as compared to taking heroin, he says, “it is better...even here I say to you, if I get a lot of money I never think to go out to buy something.” (Appendix 4T). This indicates some level of change, where the urge for drugs has subsided.

The supervisor of the Centre who is a seeker says (Appendix 4P):

“Everybody in life has an experience, my life was...not a very true and good life before (sic). A lot of sins committed, a lot of wrong doings, and I don’t know but suddenly one day, I felt I must go and refer to Tuan Guru, because I’ve been to other places, other Sheikhs and Tariqas...”.

This charts the course of a seeker gaining self-realisation and trying to find the right Sheikh as well as methods to trigger the change. An earlier reference was made to joining other tariqa, however, coming here triggered the change based on the calm

mind-set of the Sheikh, the immediate supportive and disciplined environment, the method of dhikr and the peer support.

The center supervisor outlines his contact with the Sheikh and his experience within the organization (Appendix 4P):

“But I think the change is gradual — you begin to tolerate, you gain more patience, because I used to lose my temper—young men are gregarious and not aggressive, but I’m very disciplined. So if I see things not to my taste, I let it out. But later on I realised that I cannot do it that way all the time, because some people can take it some people don’t. So gradually I’m able to adjust to the need of the person rather than my need, it is the other way around (sic).”

The above seeker adds that:

“Because in the past, I use to say like this thing is going to be black, and no other colour, but when it comes back to me green or yellow, red, I don’t accept it. But now I will accept, but I will ask the guy to explain, why is it red? Or green? Or grey? And not black? the one which I asked for. Which means there is a lot of tolerance? Well as in the past it was only one way, even though I was a teacher, but you know in the class we do practice a sought of communication. But as a leader within certain groups, especially managing people from different reigns of educations and different background of life. So you have to adjust to things to this situation.” (Appendix 4P).

This refers to a breach of old patterns and adopting to new ones, which could have been a triggered by many factors both intrinsic – age, realization, depth of dhikr, evolving patience, as well as extrinsic including the Sheikh’s guidance, the environment and the peer group support, which was stated in the previous paragraph. The friend of the resident Imam discusses about the process of his self realisation and his joining the organization (Appendix 4H):

“I came here after my late father passed away last year 16th of January 2014, after a few months four months I had a dream he came to me and said son, how long do you want to be like this? Please change your ways, please find something that you can do. Please, don’t waste your life...Yes he came in my dream. So I got up and I prayed.”

He adds that:

“Yes I prayed, Allah why must I do this? Why did you send me in like this? (sic) Please I need to change, I need to at least open my heart to become someone, only for my Server (sic)... I have to stop to do bad things. After prayers, after dhikr, I went to sleep before there’s something that happened there, myself and my brother, my younger brother said find something to do don’t waste yourself don’t rush yourself here. You have got a lot of things to do so please make peace (sic), so I fell asleep. I was thinking, what shall I do I will go to my brother’s house with my mum, leaving every one and then I got hooked back on drugs (sic)”.

This seeker is having his first flash of dreams, where it seems that his sub-conscious is being prodded by his late father. Even though he had some form of realization that what he was doing was negatively affecting him, there was no systematic channel for him to be guided and thus here is a need to have a system in place, as is the case with this tariqa. The above seeker captures some of the obstacles in his way:

“Yes let’s say for one month plus I was trying to steal (sic), trying to cheat people then after a year...I stopped... so I went to Centre (a different one), that’s the cure and care in the Center something like rehab but its better, there’s no drugs and it is drugs free (sic). There I start methadone, it is just like drugs also to stop people on being drugs, but it’s still the same, its being on drugs also that’s how it is (sic). I cannot see that I am normal. And I say I want to kill myself. I went to hospital. so I say is there any place I can.... and they say yes you have to go to place.”

The above seeker continues:

“Sungai Buloh hospital but I have a what do you call it? HIV virus. Yes but I don’t want to be with my family. I want to be in one place that I can peacefully see there’s no drugs there’s nothing that I can do. So someone gave me the number of Haji Idiris, this Centre Manager, and then I called him. When I called, he was in the hospital somewhere in the canteen. I spoke to him and I said I take drugs and I have HIV, can I come stay at your place? He say where are you I say I am in the hospital can you come and see me downstairs? And then I saw him he brought me here.” (Appendix 4H).

The struggle that we see here is one where the seeker wants to wean himself from all drug dependencies even methadone, which is used as an interim drug, an opioid, for drug addicts. There is a self-realization in this case, where he wants to make a change himself, which has been found as a central factor in most residents, as a basis for change. The above respondent talks about his struggle: “will really change. so I will

have to fight that one fight. Fight, fight... But I think I will stay here until I die and dhikr until I die.. Insha'Allah (if God wills). Yes that's what I think.. so I think maybe I found the right road that I want to be in this dhikr group (sic)".

When asked how often do the dreams come, he says: "Quite often.. each time I get dreams I get down and I pray, I wake up and pray my tahajjuth (night vigil)... grateful to Allah (sic)." Further, when asked about the types of dreams, he says they are: "... getting closer to Allah to change my ways and to remind me who I am so there's..Allah and Rasulullah but to become like Mohammed (sic)." When queried "and so when you have the dreams where do you feel it?", he says, "it is in my heart... [and] In my mind because I think is this true and true to me? And I say this is the last chance that Allah is giving to you use it in the right way." When asked to expand about who said this, he highlights that: "I say to myself. Use it as good as possible because there's no getting.. this type of treatment, pull you closer to Allah...remind me of Allah..and it is a nice group where we can talk we can share about our Islamic things (sic)." (Appendix 4H).

The resident here is alluding to both his consciousness and sub-consciousness being involved in his evolving state of transformation, which are manifested as his dream states. He expresses his determination when he says 'fight, fight..' and his getting into a deeper state of contemplation by his night vigil and ritual prayers that he performs. His role model is the emulation of the Prophet, which is done through the modeling the Sheikh, as well as reading about the life of the Prophet by using the library at the Centre.

The Nurse, who is a seeker, continues:

“.... So I follow Tuan Guru and then when I started I took the Bai'ya - oath, I had to pray. I pray Salah Taubat (prayer of forgiveness) and then ask Allah for guidance with the past. It was a great; you know everybody will be so scared after taking bai'ya thinking that it is something really wrong. But after taking Bai'ya, I find that more truth is being revealed. The closeness, how we wish for perfection of Akhlaq (morality) back to famous hadith urges and Anthabuduillah anakatarahu... it means that one comes every time Allah will make you realise....” (Appendix 4I).

Here there is a combination of methods ranging from close guidance of the Sheikh, taking the oath of allegiance, prayers of repentance and reflection on the divine scriptures. She is alluding to a change in orientation of working towards getting close to God after taking the oath of allegiance. She outlines the state of her mind and heart:

“I find a lot. I am quick tempered, hot tempered but you know (companions) knows that coming back from the war is not normal that the war on the nafs is the greatest. Now it is a greatest war and you have to do it is daily (sic), and I will do this until I die. So I stayed and then the goodness of Allah was making me to look after my mother.. It becomes my duty to look after her, then I was offered to come here (center) because of all the Beauty and Majesty of Allah.. But so when I came here after four years of divorce, I did not realize that Allah still wants me to be married (sic). So I married him (center supervisor) and that is why am here and we find we seem to have compatibility, we asked Tuan Guru for his blessing (sic).” (Appendix 4I).

She is referring here to the Prophet's⁶²⁴ saying that the “smaller battle is over and the bigger battle starts....” and when asked what the bigger battle is, he says, “..this is against one's nafs or self.” She had been taking care of her mother, who is old, for sometime now and when this opportunity presented itself, she seized it, bringing her to the Centre in terms of her work and then subsequently marrying the supervisor in the Centre.

⁶²⁴ This hadith even though has been cited by Imam Bayhaki and Imam Ghazali, there are many sources, which deems it as weak (da'if) with a weak isnad. However, there is a context to jihad al-nafs as cited in Ibn al-Qayyim said: “Jihad is of four stages: jihaad al-nafs (striving against the self), jihaad al-shayaateen (striving against the shayaateen or devils), jihaad al-kuffaar (striving against the disbelievers) and jihaad al-munaafiqeen (striving against the hypocrites), 2/421 cited in Fataawa Manaar al-Islam by Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him), Last retrieved on 21/10/2016, <https://islamqa.info/en/10455>

5.6 Spiritual Modeling:

5.6.1 Modeling the Sheikh and the Change Process:

In pursuing the conversation with the female seeker, she makes reference to the discussion with her husband, who is also a part of this organization, highlighting that one of the things that was mentioned was the development of the soul, by being with the Sheikh. When asked how she believes this was undertaken, she responds: “Observing his character.” When asked is there anything else about that, she says:

“... you feel that he is very patient. We learn because... to be like him. You try to copy as much as possible. So when you come here as husband and wife then that is the good part (sic). Because when we are under one guru.. then you remind each other. If you feel like in a loss, then I keep remembering why not, this is how our guru does it and then we absorb that behavior so you solve the problem.” (Appendix 4I).

Here she is outlining the process of modeling the Sheikh by observations, as well as inculcating the values that are being taught by the Sheikh. It is to be noted here that both the verbal and the non-verbal aspects, where the latter being the Sheikh’s demeanor, behaviours and value system, which is captured in the NLP Modeling exercise in the Chapter 6. When asked to give an example about the change of behavior, she says:

“This is small. If you look at the big thing as small, then the small thing is nothing. So if you solve things with Sharia (Islamic knowledge and fiqh) it is difficult, but with hakika (reality) then it becomes easy. Because when you solve problem you look at Allah and Allah’s takdir (destiny) and easily you want to follow the step by step in sharia, so it can be difficult. That is true but when you try to participate you find the truth there.” (Appendix 4I).

A quintessential point is made here that it is not sufficient to follow rules: one needs to apply and adapt to situations and this she points out is through ‘haqiqa’ or ground reality. Within tasawwuf itself there is a graduation framework which is outlined by Sheikh Suhrawardi⁶²⁵ as follows: i) Shari ‘at: observes the stipulated rites of Islam; ii) Tariq at: attains a stage of closeness to God with great piety, virtue and fortitude. iii)

⁶²⁵ The Awarif-ul-Ma’arif, Shaikh Shahab-ud-Din Umar B. Muhammad Suhrawardi, Trans from Persian into English by Lieut-Col. H. Wilberforce Clarke, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, Lahore, 1991:5

Ma'rifat: has attained a type of divine knowledge. iv) Haqiqat: becomes joined to the truth, where God is in all things that he sees. He says many reach the first and second stage but a few reach the fourth stage.

When asked if she herself sees any changes within herself and whether her family has seen any changes in her, she responds:

“I don't know because I don't question them but I can feel that they sort of place the value of.. being married to...him.. they sort of think that maybe there was a gap (age), after sometimes they observe that there was a difference, they seem to be attached to him and they like him (sic).”

The query was then posed about when you do Ibadah, does it impacts on the akhlaq, where she outlines the two contrasting qualities of God:

“So, it is a relationship between Abdi (slave) and Khalaq (creator)...Realising the Beauty and Majesty of Allah. Then it goes back to that you have to say no say to anything (sic)...you are always moving at the will of Allah..it is easier said...so long as you keep the dhikr and the muraqaba (meditation) that Allah is always watching you..” (Appendix 4I).

The change process within herself, here, is seen through the reflection on her husband a type of ‘mirroring’. There are two key concepts that are underlined here; one is the Slave-Creator relationship, which forms the core of Islam in terms of submission to God and emanating from it, knowing one's place in the world. The second is that in terms of change she is outlining what the Sheikh had mentioned about the continuum of Jamal – beauty and Jallal – Majestic and what is in-between, which are attributes of God, which is reflected in the closeness that one gets to Allah.

In explaining the relationship between the two variables, that is, worship and akhlaq, she outlines what kind of relationship it is:

“it the relationship between the servant and the Lord...the Khaliaq (the creator) and the Abdi (slave)... Yes Ibadah also has an impact and the guru also impact on your akhlaq. This is because when you also keep getting close to God (sic) almost every day, as long as there’s a lecture of rules there in the Mosque (sic). We always follow, so there in the lessons that he imparts to us, there is also knowledge there for people who remember Akhlaq (morality) (sic). it’s not that just we stay at home and do our Ibadah at home..(sic) it is not only on the Ibadah (sic), even when you are treating other people or looking after the sick it’s all Ibadah isn’t it? so whatever you do, the servitude to the Lord, then it is the ibadah...” (Appendix 4I).

The worship that she is highlighting is a holistic concept not just confined to prayers.

The point that is underlined here is that worship, as well as the lectures combined with the rules laid out by the Sheikh including the code of conduct, impacts on morality or akhlaq.

The resident Imam now turns to outlining his state of mind and emotions:

“And then the second day, Allah will give you a better state where you will stay. You do around three months directly. one night I cried, I don’t know why. Automatically. Nobody forces me to cry, that is, something is touching me inside (sic), there is something about it,..., I am very strong and God gives you to change your life (sic).” He now poses a question to himself, when he was initiating the process of change within himself, where he says “Why do you never see that? (sic). Why do you never think about that? (sic) My heart says like that. Yes through Allah. Before I forget to say thank you to Allah, before I forget to say Insha’Allah (If God wills). Before I never say salaam waleikum (peace be upon you too), I never respect anybody, now it has changed a lot.” (Appendix 4J).

The process of reflection and change is highlighted in the above narrative, with emotions being manifested in combination with mental space afforded by the divine forgiveness and hope. Here one sees a process, whereby the seeker is re-directing himself to fall in track with the code of conduct within Islam. When asked about the reasons for the change, he pointed out that:

“It has changed because I hope when Allah loved me very much, whatever I do is because of Allah. He said in the Quran ‘if you do whatever I say truly and hope for me to forgive you, you will do properly and then you will get it’ (sic). Now seriously I follow and I just get it in my heart, I do not know how to

discuss about your heart..... If you do not ever do you will not get it.” (Appendix 4J).

This rendition stated above represents a point of convergence of love, hope, belief, intention and action, where striving (jihad) is being emphasized to get this feeling of closeness to God. Perhaps it is in this type of convergence that change occurs, where he is referring to ‘get it in my heart’, and ‘do what you can to get it’.

The professional artist outlines his state of mind and the ensuing change after he discovered he had contracted HIV:

“Yes! I couldn’t accept it actually the first time (sic)... but after my mom, my sister, they are very positive towards me... my school friends with whom we have grown up together they are so positive (sic). They said, it’s okay, so I was like, okay! give it a try and when I was in the hospital.. you know when I look at myself, I am in the film industry, music industry so am like a modern person, involved in filming shows and wearing boots. So I was thinking like, do you want to be a good Muslim and if so I have to change not only the inner side but even the way of my appearance in society.... So, I tried to change whatever things, you know. And Alhamdulillah I am quite happy now. Like the doctor was so amazed, within less than three weeks I came off from the hospital. So, they said “oh your progress is quite good” And I think it is because I do pray and pray and pray, the tahajjuth (night vigil) and prayers - really helps” (Appendix 4U).

One sees here the professional artist highlighting the difficulty faced, while arriving at a state of self-realisation, with a change of his worldview, and thus a change of outlook both internally and externally. The facilitating factors here seem to be the support of friends and family (external), and the emphasis on prayers and night vigil, which is seen to provide the comfort. The above seekers outline some aspects of this change:

“Very difficult, but my mom always tell me just make sure you are close to Allah and things will be easy, which I tried, and Alhamdulillah (praise the Lord), you know I never miss my salah (ritual prayer). I try to be a good person, so I am more relaxed you know. Even like you, the people who surround me are totally different kind of people. So, I can go through that, you know. I have learnt to accept things and I learnt to be more patient (sabar). It looks very funny; it looks so weird, sometimes I was thinking like my mom doesn’t love

me that's why she sent me here but after experience and everything. If I look at the positive side I have learnt a lot from the...." (Appendix 4U).

This above seeker is consistent with his prayers, conforming to things and learning to accept the difficulties in being patient, which is seen to make him more relaxed. His initial integration to this group was difficult due to his foreign exposure but he has within a short time learnt to accept and adopt his ways to suit the situation. When asked how long he has been at the Centre and what was the turning point, he says;

"Two weeks really. I think the turning point was when I got the news...in UK or...Here I was not sick when I was in UK. That's why when I think that I started crying (sic), I was like Allah is so great and that's like why he didn't get me sick over there." [*He says he went through a process of questioning, where he says,*] "why He didn't get me sick when I was working, when I was at home then only He gives me this sickness (sic). So, it is a lot of wonderful things I guess. I mean..." (Appendix 4U).

When the above seeker was queried "so when did you know?", he says:

"I got to know here in the hospital, because when I was...I think two months ago. The TB was very bad because the fungal infection had already gone to my brain (sic), so, I was like... but the doctor said forget about the HIV because you can take something for the HIV but the TB is already gone to your brain and also my kidney so we have to clean that first. So that's what the doctors have been doing, and so far so good, every week when I go to see them there is a progress and then I always listen to what they want, like they say my heart is not normal. So, I will change my diet, no more acidic food, and no more these things so things can be better." (Appendix 4U).

It is to be noted that in the Centre even though the focus is on spiritual activities, the relevant medical treatment is on-going, with the center nurse's intervention and referral to the hospital. These are vulnerable times for the professional artist, who has recovered from the current illness and is coming to terms with his current predicament, with a sense of the realization of God being good to him. This is a very positive outlook rather than questioning one's life and belief and having a negative attitude, which is the

acceptance of one's situation, a fundamental premise in Islam. The above seeker continues sharing his experiences:

“It was like awakening because I am not a good person and in the industry. I am in the glamorous world. I have done a lot of things, a lot of naughty things.. and when Allah gives me a chance like this for me it is like a miracle, you know how much He loves me so much. So, that is why I can take it, you know, slowly I realized things.. can heal me and can accept. At first my Mom said that I do come here, I could not accept that. Then I told her that the dhikrulla (remembrance of God) kind of things, my impression towards that was not so good ...and then if you don't have guru, I can see that some of these people have mentors. ... but when I think back my mom was telling me we have to cleanse your body, in order for you to...because you will take a long time... so, I said okay. That is how I can accept things....”

When asked “does cleansing my body will also cleanse my mind also?”, he points out that:

“Yes because the dhikrullurah is something about, if you tell me yoga yes, because I was exposed to this kind of thing, so basically dhikrullurah is something new to me and I am quite happy that Allah loves me and brings me to this kind of thing.” (Appendix 4U).

He is addressing here a misperception by some Muslims about having a Sheikh and doing dhikr, which is a hallmark of those practicing tasawwuf (inward science). This has now changed when he came to the Centre and had a chance to observe things first-hand. His Mum's role in creating the required awareness and referring to him to this Centre has been a significant move towards his acceptance and his eventual learning to accept and try to integrate with the group. When asked about his status within the center, the above seeker outlines that:

“Because I am still under my injection, the strong injection, so once I finish that I will start the bai'ya (oath)...My salah (ritual prayer)! it so funny that I was asking my mom... that before this when I pray you know like I am catching up with time that's it. But now, when I pray, it takes a period of time because for

me I can do the tauba (repentance), my Salah tauba (forgiveness prayer). I can feel that I am near to Allah, before it was like some reaction it was like salamamikum warathmathula..but now I feel like I have done so many bad things and how Allah can accept me for what I am.” [*He continues to highlight his observations*]: “He gave me very good chance so I just have to make good use of it. Because I think He has already gave me three chances (sic). Yes, the first time I ignored, the second time I ignored and this is the third time and I feel like this is going to be my last time. Because of Allah, I got a feeling like that I do not want to listen, I do not want to go back to Him I am going to be like the others I feel great now.” (Appendix 4U).

The shift is apparent by this above seekers approach to prayers before and now, where he is able to delve into it, which is combined with the ritual repentance prayers and being acutely aware that this is his last chance. When the above seeker was asked about his past history, he expounded:

“That was when I got sick like five years ago....Not very serious sickness, just a normal sickness and I always tell myself like I take vitamins and I am not going to get sickness. So, I feel like if God says you have to get the sickness, you have to. I learnt my lesson because when I think back, then I felt like oh my God, I am so arrogant to God. I think like I am so good. But actually no, you know....I do not know. I used to be stubborn... so I have learnt my lesson but forever now my family comes first, my children....” (Appendix 4U).

What is witnessed here is an acute sense of awareness of oneself, one’s arrogance and travelling along the path being given an opportunity to relive life and improve one’s spiritual states. The above seeker talks about his state of awareness:

“.. before I was like, yes because I was so busy working until my mom said, like you go for the money you go nowhere, you know. What you should do is that pray to Allah and get the right rizk (provision) from Him.. I can see the money, where I got sixty thousand but I don't know where the money went (sic). I repaired my car and still the car cannot be moved. I spend a lot when I renovate my house the contractor ran away. So, these kinds of things make me think like what my mom said is true. And now even though I am not working, the rizk – provision - is always there and am quite relaxed.(sic) I just hope this will last for long. You know some people when they see the change of the death they go back to normal. So, this really helps, because just to remind me like, you know you cannot do so many things because you are a Muslim. So..you can do certain things and you cannot do others and I am very comfortable with it (sic).” (Appendix 4U).

Three elements can be discerned in the above narrative. First, what is pointed out is the lack of work-life balance and that when an acute situation transpires, one is thrown off balance. Second, the concept of rizk or one's life provisions are already measured according to the Islamic traditions and realizing this affords comfort for one to navigate one's course of life, irrespective of the difficulties that one experiences. Third, the daily remembrance of death is a Prophetic sunnah (tradition) and it does have a sobering effect. As the above seeker says 'they go back to normal'.

The Head of Islamic Reflexology was asked about what it is to stop one depending on these things and depend on Allah only, to which he says (Appendix 4K): "When everything else happens, we refer to Allah so we don't have to argue much." He was then queried as to 'how do you think that breakthrough came? What are the reasons?', where he outlines that "The reason is what the Quran said your body will shake and you will get sweat when you mention Allah's name. You are not using your eyes, you close your eyes then you are using your hearts eyes. When you close, your eyes your hearts eyes will open then when you open your eyes your hearts eyes is closed understand that? You see?" This referenced example is like Nabi Musa in Sura al Araf (7) ⁶²⁶:143, where God says:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ. قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنظُرَ إِلَيْكَ. قَالَ لَن تَرَنِي وَلَٰكِن أَنظُرَ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَنِي. فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا. فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

"And when Musa came at the time and place appointed by Us, and the Lord (Allah) spoke to him; he said: O my Lord! Show me (Yourself), that I may look upon the mountain; if it stands still in its place then you shall see Me. So when his Lord appeared to the mountain. He made it collapse to dust, and Musa fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his sense he said. Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers."

⁶²⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Sheikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 4, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 155

The above seeker continues:

“Before he fainted, he said to close his eyes and using his hearts eyes to open then when it opened, he mentioned the thausina (name of mountain) not inside his eyes but inside his heart. When Prophet Musa saw the thausina (name of mountain) in his eyes then only Allah thajjali (spiritual manifestation) affected his ruh and then his ruh (spirit) separated from him for 40 days (sic). So, whatever knowledge that Allah put in Nabi Musa is sirr (secret). Everything you say is inside the sirr (silent dhirk), so every knowledge you want you have to dhikr with your eyes close (sic). Then the knowledge’s comes to you Inshallah (sic).” (Appendix 4K).

The citation here of the al-Qur’an, as well as his own experience is to point out that God can be only experienced in the heart, that is in one’s mind’s eye and not by the physical senses. Here he is using the incidence of Prophet Musa (peace and blessings) to illustrate his point. On a general note, it could be said that the depth of the Prophetic experience and its divine interventions are different from that of other human beings. Ibn Kathir⁶²⁷, however, comments by citing a saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) of mutawatir grade (multiple chain of isnad – narration and is authentic) that believers will see the Lord in the hereafter. The above seeker further illustrates:

“For example, I tell you, when you put Allah’s name with one touch ..what is called touching.... you pull one Allah’s name and you pull the whole world. Allah’s name must be very heavy. You don’t understand what is clue by that. But when you glow, automatically those things flow inside your heart, you can explain those things, how this thing went how our name is heavy and how the world is very light.” (Appendix 4K).

The expression here is the total absorption in Allah’s name, which touches the heart and when the heart is free from anyone but Allah, then the light of God flows into to it. The ‘glow’ here is a kind of manifestation of the light that God gives those in His path, where matters are entrusted to God, which makes the burden of humans light. The above seeker further expounds:

“Other times, yes that I am nobody. You feel tawaddu although there is Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) who is at the highest level but he is as a slave to Allah ubudiya (slavehood). Then in person, there are a few on this level, for example, those having patience - sabar. First, we start with Taubat (repentance).

⁶²⁷ Ibid, 156

... means sabar (patience) and shukur (gratitude)... so at this level we will feel serious what people do to you..... A lot of patience. So when you are lucky enough to flourish, all these things, if you have you have to be patient and the Sabar is of very high potential. Some people they learn....” (Appendix 4K).

Once again, it is seen that the concept of Slave-Master been underlined, which is central, and this is also true for the Prophet (ﷺ), who saw himself in this way. This leads to a humbling position, which deflates one’s ego, and opens one up to better deal with people and be close to God. The virtue of patience is highlighted as a path finder, together with seeking forgiveness (tuba) and being grateful (shukur), which would lead to doing well in all things, what can also be termed as leading to self-actualisation⁶²⁸ using Maslow’s’ perspective.

The professional sailor when asked so how long he planned to stay, pointed out: “If I find myself ready to go out I will but I just want to really change myself. But now I am not ready to go out yet.” When prodded further on how he felt he could really change himself, he said: “Change yourself get nearer to God, stay in the jungle, really just be nearer to God.” He has been able to start changing his state of mind though the various methods as outlined above combined with the environment in which he is now living, which pre-disposes him to practice (Appendix 4V).

The resident who is a friend of the resident Imam outlines some of the changes that are happening to him: “yes that’s what I think..maybe I found the right road for me to be in this dhikr group.” When discussing dreams, which form a subject of importance within Islam, he says, “Quite often I get.. each time I get dreams I get down and I pray. I pray well each time I get a dream I wake up and pray my tahajjuth (night prayer or vigil)...

⁶²⁸ Maslow says that his studies are “self-actualising people,” i.e fully evolved and developed people, make it clear that human beings at their best are far more admirable (godlike, heroic, divine, awe-inspiring, lovable etc;) than ever before than their own proper nature” in *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (Penguin Compass, New York, 1970), 37.

how grateful I am to Allah.” He was asked about the type of dreams, points out that it is “about getting closer to God, getting closer to Allah to change my ways and to remind me who I am so there’sAllah and Rasulullah... but to become like Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ).” When asked further about where he feels dreams when he has them, he stated:

“In my heart” [*and when prodded where*] “In my mind because I think is this true and true to me? And I say this is the last chance that Allah is giving to you use it in the right way...I say to myself, use it as good as possible because there’s no getting give you this type of treatment, pull you closer to Allah...reminds me of Allah...(sic) nice group where we can talk we can share about our Islamic things.” (Appendix 4H).

This above narrative alludes to both being consciousnesses of God and in immersing oneself in acts of worship, as well as indication of the process of internalization as manifested as dreams in the above data extract. The situation is more pronounced in these types of cases since they are HIV sufferers and the residents see this as their final attempt to change themselves.

The Nurse who is also a seeker in this tariqa, highlights her reflections about the Sheikh and her learning:

“It is a lot to do with Shoeba (companionship) with the Guru. It is very important because that is how I learn about the Prophet. All the Shahaba (companions) were always around him, observing him and questioning him. So actually all my life, I was looking for what is life all about, it just comes from Allah. I seem to get the question what is life really about? Then when you say the Shahada (testimony of faith) there is no God but God (sic). How come lalliaha illah – there is no other - be in this, what is the secret there. There is one Abdul Abidin and the other person would be talking about the Sira Salikeen (the seeker on a straight path).. .. I was listening to them. It sought of touched my heart, then awareness comes in and then (sic) you want to practice sincerely. Meantime as I read books on tasawwuf (inner aspects of Islam) to go on the Sufi path and it is said that you have to look for a teacher, in order to go through and path, you cannot be without a teacher. If the teacher is not within the territory, you have to go out of the country. Because it is so important, I said where am I going....., and as I was taffakur (reflecting), on all those words, it so happened that Tuan Guru (master teacher) was coming over to my surau (smaller mosque). So every time when he comes, if I am off duty, I will make

sure that I will go for the after maghrib session (sic). So he was touching on all the key topics using the one kitab.” (Appendix 4I).

The process of learning is highlighted here, which captures both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of listening to the Sheikh, practicing, reflecting and in the process one’s heart is touched or the words and its subsequent action become internalized and a part of you. This is akin to Albert Bandura’s⁶²⁹ (2011) social learning theory that encapsulate this process of modeling by observing others, where four necessary conditions are outlined: i) attention, ii) retention, iii) reproduction and iv) motivation. This will be elaborated in the chapter 6 on discussion. She further expounds on her experiences:

“Where is the truth, what am I doing down there and how I missed the lectures. I miss going to the tawajju (spiritual attention) but how am I going, I feel that basically helpless. So when you taffakur (reflect) of course the dhikr I do it every day... (sic). If you look at the big thing as small then the small thing is nothing. So if you solve things with Sharia (body of knowledge relating to the legal aspects) it is difficult, but with hakika (reality) then it becomes easy. Because when you solve problem you look at Allah and Allah’s takdir (destiny) and easily you want to follow the step by step in sharia so you can be difficult. That is true but when you try to participate you find the truth there.” (Appendix 4I).

The process of self-discovery is outlined by her, where she draws a continuum in terms of knowledge, which encompasses both the external-sharia (body of knowledge including fiqh or law) and the internal-hakkika (reality), with the latter being based both on experience and intuition. The concept that she uses, namely, tawajju, which Schimmel⁶³⁰ explains as the bonding between the Sheikh and the murid (seeker) and thus, “concentration upon the sheikh, which later orders, mainly the Naqshabandiyah, considered necessary for the successful performance of dhikr....the sheikh, too, would practice tawajjuh and thus ‘enter the disciple’s heart’ to watch him and to guard him.”

When queried about the effect of dhikr, she details out that:

⁶²⁹ Albert Bandura, Most Human Behaviour is Learned through Modeling in *The Psychology Book*, DK, London, 2011, 288

⁶³⁰ *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Anna Marie Scheme The University of North Carolina Press, US, 1975:237

“Yes dhikr has of course affected me a lot, it’s the basis of our existence. The more you practice dhikr and the more you get. The guru always tells us that everything the whole universe is in dhikrullah, so how come we are not in dhikr so that is a lot to do with taffakur (reflection), we have to do that a lot ... (sic) because you have to let Allah nourish you with that, it is a gift. Because when you find difficulty you have to let Allah help you with that. Because its Allah’s gift you cannot just say that you can do it or you can’t (sic). If Allah feels like you’re ready to be gifted then Allah gifts you at that time so you cannot be impatient knowing that you put yourself in that station, which is not meant for you. Yet so, that is wrong and that’s when all the nafs - ego and the shaitan (devil) will all comes in. So you always have to be aware about the practice of dhikr, it is so important and you always have to be aware of the shaitan that is always trying to destroy the relationship with the Khalaq (Creator). Realise the position of abdi (servant)...the more you feel that you are abid ..slavehood..keep polishing as the Tuan Guru says until you die....” (Appendix 4I).

She is outlining the importance of consistency of doing the dhikr, which is remembering God, while at the same time reflecting within oneself. This can also be understood as the synchronization of the heart through the process of dhikr, which is mindfulness, as well as the mind by the process of reflection. If you keep doing this, she points to the openings that God gifts you: however, one has to be mindful of one’s ego and the disturbances of the Satan. This is akin to the concept of God as light and Satan darkness and to feed the former and to be aware of the latter. Sheikh Sahrawardi⁶³¹ discussing about spiritual advancement, that is from one state of consciousness to a higher state of consciousness says, “Hence his advance from maqam (station) to maqam is by God’s sway and of His gift – not of his own acquisition”. In the light of the above, Ibn Abbad⁶³² says, “There is no arrival to God but by God, as well as there is no veil between the servant and the Lord but his nafs (ego). One does not fight the nafs by the nafs by God.” Thus, it the ego, the I, me, mine, that is, being self-centered and selfish, which acts as an obstacle for getting close to God.

⁶³¹ The Awarif-ul-Ma’arif, Shahab-ud-Din Suhrawardi, Trans. Lieut-Col.H. Wilberforce Clarke, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1991:104

⁶³² Cited in Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Anna Marie Schimmel, (The University of North Carolina Press, US, 1975):253

5.6.2 The Sheikh as an Exemplar: The Sheikh, who is the leader of this Organisation, is the immediate focal point for all spiritual seekers, both the general ones and the residents. He is the exemplar or the living role model that they aspire to, as the graph in Appendix 3 Figure 4.8 indicates. The Sheikh himself models on the Prophet. The references by the respondents in the survey to the Master-Imam and Tuan Guru are actually to the same person here, even though it has been presented as two names, with a score⁶³³ of 38 per cent, while the Prophet himself is rated as 19 per cent (Appendix 3 Figure 4.8). This higher rating of the Sheikh is perhaps due to the seekers themselves being able to directly relate to someone physical who is in their immediate presence, even though there is reference of emulating the Prophet in the interview data extract, especially from the resident Imam.

In terms of role-modeling, the parents and the supervisor follow with a score of 6 per cent and 3 per cent, where the supervisor in this case refers to the one in the resident's center. One of the central reasons for the high rating of the Sheikh is his code of conduct or behavior, where he is able to provide a nurturing environment for the seekers. As Appendix 3 Figure 4.9 indicates, the highest rated qualities in order of priority with scores⁶³⁴ are: patience (59 per cent), humbleness (53 per cent), forgiveness (50 per cent), love (47 per cent), wisdom (44 per cent), honesty (41 per cent), and trust (41 per cent).

The roles of the Sheikh is thus seen to be crucial, especially for those who want to reform themselves and have been negligent in past. He is seen as one who has been bestowed with blessing from God, where the Sheikh or Murshid himself and has a

⁶³³ The scoring or ranking is a point score, that is, each variable has been scored out of 100 percent.

⁶³⁴ The scores are computed based on the frequency of responses, where each one is scored out a total of 100 per cent.

genealogy connecting to the Prophet (ﷺ)⁶³⁵. It is important to note that there are several conditions of becoming a Sheikh⁶³⁶ as outlined below, detailing the requirements and characteristics that an individual has to have:

- i. needs to be one learned in the science of fiqh and confident about it;
- ii. needs to perfect his knowledge about the properties of the heart, have polite manners, be aware about its illnesses and on how to maintain and stabilize it;
- iii. must be compassionate to his disciples, have a lot of patience and be forgiving, to be able to give guidance to the disciples until they receive guidance from God;
- iv. be able to confide in and not shame anyone;
- v. not have any desire and greed for the wealth of his disciples;
- vi. he should practice what he preaches and thus be an example;
- vii. maximises his time when he sits with his disciples offering the required guidance to clean their hearts;
- viii. must honour his words and they should be cleansed of any desire or passion;
- ix. must always be tolerant and not too lenient or too harsh;
- x. when disciples manifest spiritually elevated positions, he should take measure so as not to affect himself;
- xi. when the perceptions of the disciples have been affected regarding the Sheikh, he needs to readdress this matter;
- xii. should not be reckless and be able to facilitate his disciples;
- xiii. when disciples share their spiritual experiences, he should be able to guide them accordingly;

⁶³⁵ Cited in the book of the Sheikh under study *Membentuk Jiwa Sufi – Formation of the Sufistic Soul*, Jahid Sidek, (Al-Falah Publications, Selangor, Malaysia, 2014), M/S 376

⁶³⁶ Ibid

- xiv. he should not encourage vain talk amongst his disciples and restrict sharing experiences within the group, which may cause inappropriate reaction from others;
- xv. must provide facilities for disciples for undertaking their seclusions;
- xvi. he should not expose too many details of his life to his disciples;
- xvii. he should prohibit disciples from over eating and becoming slaves to their habits;
- xviii. should discourage disciples from meeting very high officials unless there is a specific requirement;
- xix. should speak to his disciples with gentleness and not speak harshly about disciples;
- xx. when invited by someone he should accept the invitation with humility;
- xxi. he should sit quietly and patiently with his disciples and conduct himself in the best manner;
- xxii. he should not avoid his disciples and pray for their goodness;
- xxiii. he must feel concern for his disciples and help them if he/she requires help.

The above criteria sets the basis to distinguish between who is a reliable Sheikh and who is not, and this is important especially for those who are seeking to find a proper Sheikh to guide them in taking this path. There is also detailed guidance on the mannerism of the disciples towards the Sheikh⁶³⁷, the mannerism of the Sheikh towards seekers⁶³⁸, as well as mannerism towards others⁶³⁹.

⁶³⁷ Ibid, M/S 385

⁶³⁸ Ibid, M/S 395

⁶³⁹ Ibid, M/S 405

5.6.3 Spiritual Modeling & Mode of Transmission of Practices and Knowledge:

The essential learning from the Sheikh that the seekers find it most useful are reflected in the Appendix 3 Figure 4.10, where the highest rated topics⁶⁴⁰ were ‘being silent’ (66 per cent), and ‘saying a prayer’ (56 per cent). This is followed by getting advice from others, supplicating to God, and being patient, with both of the latter scoring 22 per cent.

In terms of the Sheikh imparting codes of behavior to the group (Figure Appendix 3 Figure 4.22), the most important means are firstly through demonstration, by the Sheikh acting as an exemplar through his own behavior and setting ground rules (50 per cent); secondly, by setting examples and making reference to his role models primarily the Prophet (ﷺ), as well as the other Sheikhs, both of which scored the highest (56 per cent); and collectively doing good deeds including individual dhikr (22 per cent), collective dhikr (15 per cent), salah (6 per cent), supplication (3 per cent) and all of the aforementioned (3 per cent) (Appendix 3 Figure 4.28). The more traditional methods such as by teaching, giving verbal instructions, giving special prayers gained comparatively lower scores.

The two above seeker residents highlight ten virtuous traits that they have learnt from the Sheikh and which they are trying to emulate, which forms a part of the core traits required for development of the self as outlined below: Baraka (blessings), Shukur (gratitude), Tawakal (trust), Taubah (repentance), Sabar (patience); Takut (fear), Zuhud (poverty), Amal (hope), Ridha (acceptance), Akihra (next life). They go on to give some examples: “Amal means hope, you want to get it, you are not confident to get it. Day by

⁶⁴⁰ Once again the seekers were asked to tick on more than one item, which they felt was relevant, and thus each person ticks one or more. Based on their responses the frequencies of the scores were averaged, where each point was taken as 100 percent.

day, you use your hand dua (supplication), something like you hope for something”. In addition: “Ridha means like something happened to you okay. It is from God.. (sic) but you accept it”. They add: “Zuhud (poverty) means being normal and ... sufficient....buy something that is normal and to showoff (sic)..but you cannot boast, these things are like all given by Allah (sic).” (Appendix 4 E).

The above sentences portrays the virtues-ruinous framework (see Chapter 2.4), which has been articulated by many Islamic scholars, where the virtuous part forms the basis on which sound and ethical characteristics are built. The above two seekers point out that:

“Very close to Allah, so if you have these ten things you are direct with Him. You are closer to Him. That’s why when we go to lectures or when our guru is preaching we have to take notes (sic).” [*They say when they go for kullia (lectures) they take notes and they say*]: “For me with these ten things in Islam you build trust in Allah (sic)” [*and*] “So when you can do all this, Allah will accept you or Allah will listen. You are looking for him but you can’t see him but He can see you.” (Appendix 4 E).

Another essential element that emerges from the data set is the emulation of the Sheikh by the seekers by modeling him through observing him and the most important traits (Appendix 3 – 4.9 and 4.10) and by taking notes and trying to inculcate the ten values mentioned above. When asked if they had thought like this before, they stated:

“No..maybe certain of the ten...” [*They say*]: “We have learnt it from the Tuan Guru ...So I still have to catch up and I am not perfect yet. We are not actually; myself I am not... You think about it from down to top, that is, from akhira (next life) and then work your way up...” [*Both seekers expand on it*]: “Because you must... if you don’t think akhira, you never get it. If you think that akhira is true Allah says, He will stay in the heart and be scared. How are we to face Allah in the akhira?” [*He further expands on it*]: “It’s the way Allah gives, you can discuss which part you want.....you are rich but are the property you have got is not yours. You want to give it to anyone you can give, but it is not yours. Yes, the thing is mine but if you want you can have it, that is what our guru said last night in the kulliyyah (lecture). This palace is mine, you want to stay you are welcome you can stay.” (Appendix 4E).

The influence of the Sheikh seen here is creating awareness of detachment to this world and based on that realization that we come to this world alone and leave alone without taking any possessions. The end product of death and the next life becomes a starting point to intensify one's worship, and also to work on one's behavior setting these ten traits as a value based framework, where one tries to inculcate it.

Al-Attas⁶⁴¹ distinguishes between the Islamic and the Western worldview, where he points out that for the Muslims the framework is *dunya-akhira* (world-next life). It is a Prophetic tradition to frequently focus on death, so that one does not lose one's orientation and enables to maintain the required equilibrium. The above seekers when asked about how they process the information that they learn from the lecture of the Sheikh they provide their insights:

“I have to learn how to get this done deeply (sic).....by going to lectures, by doing dhikr, by humbling oneself with people, the way that we talk, the way that we give things, the way that we are scared of Allah..... everything that is wrong so that we don't do it again (sic). But it is very hard to get these ten things. Even me at the moment, but one day I will get. Insha Allah, if Allah opens my heart and softens my tongue to speak and to read Quran Insha Allah I will be someone. I would love to go deeply, more deeply.” (Appendix 4E).

There are many aspects that are underscored above, notably the three main dimensions of building oneself, worship (*ibadah*) through ritual prayers and dhikr, cultivating good character or morals through humbling and dealing with people well (*akhlaq* and *muamalat*), and building one's relationship with God (*taqwa*). His desire of 'go deeply, more deeply' is the process of intensifying one's God consciousness, where over time and with Mercy, one gets into deeper level of consciousness. When prodded on the reason for this, he says:

“Getting to know Allah is the key because you always speak about Him, you always talk about Him and you remember Him so He remembers you. So wake

⁶⁴¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Proligomena*, (ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 2001), 1-3

up, if you want to come to Me then you speak My name, you call My name I will be there anytime you need me by your side, let's say like the song. it's like a song, if you remember Him, you think about Him he will be there for us anytime. He will be there for us and He will listen although we can't see Him but He can see us and what we are doing (sic). We want to look for Him but we can't see Him. But He can see what we are doing.”

Here he is referring to the saying of the Prophet, which comes from hadith, which states that ‘Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you’⁶⁴². He elaborates:

“That is in Islam, nobody can teach you about rukun Ihsan (pillars of sincerity/excellence). If you do worship or Ibadah, Allah can see you. No if you do, Ibadah you see Allah you cannot see Allah seeing you. Nobody can give proper or good information to understand that. You must do it to get it. If you don't do that.....” (Appendix 4E).

When he points out that ‘ihsan’ cannot be taught he is referring to a key element which is derived from the Jibril Hadith⁶⁴³, when the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked what is ‘ihsan’ to which he said ‘It is worshiping God as if you see him, while you see Him not He sees you’. This refers to a method of meditation called ‘muraqaba’, a state of watchfulness with engrossed attention that God is watchful of you. People who consciously and frequently practice this kind of meditation, which is called ‘wuquf al-qalb’⁶⁴⁴ is a method used in the Order under study. The seeker seems to have varying kinds of experiences and sometimes opening, which cannot be taught and frequently cannot be captured in word.

In interviewing the Sheikh (see Appendix 4F), he points out that there are 3 tiers of

⁶⁴² Related by at-Tirmidhi, Hadith No:19, An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith, Trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, Holy Qur'an Publishing House, Damascus, 1977:68

⁶⁴³ Related by Muslim, Hadith No:2, An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith, Trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, Holy Qur'an Publishing House, Damascus, 1977:28-32

⁶⁴⁴ The concept of wuquf qalbi is a symbolic form of remembering Allah with a state of non alertness to other intruding thoughts other than Him or God (‘Abd al-Majid 1997, pp. 357). Wuquf Qalbi refers to two things done by the disciples. First, the disciples called upon the meaning of each name of Allah chanted, that is He is the Ultimate and Incomparable (al-Baghdadi 2004, pp. 79, al-Khani 1987, pp. 49). The action is to eliminate the intrusion of other thoughts other than Allah. The second step in wuquf qalbi is for the disciples to focus all his senses towards his inner heart which is located under the left breast towards the left side (‘Abd al-Majid 1997, pp. 357) in The Practice of Wuquf Qalbi in the Naqshbandiyyah Khalidiyah Order and its Practice in Malaysia, Syed Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar and Che Zarrina Sa'ari, (International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol 2, No:4, 2011), 93, The Centre for Promoting Idea USA; Last Retrieved 25 October 2016, http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol._2_No._4;_March_2011/11.pdf

Worship (Ibadah): i) Islam, with its general body of knowledge and rituals for the Awam (public). There is tendency toward ghafflah or forgetfulness in this group. The people are hoping and/or expecting rewards for their deeds; ii) Awam – Khawas. There is some degree of awareness in this group. In this group, there is ‘ar-ridha’ (being contented); iii) Ihsan: Khawas-ul-Khawas – this is the group of excellence, “Ulul al-Bab; the Muhsins (a category of people close to God). In this group, the worship is only for Allah, there is no expectation of rewards. In response to the above three categorization, it was asked whether this is aligned to the stages of development of the nafs, which was articulated in chapter 2.1, to which the Sheikh responds affirmatively. This will be further elaborated in the Chapter 6 on discussion.

The Sheikh points to the verse below in terms of finding inner peace:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

“Those who believed and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Surah ar-Ra'd (13):28645)

Reference is now made by the Sheikh to Sura Zumar (39)⁶⁴⁶, 17-18:

وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادَ ﴿١٧﴾
الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۖ وَوَلِيُّكَ هُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنَّ
الْأَنْبِيَاءَ

“Those who avoid At-Taghut by not worshipping them and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants. Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are (the ones) whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding.”

⁶⁴⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 5, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 491-274

⁶⁴⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 372

In the light of the above, there are different levels of worship (ibadah) by the seekers, and each of their levels have varying levels of knowledge, where spiritual progression brings about a greater level of understanding. The Sheikh points out that this is also consistent with the Qu’ran Sura Al-Furkhan (25), 63-64⁶⁴⁷:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿٦٣﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

“And the servant of the Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth Hawna, and when the foolish address them they say; Salama (peace). And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing.”

The Sheikh makes reference is made to Sura Al-Mu’minun (23), 1-11⁶⁴⁸:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾

إِلَّا عَلَى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ فَمَنْ أَبْغَىٰ ذَاكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾

“Successful indeed are the believers. Those who with their Salah are Khashi’un (those with fear and with tranquility). Those who turn away from Al-Laghwa (falsehood including Shirk – associating Partners with God and sin). And those who pay the Zakath (obligatory dues). And those who guard their private parts. Except from their wives or their right hand possess, for then, they are free from blame. But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors. Those who are faithfully true to their Amana (trust) and to their covenants are Ra’un.

⁶⁴⁷ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 7, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 194

⁶⁴⁸ ⁶⁴⁸ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 628-634

learn how to get this done deeply to get this done. I think I have only one or two virtuous traits only.” When asked, “What kind of deeply is that deeply?” they stated:

“By going to Kulliyyah - lecture, by dhikr, by humbling with people the way that we talk the way that we give things the way that we are scared of Allah.... But it is very hard to get these ten virtuous traits. Even me at the moment, but one day I will get. Insha Allah, if Allah opens my heart and softens my tongue to speak and to read Quran Insha Allah I will be someone. I would love to go deeply, more deeply.” (Appendix 4 E).

The reference is how people learn and it touches on social learning theory of understanding, internalising, testing and reproducing behavior⁶⁵³. Here there is a of self-assessment on-going, when he says, “I have only two traits out of ten.” The ten traits taught by the Sheikh are seen as a target towards which the seekers aspire. The Sheikh was posed a question regarding how he motivated the seekers. He responded by saying that the motivation is gained through attaining equilibrium and quotes a verse from the Qur’an Sura Talaq (65)⁶⁵⁴, Verse 3:

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ
اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

“And He will provide him from where he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure of all things.”

The Sheikh adds that “based on one’s ‘taqwa’ (piety), Allah will relieve you in many ways, in order to settle all problems” (Appendix 4F). The Sheikh says that he motivates the seekers through the exposition of the two dimensions of Allah, that is the Jallal and the Jamal and each of these has its sifats or attributes. The Jamali (beautiful) attributes are: Raheem (Merciful), Rahman (Beneficent), Al-Aleem (All Knowing), Waddo (Most Loving), Halim (The Clement), Gaffoor (Forgiving). The Jalali (Majestic) attributes are: Muqtadir (sic) (Powerful), Muntaqim (The Avenger.) These two dimensions can be

⁶⁵³ Albert Bandura, Most Human Behaviour is Learned through Modeling in The Psychology Book, DK, London, 2011, 288

⁶⁵⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 39

seen as a continuum, with the Jalal or the Uluhy attributes embodying the main aspect of fear, while the Jamali or the Rubbibiya attributes embody hope and mercy. He adds that when the Prophet referred to ‘ummathan wassathan”, the reference was to the attainment of this balance between the Jalali and the Jamali attributes. The Sheikh says that, “It is a tight rope to walk on and it is to maintain the balance of fear and hope. This will prevent one from going beyond hope to hopelessness or despair.”

The above use of the ‘tight rope’ metaphor is to navigate life between Jalali – Majestic and the Jamali – Beautiful, which as many manifestations including the fearful and hopeful continuum, which is a fine balance in life to walk. The Sheikh motivates his murids through various methods including lectures, circles of dhikr and ritual practices. He refers to Sura Yusuf (12)⁶⁵⁵, verse 87, which refer to having hope and avoiding hopelessness:

يَبْنَى أَذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَأْيَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْيَسُ
مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

“O my sons! Go you and inquire about Yusuf and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah’s mercy. Certainly no one despairs of Allah’s mercy, except the people who disbelieve.”

Here the Sheikh is drawing lessons from the Qur’an to teach, especially with those residents who are ex-drug addicts and HIV patients, who have a difficult frame of mind and for whom it is essential that they do not lose hope and elicit God’s mercy. In fact, he says, “the wamathakillah, is the motivation part also it also means whatever you do God will bless you and help you to solve your problems and expect a reward or so....”

⁶⁵⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 5, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 202

The Manager of reflexology responds to a query about what he has learnt from Tuan Guru and how he has taken that and made it his own knowledge, by saying:

“I have learnt when I am in front of him there’s a limpahan noor – flow of the light.. I feel that when he taught me the words of the Quran, (sic) I thought that I got more understanding of that than (sic) since in the majlis there are so many books that you can read but you don’t quite understand it. In this way there is more understanding (sic).” (Appendix 4C).

He was asked what else he had learnt, how he had learnt and translated it into meaning for himself:

“I learn what he taught me - every knowledge of the Quran...(sic). It has very special power, very special knowledge, very special Wahi. – the revelation. For example, one was a word fee fight, fee in Dalam (inside) you only know the inside but you don’t know what is inside the inside, that is, what woke me up. There is something inside of the inside, the only one who had fee. Okay what is inside of inside it is what knowledge Allah gave to you.” [He adds] “..... Flow of limpahan noor – flow of the light and that really gives you when he taught...(sic).” (Appendix 4C).

The Manager of reflexology further expounds:

“You mention about doing more dhikr (sic), putting ourselves down so that Allah can see an empty glass (sic). We remember what the words are in the Quran (sic)..... We always remember. That’s the first thing, how to honor the tawhid (unit of God). it’s a very interesting question.... How to honor the tawhid. It is by mentioning Allah name, that it.. how you honor the tawhid.... Allah, Allah (sic).” (Appendix 4C).

The above rendition by the Manager reflexology encapsulates many key spiritual or metaphysical aspects, where firstly the above seeker refers to the flow of light (limpahan noor), which is said to be from God where its reference point can be to the Qur’anic citation of ‘light upon light!’⁶⁵⁶ Secondly, this light enlightens one’s heart, which is said to facilitate learning and where God unveils a type of divine knowledge (ma’rifa) to this type of heart (Ghazali, 1995⁶⁵⁷). Thirdly, the reference by this seeker to the ‘inside of the inside’ is the immersion into a greater depth, which has been referred

⁶⁵⁶ “Allah guides to His Light whom He wills” Al-Qur’an Sura (24) Verse 35, Tafsir Ibn Kathir Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 83

⁶⁵⁷ Ihyya Ulum ud Din – Revival of the Religious Sciences, Imam Abu Hamid Ghazali, Book of Religious Learning, Volume III, Trans Fazul Karim (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, Lahore, 1995), 27

to as *ma'rifa*⁶⁵⁸, defined as “a measure of one’s alienation from one’s own ego that one attains direct knowledge of one’s Lord”, with Abu Ali Daqqaq⁶⁵⁹ saying it ‘is the achievement of deep awe and reverence for God... Gnosis requires stillness of the heart, just as learning outward quiet. If someone’s gnosis increases, his tranquility increases’. This type of direct knowledge is what he says ‘woke me up’, when he became spiritually awake.

In explaining the inter-link between, *tauba* (repentance), *sabar* (patience), *shukur* (gratitude), the above respondent generates a number of questions:

“...then you realize what kind of person is he, is he.... patient or not (sic)? Can he be grateful (*shukur*) or not? Is he going to complain or not? Is he humble towards the people or not (sic)? Then you know, you can change the person. What Quran says and what we say, what Quran asks you to do and what you do. Quran says you *lembut hati* you are *bail hati* [*refers to the state of the heart*] not the same then we keep on judging the person (sic)? But we cannot mention it, we have to keep it and preserve our own knowledge. So what kind of person are you? Sometimes we see this is for Allah. He puts whatever he wanted to put, he puts down everybody and he puts up ..., we cannot choose (sic).” (Appendix 4C).

Here the discussion is about different types of people and their attitudes, while essentially turning towards God with repentance, gratitude and patience. The traits above mentioned forms the virtuous elements articulated in Chapter 2.2. The state of the heart of a person who is patient, grateful and humble is closer to God. This is said to evoke inspiration that ‘Verily Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit’, a Qur'anic verse.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁸ On the Hearts Direct Knowledge of God (*Marifahbillah*), The Risalat: Principles of Sufism, Abu-al Qasim Abd-al-Karim bin Hawazin al-Qushayri, Trans. Rabia Harris, Ed. Laleh Bakthiar, Series Ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Great Books of the Islamic World, 2002: 380

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid, 380

⁶⁶⁰ Surah (3) Al-Imran:37 Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 2, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 152

5.7. Approaches, Methods and Tools for Self-Development

5.7.1 Tarkiyath (Spiritual grooming), Tarbiyath (Education) and Tazkiyath

(Purification): The methods and tools for the development of the self can be broadly categorized into three key categories, namely: i) tarikath spiritual grooming of the seeker; ii) tarbiyath, which essentially means education; and iii) tazkiyath signifying the process of purification. These above three key categories in combination lay the foundation for the progress of the development of self with the data set that has been generated.

5.7.1.1 Spiritual Grooming (Tarkiyath): This concept of tarkiyath, which was outlined by the Manager of the Centre, has grooming as a major part of it, where the Sheikh through his constant interactions with the seekers moulds them, so that they acquire better character. This is seen by the responses to the questionnaire, notably in Appendix 3 Figure 4.8, the spiritual modeling of the Sheikh by the seekers and in Appendix 3 Figure 4.22 in seeing the Sheikh ‘setting an example’ (56 per cent), followed by ‘setting of the ground rules’ (50 per cent) and by ‘demonstrating from time to time’ (50 per cent) and ‘admonishing you’. The Manager of the center, who is one of the senior most seekers explains the main methods relating to self-development:

“There’s a terminology we use. We have the three – talim (methods), tazkira (purification) and tarbiyath (education) this has terminology is called tarkiya (the path or Order).” [*He goes on to explain tarkiya as*] “...spiritual grooming... the interaction between.. the word spirit but it is something, the interaction between the ruh (spirit) and the nafs (soul).” [*He adds that*] “No, Tarkiyath (order) is what you get from reading and listening to lectures and all that...Tarkiyath that one is again within the knowledge realm... Tarkiyath is also education, with a little bit more understanding actually.” (Appendix 4O).

The resident Imam, who was a former drug addict and HIV patient, forms a peer role model for other residents, who looks up to him. He often leads the prayers and provides

guidance to the other residents. He says about this organization:

“It is very different because this Naqshabandiyah is very tight and has very good discipline, good adab (conduct). You are facing seniority. You are facing your Tuan Guru, you must do things properly. And then, in here as well whatever you do, you must know that Allah— everything you do, that Allah sees you really.” (Appendix 4Q).

The sense of discipline of the Order comes out in the above rendition by the resident imam. This refers back to the concept ‘waqafal qulub’, where God is watching you, which has already been elaborated and ties in with the Jibril hadiths, where the Prophet⁶⁶¹ explained ‘Ihsan’ as, “It is to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not yet truly He sees you.” The resident Imam says in terms of taking a deep dive:

“If you go into learn about Islam, the background opens up your heart. Door by door, deep by deep inside that’s why to Rasulallah (Prophet (ﷺ)) Allah says, humble.. israk mihraj (night and heavenly flight)..... So but in Rasulallah it was a proper humble...(sic), where he tauba (repented) seventy times per day.” (Appendix 4M).

The seeker here is outlining the process of unraveling of his experiences and insights that he is gaining from the immersion, which is referred to as ‘door by door, deep by deep.’ In this light, he cites the night journey of the Prophet (ﷺ), where after his heart was cleansed by the Angels at Kabah, he undertook the night flight on a heavenly being to Masjidul Aqsa (Jerusalem), and then vertically to the seven heavens, where there were numerous spiritual experiences. The seeker is appreciating the humbleness of the Prophet (ﷺ) in spite of his lofty spiritual status.

⁶⁶¹ Narrated by Anas (r.a.), who said that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say this and it is related by Tirmidhi, who said that it was a sound hadith. Hadith 2, An-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith, Trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, The Holy Koran Publishing House, Damascus, 1976:30

5.7.1.2 Oath of Allegiance (Bai'ya): Bai'ya or the oath of allegiance that the seeker makes with the Sheikh, which involves adhering to the religious obligations and code of conduct of the Order, was a recurring theme in the narrative of the seekers as evident in this section. The professional banker who is one of the seekers outlines that:

“The oath of allegiance (bai'ya) forms one of the central elements by which the seekers form a spiritual and social bond with the Sheikh.” [*He says*]: “You know the most important when you take bai'ya with any Sheikh, you have to sabar (patience), meaning you have to follow the Sheikh actually. Not meaning that when you do already have bai'ya then you just, you do it by yourself (sic). No you have to have sabar (sic).” (Appendix 4N).

This above mentioned seeker discussing his own bai'ya:

“In 1990 with Sheikh Imam Issak (the Master of the current Sheikh) himself the most important thing is to make people change (sic), it is not only Ibadah (worship), they have to do some dhikrullah (remembrance of God); a lot of istikhfar (repentance); a lot of Salawah (praise on the Prophet); a lot of dhikrullah, yes, will help (sic). Then don't think too much about this world.. the things that are stopping you from dhikrullah (sic)”.

Here, the first oath was taken from the Master of the Sheikh himself and then when the Master passed on, he continued with his current Sheikh. What transpires in this narrative is the intensity of the spiritual acts, with repeated reference to seeking forgiveness and having a sense of detachment, where Prophet (ﷺ) himself said, “Be in this wordily life as if you are a stranger or a traveler.”⁶⁶² In response to the question, “What is bai'ya for you?” the above seeker says:

“...when you actually bai'ya you are in front of the Sheikh, where you promise in our Quran... in Sura Fath (48):18663:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَبَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

“Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the pledge to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down As-Sakinah upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory.”

⁶⁶² Abdullah Ibn Umar (r.a) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) took hold of this shoulder and related this hadith, Hadith 40, A Selection of Authentic Qudsi (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths, Collated by Muhammad.M. Abdul-Fatah and Reima Youssif Shakeir (Dar Al-Manarah, Egypt, 2014), 139

⁶⁶³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 9, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 148

The reference to the heart is meant to be taken as a reference to their level of truthfulness, trustworthiness, obedience and adherence, while as-sakinah refers to calmness and tranquility⁶⁶⁴. The above mentioned seeker says:

“.....I make bai’ya, it’s a promise; it’s not a promise to me, actually it is promise to Allah (sic). You know we have this Quran... very important to life. That is why when you recite Sura Fath you promise someone or your bai’ya in front of somebody actually you are under promise.... If you do good you know Allah will give you good things...” (Appendix 4N).

This act of the oath is sometimes misunderstood by a segment of Muslims as allegiance to the Sheikh, rather than an allegiance to God. When asked the question whether there is a difference between before bai’ya and after bai’ya, this above seeker says:

“The difference is that then only when you know who Allah is, then you will know... who you are actually. So here we cannot you know before you know Allah, you would think that you have the power, you have strength, you have this.... you do that. Then when I joined, I knew who.. makes me earn money, where does the money come from, then you realize that is all Allah.. it’s not me... I cannot do anything if Allah is not helping me. It is actually Allah. You want to eat it is Allah who is moving your hand.” [*He is citing the Qur’an, Sura Al-Hijr(15) :25665*] “Its Allah, if Allah doesn’t move your hands you cannot eat. So then you know this is Allah. When you see, don’t just look at the tree. If you look at the tree you will see the tree, God is a creator, and God can create a tree, be it tall or be it small (sic). When we think Allah already knows what we are thinking. We think that we are so intelligent... (sic). Allah is moving our brains to think actually, so when you know who is Allah, you know you are down to earth.” (Appendix 4N).

So the shift seen here in the perception believing in oneself, to believing that all things proceed from God. This seeker reinforces this stating that:

“Actually that’s why I just told you just now, before bai’ya, I still prayed but I was thinking who Allah is. I don’t know who Allah is because that time I didn’t have any dhikrullah, you know lack of dhikrullah and istikhfar (repentance)....” (Appendix 4N).

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid, 149

⁶⁶⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 5, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 387

This points out to a renewed orientation of the seeker and his deepening understanding of the nature of God through his repentance and meditative practices of remembrance of God. Even though the ritual prayer in Islam is sacrosanct, the Qur'an says that, "the remembrance (praising) of Allah is greater indeed,"⁶⁶⁶ putting the emphasis on dhikr. In this light, Lings⁶⁶⁷ says that one of the meanings of this passage is "that turning towards the inner center is 'greater' than turning towards the outer center." The ideal, however, is to do it simultaneously and it is best captured in the saying, "Our performance of the rites of worship is considered strong or weak accordingly to the degree of remembrance of God while performing them."⁶⁶⁸ Responding to the question as to whether the oath is binding, the above seeker says:

"If you disobey or break your promise you will get kifara (punishment) from Allah. Yes it is binding (sic). So there is a lot of difference between before bai'ya and after bai'ya. Before bai'ya you don't know to whom you are praying.... I follow the fasting, I follow all the fiqh rules and things but yet there were no changes (sic). The only thing that you do is pray, without knowing to whom you are praying. You don't know. So there is no Khusu (concentration) on the salah (sic)." (Appendix 4 N).

The reference above is to a change in orientation from becoming aware or mindful while in a state of worship, where there has been a shift from not being fully aware of what one is doing it for, or for whom one is doing it for. This is also to come to a realization and as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "...consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul and the heart feel tranquil...."⁶⁶⁹ The question was posed to the Manager of the Center about the nature of bai'ya, and he responded:

"Bai'ya means a promise. There is a verse in the Quran saying that between you and that person, your follower—this is the words in the Quran. It is not between you and the person but.... to God. So actually a testimony is between you and God (sic). And there is a Quran verse and I showed you many." [*He was requested to outline what occurs in a bai'ya*]: "Something to motivate you to

⁶⁶⁶ Sura Ankabut (29): Verse 45, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 7, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 493

⁶⁶⁷ Martin Lings, 2005:37

⁶⁶⁸ Sheikh al-Alawi cited in Martin Lings, 2005:37

⁶⁶⁹ Wabisah Ibn Ma'bad (r.a) narrated this hadith as state by the Prophet (ﷺ) Hadith 27, A Selection of Authentic Qudsi (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths, Collated by Muhammad.M. Abdul-Fatah and Reima Youssif Shakeir (Dar Al-Manarah, Egypt, 2014), 127

bai'ya otherwise if there is nothing.... binding you, then you wouldn't want to be part of it. If you do you get the blessing or you get the reward. So after Bai'ya that person must have the ambition to perform it... So it almost becomes compulsory, because the first you have to say the bai'ya". (Appendix 4O).

He describes what occurs immediately after bai'ya and the focus of the dhikr or remembrance on the different parts of the body on what is called the subtle spiritual organs (latifa) starting with the heart:

"So the first one after Bai'ya you must say at least 5000 times per day, and that one is focused onto your Qalb (heart) and later on after.... some time... to join it with the ruh (soul), sirr (inner secret), khafi (Inner most secret), akhfa (inner most inner), nafs (self) and kulli jasm (the whole body from top to bottom), then you will get your promotion to the next lathaif." (Appendix 4O and diagram in Appendix 5).

Here the seeker is outlining the process of dhikr, where after taking the oath of allegiance, you draw your attention to your spiritual heart (just below the physical heart), and this is followed by shifting the attention to others areas as above mentioned located in the different part of the chest and head. Appendix 5 illustrates the points of the lathaifs within the body. This is a whole system unique to the Naqshabandiyah system, where the seven points in the body are used to focus one's attention, while the explicit overall focus is on God. The seeker reinforces this by stating that:

"Bai'ya it is also a motivation and obligation. The motivation is because you have joined the group. And the obligation is to perform it, there are no excuses. There shouldn't be any excuses. This is the one which must prompt you to go on to do the sunnah – practice of the Prophet, where I was saying although it is sunnah, it is wajib (obligatory)... If you don't do it means you have missed something—just like our prayer, our daily five prayers, if you don't do it you have sinned. And the compulsion it is...obligation (sic). You must do it then only after sometime—then this is the technology that is the beginning... you are stuck to it ... (sic)." (Appendix 4O).

Here the emphasis is cultivating it as a habit, so that it becomes a part of you. Even though there are acts which are termed sunnah, which are not obligatory, for example the dhikr, these in themselves become somewhat obligatory in that if you happen to miss it, then you tend to feel a gap in your heart. The friend of the resident imam, who

had previous difficulties relating to drugs and HIV articulates his motivation and his experience:

“First of all I before I was becoming a part of the dhikr group, every day I see the seeker going (for dhikr) and my heart is itching to be with them (sic). So after one month, I told them I want to join and did so. After bai’ya about two or three weeks, I was really happy that I was doing dhikr and learning how to dhikr. My idea was how to be in the dhikr group and I get close to Allah. As time went on, I got dreams I saw that I am dhikring in my dreams, so whether I don’t know is it Satan or is it me? Is it me or is it Satan in my dreams that I was dhikring with our group?” (Appendix 4 H).

This is a juncture when the role of the Sheikh becomes important to cross-check these types of experiences based on the framework of his experiences. This signifies a state of internalisation of the remembrance of God, as it becomes reflected in dream states. As Jung⁶⁷⁰ states, dreams “reveal more than they conceal.” What is explicit here is that, there is an acute sense awareness that things that transpire can be God inspired or from Satan, and thus the Sheikh’s role of guiding the seekers become critical for one’s development.

One of the two females⁶⁷¹ in the group relates her experience of the oath:

“So I follow Tuan Guru.... when I started I took the bai’ya, I had to pray. I prayed Salah Tauba (repentance) and then asked Allah for guidance with the past (sic). It was a great; you know everybody will be so scared after taking bai’ya thinking that it is something really wrong. But after taking Bai’ya, I find that more truth is being revealed. The closeness, how we wish to perfection of Aqida.” (Appendix 4 I).

⁶⁷⁰ Jung says that “They are a natural expression of our imagination and use the most straightforward language at our disposal: mythic narratives. And surprisingly enough, Jung did not believe that dreams need to be interpreted for them to perform their function. Instead, he suggested that dreams are doing the work of integrating our conscious and unconscious lives; he called this the process of *individuation*. its easiest to think of individuation as the mind’s quest for wholeness, or that quality of applied wisdom.... While not required, working with dreams and *amplifying* the mythic components can hasten along the process”, The Dream Theories of Carl Jung; Last Retrieved 27th October 2016; <http://dreamstudies.org/2009/11/25/carl-jung-dream-interpretation/>.

⁶⁷¹ The interview was done with one female, while the survey questionnaire was completed with two, one who was the nurse and the other was a wife of a senior seeker.

The reference here is to dispelling her fears and having a renewed experience after she had taken oath and gone through a process of repentance. There seems to be a greater propensity towards God, signifying her statement through more truth being revealed.

5.7.2 Tarbiyath (Education): There are some key aspects to tarbiyath including keeping the company of the Sheikh, Qur'anic recital and kulliyyah (lectures). Each of these will now be elaborated.

5.7.2.1 The Company of the Sheikh (Shoeba): Being present with the Sheikh is one of the most vital elements, where one comes to grips with oneself and getting the required guidance into the pathway for the development of the self. One of the participants says:

“Like the Sahabas (Prophetic companions) we refer to Abu-Bakr (r.a), Omar (r.a), Osman (r.a) and Ali (r.a) (sic).. We have to follow this type of model (sic).... when it is work time you do work, when free time you have to do dua for your Sheikh. Like me, every weekend I am helping my Sheikh by helping him here, to cook. Actually I cook for them.” (Appendix 4N).

This aspect of service to others is a key part of the way of the tarika or the path, where you go beyond your own selfish needs and cater for others. Imam Qushari⁶⁷² says “someone who keeps the company of the Sheikh whose degree is above his own is to give up opposing him, to treat everything that appears from him as beautiful, and to accept his states with faith in him.” The motivation to join the organization and be with the Sheikh is thus flagged as the seeker points out:

“From the dhikr and also from this Qur'anic verse, you look at the Rahman (mercy) of Allah. Yes the jamalullah (the beautiful), the sifhana sifha jamalullah (the healing and beautiful). The group of attributes of Jalal (uluhia) and al jamali (rubbibia) such as Rahman al Raheem (the compassionate or beautiful attributes), which is the opposite of the al jalal attribute (the Majesty and Powerful) such as, wabeer, munthakheem, munthakhabeer... Takut in English is something to do with frighten..... What do you call it? When we remember the ...the fear of Allah..... (sic).” (Appendix 4N).

⁶⁷² Qushyari, 2002:357

This attribute of Jamal (Beauty) and Jallal (Majestic), which was referred to earlier by the Sheikh and now by one of the seekers, is a continuum of Godly attributes, where parts form a basis for emulating and building one's own characteristics based on the ninety nine attributes of God⁶⁷³. This is seen to be reflected in the Prophetic model, a pathway for 'ennobling one's character', as the Quran states: "And indeed, you are upon a noble conduct, an exemplary manner"⁶⁷⁴, and where the "moral of the Prophet (ﷺ) was based on the Qu'ran" as stated by his wife Aisha (r.a.)⁶⁷⁵.

The outcome of getting the guidance from the Sheikh and being with him is to try and develop a more holistic way of life as underlined here by the Sheikh himself:

"Yes love, care and fear of Allah and being full of hope and his mercy – Rahman" and to gain an a sense of equilibrium, which is the aim (sic). It is not the middle path, which is something else (sic). That's what normally people interpret but the middle path means a state of equilibrium..(sic)".

Given the flux of life the Sheikh says that the guidance "guides you to the true path ..you walk on the road..... walking on tight rope, so you balance, if it isn't balance you fall off it's something like that, yes." (Appendix 4N). With 50 per cent of the respondents being drug addicts, HIV patients and a few transgender, the close guidance of the Sheikh is critical as underscored here by the Sheikh himself :

"Despair, that prevents you from going to despair... or hopelessness... both of these are the things are used to motivate the murids (seekers); all the attributes.... it is the balancing of both the Jamal and Jalal..... If you can achieve this. then you are okay you're going in the right path (sic)." (Appendix 4F).

Discussing about the methods used by the Sheikh:

⁶⁷³ Of the ninety nine attributes of God, there are some which can be emulated to some extent such as, being beautiful, compassionate, subtle, forgiving etc; while others cannot be such as, being Majestic, all Powerful, the Life Giver etc.

⁶⁷⁴ Al-Qur'an, Sura Nun (68):4, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 100

⁶⁷⁵ This was narrated by Abu Dardar (r.a) when he said Aisha (r.a.) about the character of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Dimension of Manner and Morals of the Holy (ﷺ), Ahlul Bayt Library Project 1995-2016, Al-Islam.org; Last retrined 23/10/2016; <https://www.al-islam.org/prophethood-and-prophet-islam-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/dimensions-manner-and-morals-holy-prophet>

“So the murids (seekers) listens to its lecturers and.. otherwise you don’t get anything.... you also got to go for his classes and learn about the actual practice of the dhikr and the tarika or the path.” (Appendix 4F).

The Sheikh motivates his seekers through various forms, including lectures and by pointing out that none but people who deny the truth can ever lose hope of God’s life-giving mercy of dhikr and ritual practices. The Centre Supervisor’s says that:

“Shoeba (companionship) near the Tuan Guru. Everything you get is through Shoeba (sic)... he will teach you how to sort that problem.” (Appendix 4P).

In response to the question regarding what one has learnt from the Sheikh that one can use in one’s life, one of the seekers, who has been with the Sheikh for several years states that:

“One of the things that I have learnt is the practice of dhikr (remembrance of God)...” [and] “One of the things is the spirit of Shoeba (Sheikhs company), which means that there is a great attachment to him and with that I get attached to my family, friends and folks, especially with those who are within the group of dhikr group, there is a bonding.” (Appendix 4Q)

The Centre Nurse, who is also a seeker, says about modeling the Sheikh:

“What you feel is that he is very patient. We learn because... to be like him. You try to copy as much as possible. So when you come as husband and wife then that is the good part (sic). Because when we are under one guru and then you remind each other. If you feel a sense of loss (sic) then I keep remembering why not, this is how our guru does things and then we absorb that behavior so you solve the problem (sic).” (Appendix 4I).

The trait of patience is one of the keys to self-development, given its repeated reference both in the interview data set, as well as the survey data as seen in the Appendix 3 Figures 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12. Here one observes once again the process of emulating and modeling through, which one learns as outlined in the social learning theory of Bandura⁶⁷⁶, which will be fleshed out in detail in the chapter 5 discussion. The Centre Manager discusses the role of the Sheikh as an educationist and in doing his spiritual

⁶⁷⁶ Albert Bandura in Modelling and Social Learning Theory, Psychology, DKH, 2011: 286

dispensation, as well as how he interacts with the seekers in the various geographical areas:

“The sheikh appoints the halaka chief. Halaka is the group so in each center we have the chief. He goes round every month the first week in the month he goes to...different sub-centers within Malaysia (sic). They also have some seeker in Brunei and Singapore.” (Appendix 4R).

This denotes a centralized form of management, with the sub-center Chief's being empowered, which makes the functioning of the system more efficient.

5.7.2.2 Qur'anic Recital:

Turning towards the Qur'an and reciting it, whether one understands it or does not, forms a central aspect of the Islamic life, representing a reflection on God and His message, which was a part and parcel of the life in this Order. One of the senior seekers says:

“Yes, actually Allah is not teaching Rasulallah (the Prophet ﷺ) to read, Allah is teaching Rasulallah to dhikr and this translation is real. That time there is no books or something that Rasulallah cannot read. This is something that Allah is asking us to do (sic). The meaning here is that you have to dhikrullah and think of Allah. Many people will dhikrullah but they might be somewhere else (in their mind). Believe me, that is why we have a clinic (uzal) for 10 days.” (Appendix N).

Thus the seeker alludes to what he was essentially transmitted was dhikr or remembrance of God. Secondly, the reference to people being 'somewhere else' pertains to the need to get away to the uzla or retreat, where one can train oneself to be focused in developing ones attention. One of the residents alludes to his schedule of waking up and devotion:

“I wake up for thahajjuth (night vigil) and do thauba (repentance). First, tauba nasiha...yes what sin has come, ... what sin is gone, so Allah please open my heart to follow and soften my tongue to read our Quran because I will still try to learn how to read the Quran, because I don't know how to read the Quran yet.” (Appendix 4H).

Repentance or tauba, which is seen throughout the data, is seen here as an in-road to getting close to God, with a plea to ‘soften my tongue’, to be better able to absorb and learn.

In terms of expectations of joining the organisation, the resident Imam says:

“For me let’s say I want Allah to forgive me for whatever I have done before (sic). The rubbish things relating to my morality (akhlaq), where somebody looks at me like I am rubbish (sic). Nobody can say what is wrong with you.”

He continues :

“But then you still must follow up and then, if you do it truly and then keep at it, then like you leave... the wrong parts. If you go straight, day-by-day in your heart, you think you are very small, if Allah doesn’t hurt you, nobody can do anything. You can never do that; Allah will not let it happen. Now that trusting in Allah is 100 per cent. Before you just say that Allah gives your life so I go anywhere, I don’t know how to salah, I don’t do fasting, I don’t do salawah. So I ask myself, why do you do like that, you know the punishment is very very hard... I learned that I know that I am very scared.” (Appendix 4J).

An above rendition is a process in tasawwuf known as ‘muhasiba’ or self-accounting, which is an essential part of reconciling with oneself and God and coming to terms with one’s spiritual position (see chapter 2.2). Regarding trust, the resident Imam highlights that:

“...my heart is very trusting, so who is Allah (sic) and, whatever you think He not like that (sic). It is the same like if I give you honey and you eat that honey, while I saw you eat the honey and then I task you how about this honey (sic). You say it is very sweet and I say you are also very sweet but how is your sweet (sic). For me, I say that I don’t know what is the difference (sic).” (Appendix 4J).

Here he is discussing the incomprehensibility of God, for as the Qur’an says, “There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.”⁶⁷⁷ The concept that tasawwuf or the experiential learning of the knowledge of God in effect constitutes only a sense of

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Qur’an, Sura Ash-Shura(42), Verse 11, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 598

‘taste’ (dwath) that nobody else but you knows. The reference here is to ‘the taste of honey’, which is sweet but its perceived taste differs from one to another. Lings⁶⁷⁸ highlights that the concept of ‘taste’ in tasawwuf forms one of the central concepts given that knowing God is a personal experience, which varies from one person to another. In responding to the question, “whereabouts is the trust?”, he says:

“That’s in your heart. Trust is not being scared and hope Allah will keep you (sic). You know Allah sees you everywhere, whatever you do, whatever is inside your heart Allah. Right or wrong...What Allah gives you and more? What you know about the world the secrets of dhikr in the Quran”. [*When so was there trust before or now?*]: “Unlike before (sic). now if something is wrong, my brain is fighting inside with that which is wrong (sic). Sometimes it’s true, it’s wrong and then I think yes this is wrong. But I just learned from al-Quran that it said... don’t shop lift or take something (sic).” (Appendix 4J).

This ties in with the method of dhikr that his Order does, namely, waqf-ul-qulb⁶⁷⁹ or that God is watchful of you and He is the Knower of the heart, where trust resides. This state of the heart is what is referred to as ‘nafs-ul-lawwama’, where the critical self becomes aware of its’ wrongs (see chapter 2.1). The transformation of the resident Imam and why this happened is articulated as thus:

“It has changed because I hope when Allah very loved me whatever I do... He said in the Quran ‘if you truly do whatever I say and hope for me to forgive you, you will do it properly and then you will get it (sic).’ Now seriously, I follow You, I just get it in my heart. I do not know how to discuss about the heart (sic), you must do what you can to get it, if you do not, then you will not get it (sic).” (Appendix 4J).

Apart from Islam meaning peace, the essence of it is submission to God and this is exemplified where the seeker says, if you truly do what is commanded by God, then He is with you, and this is through the heart, where he poses the question and then responds to it.

⁶⁷⁸ Martin Lings, What is Sufism (Sohail Academy, Lahore, 2005). 7

⁶⁷⁹ Concept of waqf-ul-qalb, elaborated in Syed Hafidullah and Che Zarrina Sa’ari, 2011

5.7.2.3 Lectures (Kulliyah): The lecture sessions conducted by the Sheikh are held periodically in different mosques and also when the group and the Sheikh gather for dhikr. The perceptions of the seekers are outlined below. The resident Imam says:

“Apart from that we learn that the talim (educational) part, we learn a lot of things from him (Sheikh), especially those pertaining to the tasawwuf or sufism.”

These are mainly lecture type sessions rendered by the Sheikh, while there is also key guidance pertaining to tasawwuf. communicated both verbally and non-verbally. These are either noted down or become a part of the memory of the seekers, which is factored in as a part of their learning (Appendix 4Q). The female seeker reveals her point of contact with the Sheikh:

“So you will die because you want to be close to Allah. So every time he (Tuan Guru) came to teach, I was one of the few... out of the whole village...who made use of it (sic).” [*She says*]: “Yes Tuan Guru was looking for me and was asking some students, what happened to me and why I haven’t come for so long (sic).. At that time, I was looking after my mother who had a stroke... it was the end stage of her life so she was very dependent. So when they came, I was actually caring for my mother and so they were surprised... but during those period, I was actually praying to Allah and asking Allah. I did that tawasul...” [*She went through a process of questioning herself*]: “Where is the truth, what am I doing down here and how I missed the lectures. I miss going to the tawajju (spiritual attention) but how am I going for it (sic), I feel that basically helpless. So when you taffakur (reflection) and of course the dhikr I do it every day...” (Appendix 4I).

She is here outlining her circumstances, where despite them she was able to undertake the practices that she has learnt from the Sheikh. There is a notion within tasawwuf that when the student is ready the Sheikh comes along and fulfills this role, and it was from this that she eventually became fully involved with the Order. There are three concepts that she refers to: namely, tawasul, which is requesting God to fulfill a wish; tawajju or getting spiritual attention from the Sheikh; and taffakur, a state of reflecting on one’s own spiritual states. She reiterated the impact of the lectures:

“Yes Ibadah also has an impact on your akhlaq (morality) and the guru also impact on your akhlaq because when you also keep getting close to since almost every day as long as there’s a lecture and rules. In the mosque, we always follow the programme, so there, in the lessons that he imparts to us, there is also knowledge there for people who remember Akhlaq (morality)... Ibadah even when you are treating other people or looking after the sick it’s all Ibadah isn’t it? so whatever you do, the servitude to the Lord, then it is the ibadah...” (Appendix 4I).

Here one can discern that there is a systematic approach by the Sheikh in terms of having a programme and dispensing it to the murids or seekers. She is pointing out that worship, as well as the Sheikh, has an impact on morality (akhlaq). This is corroborated by the survey data, where seekers have pointed out the connection between then (Appendix 3 Figures 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32). Here the holistic concept of worship is underlined, where it is not only confined to the ritual prayers but also includes servitude to God and caring for others. Responding to the query, “What have you learnt from Tuan Guru? And how do you take that knowledge and make it your own?”, the Manager of Islamic Reflexology says:

“I have learnt when I am in front of him (Sheikh) there’s a Limpahan Noor (flow of light). I feel that when he taught me in the words of Quran. I thought that there is more understanding of that, that is, what I learnt in that majlis (congregation) because so many in the books you can read but you don’t quite understand and here this is more understanding (sic).” (Appendix 4K).

The concept here is of the flow of light, which is generally characteristic of a pious person from a traditional perspective, and its penetration into the hearts when the Sheikh teaches, as compared to what he had learnt before. This is perhaps reinforced by the insight and explanations of the Sheikh himself. The above seeker further expresses his feelings:

“Other times, yes, that I feel that I am nobody (sic). You feel tawajjuh although there is Prophet Mohammed the highest level but he is as a slave to Allah ubudiya (slave). Then in person, there are a few on this level, for example, those with patience or sabar (sic). First, we start with Tauba (repentance), then the sabar (patience) and shukur (gratitude)... so at this level we will feel serious what people do to you... You go for Kulliyyah and then you come back late everyday... You have to be patient. A lot of patience. So when you are lucky

enough to flourish for all this things you have you have to be patience and this Sabar (patience) has very high potential (sic).” (Appendix 4K).

The concept of ‘tawajjuh’ referred to here is “a process of spiritual inducement brought about by the special attention of an accomplished Sufi Master unto a seeker.”⁶⁸⁰ He is touching upon the virtuous traits like repentance, patience, and gratitude that are required to flourish within oneself as per his own articulation. These three traits (repentance, patience, gratitude) were also flagged by respondents from both the center residents as well as the general seekers in the survey data (Appendix 3 Figures 4.11, 4.12, 4.16 and 4.17). Thus these form key traits, which are required towards the development of the self. Imam Junayd⁶⁸¹, Imam Ghazhali, and Imam Hazm⁶⁸² all point to patience as one of the most fundamental virtues (see chapter 2.5 – table on virtues).

Two of the residents, including the resident Imam, who are transforming their lives, outline their learnings from the Tuan Guru through the kulliyyah or lecture exercise:

“So like tuan guru said last night, there are ten traits (sic): baraka (blessings), shukur (gratitude), tawakkal (trust), taubat (repentance), sabar (patience), zuhud (spiritual poverty), amal (hope), ridor (acceptance) and takut (fear).” [*They outline that*]: “So the brain and the heart are different (sic). So Allah says, if you never use your brain and heart properly to dhirik, they must be together. It must be in our brains and in our heart... that we do well, we get good from it and we stay good okay (sic).” [*They say that*]: “You want to get it and you are not confident of getting it (sic), day by day, you use your hand to make dua (supplication). Dua is something like you hope for....” (Appendix 4M).

The above seekers reiterate that ridor:

“this is in Gods will and not mine (sic)... you accept it. One needs to think about the akhirah (the next life), so that they have baraka (blessings) in this world and that they need to have shukur (grateful), tawakkal (trust) in Allah, taubat (repentance), sabar (patience), takut (fear) of Allah.” [*They continue*]: “If you get these 10 things then you are very close to Allah” [*and*]: “That’s why when we go to Kulliyyah or our guru is preaching we have to take notes (sic).” [*They*

⁶⁸⁰ In ‘Dalail-Us-Sulook: An Objective Appraisal of the Sublime Sufi Path, Maulana Allah Yar Khan, Trans from Urdu Abu Talha Idarah-E-Naqshbanddiah Owaisiah, Pakistan, 1976), 10

⁶⁸¹ Imam Ghazali ‘s Ihyya-Ul-Ud-Din (Revival of Religious Sciences) (Muhammad Ashraff, Lahore, 1995; 1998)

⁶⁸² Imam Ibn Hazm’s Virtues (1995)

reiterate that]: “So when you can do all this, Allah will accept you or Allah will listen. You are looking for Him but you can’t see Him but he can see you” (Appendix 4M).

There are two central aspects that they are discussing, firstly, the ten virtuous traits that forms the rails on which one has to walk on the spiritual path. These core values form the drivers for change in one’s behavior and there seems to be a concerted effort to inculcate it. Secondly, the orientation of the next world within the framework of dunya-akhirah (this world-the next world), which gives the right perspective for immersion in these type of activities. This is a Prophetic perspective of living a truthful life in this world and preparing the next life, while being frequently reminded of impending death (see chapter 2.6 on the spiritual life of the Prophet).

5.7.3 Tazkiyath (purification):

This section on ‘tazkiyath’ is one of the keys to self-development and it deals with some critical approaches and methods that are needed for this purpose including development of virtuous traits, uzla (retreat), repentance, ritual and optional prayers-salah, dhikr (remembrance), night vigil (tahhajuth), supplication (dua) and serving others (ukuwath or solidarity).

5.7.3.1 Morality (Akhlaq) & the Heart: The Sheikh points out that:

“Values (human) and their manifestation depend on the stages of the heart of the worshipper. They are influenced by emotions and attributes. Some of the key values are: taubat (repentance), Shukur (thankfulness), Sabar (patience), zuhud (state of poverty); muhabat (love), ridha (acceptance). The heart of a muhsin has humility and is awake.” (Appendix 4G)

The Sheikh cites Surah Zumar (39:17).⁶⁸⁸

أَخْرَجَ مُصِيبَعُونَ لَقِيَ وَلِيَّتَيْهِمْ مَعُونِ الْيُنَى عَنِ الْفَنَاشِئَةِ لِلشَّرِّ لَمْ يَمِ اللَّهُ لَيْ وَابِلَوْ لِي عِدُو مَا أَنْ لَطَغُوتِ أَصْنَعُوا وَالْيُنَى
١٨ آتَابَ أَلُوا مَمْ وَأُؤِيَّكَ اللَّهُ هَيَّ مَمَ الْيُنَى أُولَىكَ

“Those who avoid At-Taghut by not worshipping then and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants. Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are (the ones) whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding (Ulul-Albab).”

There are many aspects covered by these verses referred to by the Sheikh, which point out that by aligning with the divine writ and in doing that which has been ordained, one is strengthening one's acts of worship and focus on the remembrance of God. All of this puts the seeker on track, while changing their behavior for the better. Ibn Kathir⁶⁸⁹ comments on the above verse and its reference to 'At-Taghut', based on the authority of a companion, who had left the worshipping of idols and turned to God. Muhammad Asad⁶⁹⁰ referenced At-Taghut as being such that 'circumscribes the seductive force of certain evil ambitions or desires – like striving for power for its own sake, acquisition of wealth by exploiting one's fellow beings, social advancements by all means of immoral means etc.'. The men of understanding referred to here are those who 'possess sound reasoning and an upright nature', who are beyond these mundane desires. The Sheikh cites another Qur'anic verse⁶⁹¹:

“(Hence,) O my sons, go forth and try to obtain some tidings of Joseph and his brother; and do not lose hope of God's life-giving mercy, verily, none but people who deny the truth can ever lose hope of God's life-giving mercy.”

⁶⁸⁸ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Sheikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 372

⁶⁸⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Sheikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 372-373

⁶⁹⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Sheikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 9, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 845

⁶⁹¹ Al-Qur'an Sura Yusuf (12): Verse 87, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 5, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 202

Thus, there are two aspects: one that of one's own realisation and the other the hope that change will come. This verse is very pertinent for the residents of the Centre where they see impending death, while God highlights hope and life-giving qualities.

5.7.3.2 Core Value System: Virtues and Vices: This section deals with the various features that relate to the development of the self including facets connected with virtues traits, as well as vices and an essential teaching of the Sheikh. The 5 most important traits scored⁶⁹² by the respondents that were viewed as important for self-development (see Appendix 3 Figure 4.17) were: patience (13 per cent); humbleness (11 per cent); kindness (9 per cent), love (9 per cent), with forgiveness and honesty both being 8 per cent. As evident in Appendix 3 Figure 4.18, these virtuous traits were further ranked⁶⁹³ by the respondents, with highest ranked being patience and love, followed by generosity. The rest followed with the same score, including wisdom, modesty, kindness, hard work, humbleness and honesty.

In terms of the vices as seen in Appendix 3 Figure 4.20, the highest ranked vice was anger, followed by love of the world, heedlessness, plus laziness and superiority. Pride, greedy, anxiety, materialism and fraud were ranked similarly. These vices were further prioritised in order to get the 1st ranked (Appendix 3 – 4.21) and resulted in anger being the most highly ranked, followed by heedlessness. This was followed by similar scores for superiority, love of the world, forgetfulness and arrogance. There were a comparatively high percentage of respondents who did not specifically a response to this ranking.

⁶⁹² These scores were computed based on the seekers scoring of different traits, while arriving at an average score by dividing the response by the number of participants who score against these traits.

⁶⁹³ The same seekers were asked to priority rank these above mentioned traits and these are accordingly reflected.

It is interesting to compare the type and level of vices before and after joining the group as shown in Appendix 3 – 4.21 and 4.30 respectively. Before joining the group there is a high range of vices with decreasing levels including: anger, forgetfulness, heedlessness, anxiety, and laziness. There was high percentage of respondents who did not give their responses. There were other responses, which had much lower scores including the inability to accept one's mistake, sinning, jealousy, lying, sulking, and a lack of confidence in being able to do things. These above response of anger as being one of the worst vices corroborates with the scholarly views of Imam Ghazali, where he has flagged anger-hatred as core ruinous traits that give rise to other ruinous traits of envy, ridicule, contempt, back-biting etc. (see chapter 2.2 Figure 2.4).

There was an observation made of the traits before and after joining the Order. It is found that many other traits remained the same before and after joining the organization, while some key changes were noted, being underlined in the proceeding section. In Appendix 3 – 4.21 and 4.30, it will be noted that there was a high level of non-responses, followed by an inappropriate indication of calmness as one of the vices, which is followed laziness, anger, and heedlessness. These three traits seem to be recurrent in the data set. Perhaps the reference of calmness as one of the vices could be due to inactivity and a sense of relaxation, where people tend to become less active (i.e. a conflation with laziness.) The rest of the vices had a much lower score including arrogance, forgetfulness, being materialistic, love for this world, malice, and superiority. There seems to be an indicative reduction in the scores especially relating to anger (from 8 to 2), heedlessness (from 3 to 2), with one trait where the score was slightly higher after joining the organization being that of laziness. They could perhaps be related to devoting more time for worship rather than doing some activity, which is deemed as laziness.

Appendix 3 – 4.20 shows anger as seen is marked as the most destructive vice, which affects self-development following by superiority, heedlessness plus laziness. When asked about the essential teachings of the Sheikh on its management (Appendix 3 – 4.16) the following were scored in order from high to low: being silent and saying prayer being the highest (66 per cent and 56 per cent respectively), getting advice from others and supplicating to God scored evenly at 26 per cent, with being patient following it with a score of 16 per cent. The rest of the strategies on anger management had lower scores including: being realistic, Islamic reflexology, salawat, dhikr and retaliation.

5.7.3.3 Uzla – Spiritual Retreat – The Sheikh articulates that seclusion (uzla or khalwat) is outlined as an activity, which is essential for gaining the knowledge of God and experiencing the beloved meaning God, which is an essential part of the Prophetic tradition.⁶⁹⁴ He outlines the twenty conditions that guide the retreat:

- i. having sincere intention to cleanse oneself;
- ii. requesting the Sheikh to pray for the disciple, and also taking the oath of allegiance (bai'ya);
- iii. practice solitude, staying awake and experiencing hunger;
- iv. Stepping into the khalwat with the right foot, while seeking help from Allah to keep away Satan and reading the Qur'anic sura Nas;
- v. always be with ablution (wudu);
- vi. not focus on the desire to get sanctity;
- vii. the disciple should not lean against the wall or the like;
- viii. the disciple should always imagine his teacher;

⁶⁹⁴ Membentuk Sufi Jiwa, Jahid Sidek, (Falah Publication, Malaysia, 2014), .M/S 284

- ix. the disciple should fast;
- x. he should be silent except for the remembrance of God or when it is necessary to speak out;
- xi. beware of the four enemies – Satan, the world, lust and an-nafs (self);
- xii. should be far away from loud noise;
- xiii. be mindful of the Friday prayers and congregational prayers, which is the sunnah of the Prophet;
- xiv. cover the head and up to the knees, and look down only;
- xv. should not sleep unless very sleepy and must be in a state of cleanliness;
- xvi. must maintain a state of awareness and with a balanced state so as not to over eat;
- xvii. in the midst of the khalwat, should not open the door to others except for the Sheikh;
- xviii. if there are any openings (spiritual), should feel that this came through the Sheikh and Prophet from Allah;
- xix. should reject any thinking, whether good or bad since this would disrupt the heart, which is focusing on Allah;
- xx. always maintain remembrance as guided by the Sheikh until he is asked to stop or leaves the khalwat.

The Manager states that:

“Beneficial is the Quran....it is... very peaceful. When you had tahajjut (night vigil)....” The question was posed so what is it about the Quran reading which makes it like that” and he responds saying “To me it is peaceful; when I do not understand I ask the imam and he explain to me what this is. When asked is it the words or the meaning or just the words?”. He says “The meaning.” When they do not understand the meaning they ask the imam (Appendix 4R).

There are different things which give peace to people and in this case, it is found that the recitation of the Qur'an seems to elicit this state of mind. In the context of the

current mindfulness culture, this is termed ‘passage meditation’⁶⁹⁵, where one concentrates on scriptural messages. During the retreat, the dhikr and the recitation of the Qur’an become intensified, in order to get a greater immersion into the depths of one’s mind for the seekers. The professional banker discusses about Uzla (seclusion):

“...they went for ten days already. Sometime, most of the time in Ramadan we do in Ramadan... what is the observation?...Lot of rules... less talk, you cannot simply talk and then you just don’t sit like this and start talking... your duty is dhikr only. Dhirk.....Yes five times we pray five times. We do jammah (congregational) you cannot do salah alone.. The rule is doing things together (sic).” [*He expounds that*]: “And then there are rules you know, we sleep in a mosquito net. it’s like a grave and when you sleep in there, it feels like... last time...Food, only rice and vegetables (sic). This is for the ten days (sic). After ten days you go and eat meat, it’s okay. We cannot give in... we are afraid. We cannot give in for we have Shahawath (desire) (sic).” (Appendix 4Z).

Here the respondent is referring to the environment of their spiritual retreat and the rules governing it, where the key focus is on ritual prayers and dhikr. The key aspect is that it provides them with a space away from their normal life, with the restriction of food and desires, which prevents lethargy from setting in from consuming too much food. All of these are done to enable the mind to free itself from the daily machinations and become freer and more focused. The question here is to establish if this tariqa is following the sharia (that is their five daily prayers, the congregational prayers, which they usually do) or is it going beyond the prescribed to those acts that are deemed optional, that are doing dhikr and many sunnah prayers, as well as maintaining a state of physical purity or wudu. The intention of the retreat is to restrict the connection with the outside world as much as possible, and sustain a minimalistic living in all senses including diet, sleep, sensations etc. The above seeker says that in terms of sleep:

“It’s up to you. When you get tired, you take a rest then you start when you wake up. When you get up in the morning it is 4:30am, you have to wake up and start to dhikr while waiting... for subuh (morning prayers) (sic). And then you know you cannot sleep after iftar (breakfast). That is the rule actually. Every day in your lifetime..... You have to be in Wudu (ablution) 24 hrs. What you do in

⁶⁹⁵ Shapiro et al in *Cultivating Mindfulness*, a randomized controlled study, which compared mindfulness with another traditional practices called the Eight Point Programme, which was one of the first study of its kind, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 2008

Uzla (seclusion), you have to bring it to your life (everyday).” (sic) (Appendix 4Z).

In the above narration, he is pointing out to the intense regime that they follow by waking up early in the morning then involving yourself in dhikr (remembrance of God). The importance of the transfer of one’s learning from the retreat to the normal life outside, which in-effect forms the essence of cultivating it as a way of life, is clearly stated. The above seeker outlines that the extent of dhikr within the uzla:

“As many times as possible..... so you report to the sheikh.... you increase your dhikr to your whole being and also for the Lathifahu Qalbi (heart) and lathifa Ruh (soul) you have two places where you dhikr outside in uzla it is double, being for the whole being ten thousand times (sic). Your Lathifathul Qalbi is 10,000 and Lathifathul Ruh is two thousand. And then a few after that in the night you have got to report. He (Sheikh) could say increase some more until eleven thousand. Eleven thousand is but in Uzla it can be 22 thousand (sic). It’s not that you dhikr too much. No it takes about half an hour to forty-five minutes, but when you dhikr, always think of Allah always – ‘Laikamishihai’ (there is non comparable to thee) not when you dhikr your mind is somewhere... it should be towards Allah.. But when you want to dhikr, it is very difficult to.” (Appendix 4Z).

Here the respondent is discussing performing intensive dhikr on specific locations within your body, termed as seven lathaifs or subtle organs. This is combined with the orientation that the Lord is watchful on you, that is the concept of ‘wuquf-ul-qalb’ and that there is none comparable to God.

The Head of Reflexology was queried about his experience and in reference to a spiritual breakthrough was asked, ‘When did you say that the uzlas breakthrough came?’ and did it come through because you were doing the dhikr?’ He replied:

“With the Rahman (Mercy) of Allah, no Muslim or human being is going for uzla to undergo (sic) that type of experience then you have to leave yourself to the Sheikh. Whatever the Sheikh wants to do to you just let yourself. Then when you go for the classes, whatever the Sheikh says Inshallah is the knowledge from our Quran (sic). For example, whatever happened to Abu-Bakr, when Prophet Mohammed received his revelation, where he said that I have now finished my work, where I already completed in Islam (sic). What Abu-Bakr

heard and saw he understood that the Prophet will not be with us for long ...something like that.” (Appendix 4K).

The articulation of the breakthrough here is through the continuous remembrance of God and in getting the guidance of the Sheikh, to reach a spiritual state, where some get it and others do not. These are spiritual states called ‘hal’ and spiritual stations termed as ‘maka’m, where one experiences closeness to God. The kind of knowledge that he is pointing out is beyond mundane knowledge to one that is called hakika or reality. This will be elucidated further in the discussion chapter. The Manager of the Reflexology Unit explains about the spiritual retreat (Uzla) and the dhikr (remembrance of God):

“We group.. we are under one leader, only one Sheikh and then we have our own individual like our own guru.....inside our room and salah time, we go out and we do for like a majlis thawajju (prayers and group spiritual attention) and when we finish, we go to our room everybody has a room. We have only dhikr for night and day, day and night then only.....when you go for dhikr there are three parts. First Intiba, you are starting dhikr. The second part Iqbar. The third part alhizol. So you pass through this three” [*He was asked what is intiba?*]: “Intiba is like you just woke up from the bed. Just wake up...Ikbar is that you are getting more everything you remember is only Allah. Ikbar something like that.... and then alhizol... is where you will be born second time. Using your soul. Your soul can input what every knowledge that Allah gives.” (Appendix 4K).

Here he is describing the different states of consciousness that the seekers go through, where they wake up to the reality or intiba, and then move on to another state that you see God in all the state of one’s remembrance (ikbar), which results in a state of being born again (alhizol). This alludes to different forms of consciousness, which seems to tie up with the states of the development of the souls referenced in Chapter 2.1, the nafs ul ammara (beastly state); nafs ul lawwama (the critical self); and the nafs ul muttummainna (the peaceful self). This will be taken up in more detail in chapter 5.

The professional banker says that:

“So you to make your heart, your whole being, always doing dhikrullah. We have a place we called Uzla – spiritual retreat. We have uzla for ten days...every year. Sometimes twice a year. Ten days.. somewhere in June and then sometime in November. In November...Yes that is what we call a clinic of treatment of the heart. Because actually a lot of people are praying five times, fasting but still yet the behavior of the people is not changing at all. Some day they do wrong things. People say don't smoke, but still smoking. Because last time I was smoking. I stopped maybe for 5 years or 7 years. In uzla, you do dhikr for 24 hrs, you can rest one, two or three hours yes. During that time there is no food that contains meat, eggs. No that time, you have to eat right because Rasulallah Allah uzla in Hira.....” (Appendix 4N)

He is referring to some key aspects of uzla – the discipline, speaking only when necessary, maintaining silence with focus on dhikr, all of which are pre-requisites for making the retreat effective. The concept of uzla or retreat derives from the life of the Prophet, where he meditated for 13 years by isolating himself on top of a mountain called Hira in Makkah. Subsequently, this was replaced by what was called ‘ihtiqaf’, which is carried on by retreating to the mosque for a set period of time and staying there. The reference is to the spiritual clinic, which offers one to cleanse one's heart, as a basis for changing behavior, which does not happen in the normal passage of life in spite people observing the obligatory ritual activities. The banker further explains certain aspects of the retreat:

“Yes as you go up and down but actually people don't know what he (Prophet/Rasulallah) does not eat meat that time, during that time (sic). No living things like animals like camel... sheep. Rasulallah never took meat that time. You know he only took zam zam and dates, that's it. If you eat meat during that time you are, I mean you are what we call that's Shahabad (desire). We have to control the shahataw. .Shahawa will stop you from dhikrullah and actually we are fighting our ...nafs (self) actually. This is a big fight, not like we fight with Americans, we fight with the people this is not big issue..(sic). So before that there are a lot of things. First I was hot tempered, I prayed but my hot temper did not reduce (sic)... Alhamdulillah I would have still been there...before. I pray I don't know to whom, I pray (sic).” (Appendix 4N).

The above seeker is describing his past life and the anger that he had. The fundamental issue or obstacle in the path to self-development is one's desire, where one of the steps is to become aware of the inherent weaknesses and in this case anger (see Appendix 3

Figures 4.13 and 4.14), and immersing oneself in dhikr may enable one to triumph over it. This is not an easy fight and one needs to sustain it over time, while supplicating to God for His mercy, so that change happens.

The Supervisor of the residential center explains his involvement in the organization, as well as about the retreat:

“Then it’s only these last five years that I started doing it properly ...after I went for Sulook.” [*When asked what kind of sulook is sulook, he says*]: “Yes, after I went for it then only did I speak to you (sic)”. [*He confirms it is the spiritual retreat*]: “Yes for 10 days. Since these past five years I went there five or six times, 60 days already.” [*When queried ‘what does that do to you?’ he says*]: “It changed me a lot. Before this I was a very angry person, who got angry very easily out of limits. I just wanted to fight people. But now days, I have my limit. I know, I cannot go through this is bad for me.” (Appendix 4P).

The term sulook refers to a seeker adorning the spiritual path. The seeker is alluding to some of the changes, which came from the multiple methods that are utilized in the retreat or uzla, which over time impacts on one’s character and in this case it seems that it changed his state of anger and he became more aware of himself. One of the vital aspects that emerged is the need for the uzla from time to time, and to sustain it over many years, in order to trigger the change within oneself. This ties in with a saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated by his wife Aisha⁶⁹⁶ (r.a) that even if you do a small act, do it regularly.

The Centre Manager talks about his experience of the retreat, where he outlines the impact of the retreat:

⁶⁹⁶ In: Sahih Bukhari Chapter No: 31, Fasting - Hadith no: 208; Narrated by Alqamah, I asked Aisha "Did Allah's apostle, use to choose some special days (for fasting)?" She replied, "No, but he used to be regular (constant) (in his service of worshipping). Who amongst you can endure what Allah's apostle used to endure?"; last retrieved 28th June 2016; <http://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=even+if+you+do+a+little+be+regular>, 2010-2016

“It is to be spiritual. Everybody has a different spiritual taste...you cannot translate this thing to others. I don’t know how to explain it to you, because you can look at Allah only from there. You can look at the face of the person and get evidence that these people are going to akhlaq. Only I say that, because you can look at Allah and the change of the people. You cannot describe it by telling other people what you get, because this type of secret (rahsia) is to you and with different people, it is different (sic). That’s the skill, because if you tell the secret and take someone’s promise, you have bad things coming (sic).” (Appendix 4S).

What is referred to here is a metaphor that is called ‘dhat⁶⁹⁷’ or taste, which means individualized experiential learning, what the heart feels, which varies from person to person. The other aspect is the manifestation of light in the face referred to as ‘noor’ or the light, an indication that one is getting close to God. The Manager expounds on it:

“Yes, this experience is a big one, once it enters into your life (sic)... you make things that you don’t break or you don’t get far from Rahma (Mercy) that Allah gives you (sic). The important thing is the first time what it gives inside your heart, every once in your life. At others times maybe sometimes Satan can come and disturb you (sic). But that’s why we have to get to our Guru... he will guide us whether this is right or this is wrong. Sometimes Satan is everywhere. That means this is not true. When you’ve got your Guru, he will tell you, this one is okay and this one is not (sic).” (Appendix 4S).

When experiences start emerging it is important for one to be able to distinguish between those emerging from God, which are laced with the divine, and those that are not, which are referred to as “was-was or whispering into the breast of mankind”, which is referred to in the Qur’an⁶⁹⁸ and thus the Sheikh’s guidance is necessary. Whatever ‘opening’ or spiritual states are only afforded by the mercy (Rahma) of God. One key aspect relating to worship and morality in the context of mercy is what the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The deeds of anyone of you will not save you (from the (Hell) Fire)." The companions said: "Even you (will not be saved by your deeds), O Allah's Apostle?" He said: "No, even I (will not be saved) unless and until Allah bestows His mercy on me.”⁶⁹⁹ This is not to diminish efforts since one needs to struggle (jihad) and the measure one receives depends on one’s intention and the Mercy as underlined above.

⁶⁹⁷ Martin Lings, *What is Sufism?* (Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1983), 7

⁶⁹⁸ Sura An-Nas (114): Verse 5, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 649

⁶⁹⁹ Narrated by Abu Huraira (r.a) and recorded in Sahih Bukhari - Book 76, Hadith 470

The Centre Manager further explains the sleeping space in the Uzla (seclusion):

“This is sort of like an enclosed one. Tempat (place)...where another form is like the form of the earth. Each one has got its own. The other thing is the cubicle's there was a small size one, just like the Japanese one where you are going to lie down and that you can't lie down with your full legs. When you lie down you will only be able to do like the babies in the womb. In fact that was the terminology used where you go back to the womb, which means you're innocent and pure and unadulterated. That's why a baby is pure; it is the parent that turned you into Jews or Muslims or whatever religion (sic)...to practice together (uzla), for to go alone is quite difficult and this is the generation of the tarika (Order) actually (sic).” (Appendix 4S).

In reference here is to having a bare minimum include sleeping space. The analogy is symbolic metaphor referring to a state of infancy is with the reference made to in the Qur'an⁷⁰⁰, where the concept is called 'fitra' or the primordial state, where all humans are born pure, no matter who you are and it is the life process that makes you either good or bad. The professional banker talks about the blessings of the retreat:

“Because you know the Angels (malaikat) they like you when you are there. That's why sometimes I have got people asking me that if I open a restaurant, how do I make my restaurant popular? It is very simple, tell them... don't use.. all those charms, make sure you are clear from all those things.. they must always be in a state of ablution (wudu) 24 hours (sic)... Be in good mood when they are attending to the customers. While they are cooking...you the owner, you have to be in wudu, then only...your food received...blessings (Baraka) and the food... it is delicious (sic). When a rich person came for uzla for 10 days, I thought he wants to complain but he said how come he takes vegetables and rice and it is so delicious (sic). At home I have got fish and meat but it is not so delicious but Subhana Allah (Glory be to God)... you eat vegetable and rice only...” (Appendix 4Z).

What is pointed to here is a 'pure heart', free from evil thoughts, with good intentions and one with love, which bring in the blessings and makes things wholesome. The Manager of the Islamic Reflexology outlines his insights and experiences of the retreat:

“So Uzla is a very hard and difficult part for the people. Because it's using your heart, you transfer from your head to your heart then you understand more. it's

⁷⁰⁰ Found In: Imam Malik's Muwatta Chapter No: 16, Burials Hadith no: 53, Narrated: Yahya related to me from Malik from abu'z Zinad from al-araj from abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Every child is born on the fitra and it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian. Just as a camel is born whole - do you perceive any defect?" They said, "Messenger of Allah, what happens to people who die when they are (very) young?" He said, "Allah knows best what they used to do.", last retrieved on 28th June 2016; <http://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=born+in+a+state+of+fitra>

more real example like in Quran it says nafs al muttumaina (soul in peace), you don't know when you learn fardu ain (individual obligation) it gets stuck to you only but when you go for uzla you know what is mutummaina (soul at peace), you will bring yourself and be born into another person (sic). Now you were born by your mother and now you will be borne by your teacher that's the nice part." (Appendix 4K)

The reference here is to spiritual re-birth, a symbolic metaphor, when one tends to go through the intense sessions for the ten days, with all related restrictions, where you undergo a paradigm shift in one's perspective, where one feels different and connected. A vital aspect that is pointed out is the heart-brain interconnection, which is elucidated in details in a later subsection. This enables one to get away from the mundane needs and distractions and fully focus on their worship. This enables one to cultivate silence since unnecessary chatter is reduced to a minimum by the ground rules and contemplative practices, thus there is silence of the tongues but is there silences of the heart, as Ibn Arabi⁷⁰¹ has articulated? This is directly in line with the Prophetic⁷⁰² tradition: "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or keep silent." When asked about the meaning of the breakthrough, the above seeker explains that:

"Meaning something like you want to get inside you have to break the bamboo, then you get inside there something like that. So not all the people came to this, so people have to cross this line or draw the line...they are only using the head eyes not the heart eyes (sic). Only when you close your eyes the heart eyes open, this is the part that Uzla teaches you....Relating to Nabi Musa (Moses), Allah says you cannot see Me, you can only see Me my closing your eyes, then you see the Tusina (Mountain), only then the tajjali (spiritual light) can come in." [He then talks about some of the changes]: "The change, we...struggle...what my friend told me after the Uzla is that, we throw all that teaching, we only take one, we follow every night to his (Sheikh') class. That's the change...we collect all the knowledge from him (Sheikh). Every word he said we collect that. They are like gold...so something like that... Every way I feel I keep it...we have to keep secret. It's hard to transfer from the word of mouth. It is hard work." (Appendix 4K).

⁷⁰¹ The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation: The Adornment of the Spiritually Transformed (Hilyat al-abdal) (Mystical Treatises of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi) Bilingual Edition by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (Author), Ibn Al'Arabi (Author), Stephen Hirtenstein (Translator) (Anqa Publishing, Oxford, 2008)

⁷⁰² As reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a) and recorded in Sahih Muslim (Sunnah.com reference : Book 18, Hadith 1 / Arabic/English book reference: Book 18, Hadith 1511)

This affords insight of the seeker into the deepening layers of the mind or consciousness, where acquired or learnt knowledge refers to the intellect, which is to be discarded and the mind-free to ‘the nearness of God and make efforts to realise Him’ as highlighted by Ghazali⁷⁰³, which opens up the heart for divine inspiration. To support this, there is a reference in the Qur’an, which points out that: ‘For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts’.⁷⁰⁴ Ibn Arabi⁷⁰⁵ says, “When you close your physical eyes, you negate the physical world and you open to the world inside.” The Manager of the Centre discusses about some key aspects of the retreat and the book that they receive on its completion:

“Silsila (chain of spiritual lineage)...I show you...it has a nice cover..*[referring to the book and the silsila]*.... because as I said sometimes to me it is sacred. But not as sacred as the Qur'an..... of course, we can grasp it (sic). This is a book received on completion of ...uzla...(sic).” *[He adds]*: “Uzla if you have gone through the nabisba until you finish Muraqaba (meditation) complete it, then what do we call this? The people who run the Uzla? They award you with this small book explaining about the Ibadah that you have to do...dhikr.” *[When asked what types of different things? he says]*: “...and then it explains about the latter age. This book explains about the lathaifs (subtle spiritual organs), almost the same as the one in jiwa sufi (book written by the Sheikh)...and other books as well, so really you see lathaif.” *[a Qur’anic sura Kaf, aya (verse) 28.]* “The question that you are asking me whether there is this one, the Quran commandment whatever (sic)”. (Appendix 4L):

Here is referring to a book that is given to the seekers at the end of their completion of uzla, which contains essential elements that they should know, as well as the description of the seven subtle spiritual organs. In response to the question by the researcher, if there is Qur’anic command relating to dhikr, he refers to the verse in sura khaf, verse 28⁷⁰⁶:

⁷⁰³ Imam Abu Hamid Ghazali, *Ihya-Ul-Ud-Din* (Revival of Religious Sciences), The Book of Destructive Evils, Volume III, Muhammad Ashraff, Lahore, 1995:3

⁷⁰⁴ Al-Qur’an, Sura (22):46,, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 590

⁷⁰⁵ The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation: The Adornment of the Spiritually Transformed (Hilyat al-abdal) (Mystical Treatises of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi) Bilingual Edition by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (Author), Ibn Al'Arabi (Author), Stephen Hirstenstein (Translator) (Anqa Publishing, Oxford, 2008)

⁷⁰⁶ Al-Qur’an Sura Al-Khaf (18), Verse 28, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 142

“And keep yourself (O Muhammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, and who follows his own lust, and whose affair has been lost.”

The uzla is further expounded by this seeker:

“Probably that is a thousand times I think the bigger the group, the less you read then after that we continue to read, the isthikfar (repentance) and with sirr (silent dhikr) those are the practices that hkatham hoja khan (reading of the Qur’an) you can decide but probably you will know. These are the quality of the Sheikh...this is the adab (code of conduct) towards the murid (seeker) and towards the sheikh. Mannerism..The brothers and sisters in Islamic adapt (sic).” (Appendix 4S).

Here one sees the reference to worship (ibadah) of the remembrance of God and to the morality (akhlaq) through a process of seeking repentance of God, remembering God (dhikr), recitation of the Qur’an and its completion (kathan hoja khan) combined with code of conduct (adab) towards the Sheikh and eliciting his guidance.

5.7.3.4 Repentance-Forgiveness (Taubah): From the data set it is clearly evident that tauba or repentance plays a key role in clearing the mind of the seeker and getting close to God. This is seen to have a compound effect when combined with the ritual cleansing or wudu and ritual prayers. The data extracts below indicate its varying positive aspects. One of the central themes that is captured in both surveys, as well as the interviews, is repentance or seeking forgiveness, which forms a key means of cleansing oneself from past bad deeds. In the survey data, repentance is reflected both in the most important traits of the Sheikh (Appendix 3 – Figure 4.9), and forgiveness as an essential learning from the Sheikh for self-development (Appendix 3 Figure 4.10). When asked about repentance and what kind of tauba it is, the resident imam says:

“Firstly, you must take a shower okay and then when in your heart you say.....” [*When asked are you referring to intention, he points out that*]: “Yes clean my heart and mind and zahir (outer), that is, my body for the wrongs... for

thanking Allah and then you take shower. Before that you must take Wudu first.... and everything you can do, every time you go to God.” [*He was queried ‘you do this every time?’; where he outlines*]: “Every time, yes and then if you get time before Fardu [*obligatory prayer*] around 15 minutes you do salah tauba [*prayer of repentance*]. Firstly, you must be do salah tauba and ask for forgiveness.” (Appendix 4J).

In terms of purification of oneself, one of the residents says:

“We have to do a lot of istikhfah [*repentance*], you know my... tauba, yes at least one thousand times. If Rasulullah did istikhfar or I heard is about 75 times, we have to do more than Rasulullah. Because as you know one day I have to do istikhfar 1000 times and Salawah about 1500 times..... That is the one being taught by the Sheikh.” (Appendix 4N).

Both of the above seekers outlines the process of seeking forgiveness, which is a key aspect in Islam in terms of getting one’s repentance accepted by God. As evident in the above narrations, this signifies a process of seeking forgiveness, a process of turning to the Creator and asking Him to cleanse one’s heart, releasing the burden that one carries within oneself. The friend of the resident Imam describes his attempt to change himself by joining an organization;

“I have been with another organization but I think this group is wrong.....There is one in Kuala Kubu Bharu (in Malaysia) ... but they don’t do tarika, they ..have.. different ways....and when they force us, while here they don’t force you here (sic).” [*When prompted further he says*]: “They don’t force you here but you must pray that’s all. And I think that jamaah (congregation) and you pray by your own self. I think it’s better that you pray jamaah (together). Because the thing that the surrounding is very different.... is better than the jamaah, where you really concentrate and now we are expected to wake up early go down and do taubat and then dhikr (sic)” [*He discusses about his preparation*]: “I wake up to.....Taubat (forgiveness)Yes what sin has been done,(sic) what sin is forthcoming (sic), what sin has gone (sic), so Allah please open my heart to follow and soften my tongue to read our Quran because I will use methods like ritual repentance....” (Appendix 4H).

The general approach of the tariqa (Order) is discussed here of not forcing but creating awareness and teaching methods, like ritual repentance and supplication, which is a way to the heart and it has its effect on speech. The above resident was asked if this is done five times:

“Tuan guru told us this... Yes. Five times and then another do ruku (bow) sujjud (prostration) same fardh (obligation) and then you get chance then do second rakaa (second ritual prayer movement). Then you repeat al fatiha (opening verse) one time and then second sura al ikhlas (one hundred and twelfth verse) three times. And then you will do sujjud (prostration) it is always like salah fardh (obligatory ritual prayers) and then give salaams, take your tabby (rosary)... and then has been inside your heart you say astaghfirullah... that means Allah forgive me (sic)” (Appendix 4H).

When asked how many times, he answers:

“It’s up to you... Prophet Yunus said ‘laailaha illantha ini kundthuminal lalimeen’ (God you alone are sufficient).. God forgive me and then for me I do a hundred... firstly you must salawah (praise the Prophet) and then you give your heart to Allah. Please Allah, please forgive me... Bismillah (in Your name) before I was very weak, very wrong, very poor in my deeds. I am blamed for whatever did, which I never do it properly (sic). Allah every day and then you do it properly your heart day by day, then your heart wakes up (sic). ...before we take food and then salah (sic).. Now things have changed, you are rushing for salah and then have your food...(sic). ...your heart says rizk (provision) Allah gave to you what he has promised to give you. Salah he didn’t promise you but you must do it first, that is baraka (blessing) for me (sic).” (Appendix 4J).

The resident here is outlining the change behavior and habits, where the orientation is towards God unlike their state before, brought about by a series of contemplative practices including repentance, supplications of the Prophet (ﷺ) (see Contemplative Tree, chapter 2.3), as well as opening oneself up for self-criticisms (muhasibha, see chapter 2.2). The change of behavior is indicated here with reference to saying the prayers first and then eating, where before eating was a top priority. The above seeker says;

“Turning because I hope when Allah... loved me whatever I do because Allah said in the Quran: If you do whatever I say truly and hope for me to forgive you, you will do properly and then you will get it.. Now seriously, I follow you, I just get it in my heart, I do not know how to discuss with you about the heart.... you must do... you can get it, if you do not ever do you will not get it.” (Appendix 4J).

The focus here is on turning one’s attention towards God by citing the Qur’an and adhering to God’s commandments and internalizing it in one’s heart, while if this is not

done, then the change does not occur as per the above seekers conception. When asked why is taubat so very important, the above seeker points out that:

“Yes very important. If I fall (sin), you must follow up what Guru said. This is very important for ibadah..and then you do with your heart and nobody force you, that means, ikhlas (clarity). You give your heart and you will see yourself through. ..We.. know we are human beings and very small (sic). When you do the Ibadah ,so that is much better you ask Allah to clean your heart. It also changes your mind, so it links up with akhlaq (morality)...changes your mind and also how you talk to people.” (Appendix 4J).

This refers to humbling oneself by turning to God and seeking forgiveness and seeing things in a wider perspective, where the ‘I’ becomes small. With this kind of perspective, when one indulges in worship, this seems to trigger some changes in one’s conduct. When asked if all of this happens through taubat or through dhikr, he expounds:

“Through taubah. Same like somebody said work for you salah? And you have to say because of Allah. What if you say no, is it that you are very old you do not want to fall again...to do dosa (sins)? For me it’s very simple to let people know why you salah. I salah because of Allah. That’s why I appreciate my Rasulullah (the Prophet). If Rasulullah cannot get this love nobody could have known Allah the jahili (Majestic) (sic). Then Allah parawalaikan (appointed) Rasulullah, so who are you not to do Salah....(sic). You say Salah to Allah because you must respect...” (Appendix 4J).

The above focus is on one of the most fundamental aspects of Islam, namely intention, where the Prophet (ﷺ)⁷⁰⁷ said: “Actions are but intention and every man shall have but that which he intended,” and in this case, the seeker is emphasizing that his turning to prayers is for God. There is repeated reference to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the need to respect and follow his way to gain the love of God.

The professional artist, who is widely travelled and a center resident points out that:

⁷⁰⁷ Prophetic hadiths No: 1, narrated by Umar Ibn Khattab reported both by Bukhari and Muslim in An-Nawwai’s Forty Hadiths, Trans, Ezzadin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson Davies, Holy Qur’an Publication, Damascus, 1977: 26

“My salah! It’s so funny that before this, when I pray you know, like I am catching up with time, that’s it. But now, when I pray it takes a period of time because for me I can do the taubah and my salah taubat (ritual forgiveness prayer) (sic). I can feel that I am near to Allah. Before it was like some reaction to it (sic)....but now I feel like I have done so many bad things and how Allah can accept me for what I am. He gave me a very good chance so I just have to make good use of it (sic). He already gave me three chances.” (Appendix 4U).

This respondent who is being treated for HIV and has come off drugs is denoting the changes, which are profound to him and that do not necessarily come out in words but in his body language. This denotes a shift in his perspective from leading a high life to one that is grounded in reality.

The Sheikh’s rendering of the relationship between worship and morality (akhlaq) is outlined as conditional to the state of progression of the heart, where he points out that:

“Values and their manifestation depend on the stages of the heart of the worshipper. They are influenced by emotions and attributes. Some of the key values are: taubat (repentance), shukur (thankfulness), sabar (patience), zuhd (state of poverty); muhabat (love)..., ridha (acceptance). The heart of a muhsin (someone who does good) has humility and is awake (sic).” (Appendix 4F).

The cultivation of these values were echoed by the resident Imam and his friend, which they try to internalize and this as outlined above originates from the Sheikh’s teaching himself. Apart from the focus on worship, there is an emphasis on values and trying to assimilate these values, which has a bearing on one’s akhlaq or morality.

5.7.3.5 Prayers (Obligatory & Optional): One of the essential aspects of following Islam is the ritual prayer, where the resident Imam says:

“They don’t force you here but you must pray that’s all. You pray.... by your own self but I think it’s better that you pray jamaah (sic). Because...it is better with the jamaah you really concentrate and now we are expected to wake up early go down (sic).” (Appendix 4E).

The importance of using one's own volition is underlined rather than being forced, with the ritual prayers being done in congregation, which is a Prophetic practice. When queried about the position of dhikr and where it fits in, he comments that it is during "The prayer time." (Appendix 4A). The professional banker outlines the quality of prayers and about taking the oath of allegiance:

"So there is a lot of difference between before bai'ya and after bai'ya. Before bai'ya you don't know to whom you are praying to. So my behavior is still like that I find I follow the fasting, I follow all the fiqh rules and things but yet there is no changes. The only thing that you do is pray, without knowing to whom you are praying and you don't know. So there is no Kushu (absorption) on the salah." [*When prodded what type of kushu, he says what kushu is not is that*]: "Your mind is somewhere but you are reading Bismillah Rahim (In the name of the Lord, the Beneficent) you are reading Allah bin Rab (Allah is the Lord)..... but your mind is somewhere. what have to focus...." [*When asked, you mean you can focus, he says*]: "Yes focus is the most important. This prayer is actually to get to you, when we are praying actually we are thinking of Allah (sic). So actually when you think about Allah, you have to focus Allah (sic)." (Appendix 4N).

What is understood is that there is a change, which occurs from blindly following rituals to one where there is a sense of awareness after taking the oath of allegiance. The conception of 'kushu' refers to the concentration or absorption in acts of worship, where without it the mind wanders, the prayers are not an acceptable act, and in a proper sense will be nullified. The resident Imam says:

"So my soul, that is...I must do it properly outside and inside my heart. So, if I read sura al-fathia (opening verse), I must know what that means. What is the meaning in English and then, that is something you do very perfectly. You do it perfect, maybe 80 or 70 per cent. Before, I just do it, no percentage (sic). Now, if I takbir (signifying the start of the prayers) you know that Allah sees you, really. I don't know how. Just that my brain, my heart knows that, truly. Then my part goes through ruku (a bowing position), sujjud (prostration)... and Allah sees... I just changed my life. So, when I wanted to start, I did everything in time. I start it now, step by step (sic). In istana budi (the center) I do it.... I do... tahajjut (night prayers), dhuha (prayer after morning prayers). I wake up in the morning and then I don't miss it (sic)." (Appendix 4Q).

When the above seeker was queried about his time of waking in the morning he says:

“2 o’clock in the morning.... it’s supposed to be fajr (morning prayers) or whatever, because I learnt in (sic) the study of Hadith of Rasulullah (Prophet ﷺ) that (sic), his ankle swelled up (by praying). I think that is a secret inside. I want to know what the secret is and then my Guru’s is also... like that (sic). That’s the way for me to be reminded of Allah, to think Allah is the best. Very loving and can forgive all your darkness, your dosa (sins).” [*The resident Imam above mentioned acts of a role-model for his peers, where he highlights that*]: “Somebody looked at me and then that gave me the responsibility to control our friends praying, how to do salah. tauba (prayer of forgiveness). My Guru said to me, you must do salah tauba, shower and get.... clean in the outside and inside of your body (sic).” (Appendix 4Q).

This particular seeker who was an ex-drug addict and HIV patient has by virtue of this devotion and discipline has been able to lead other residents at the Centre in daily worship. He manifests within himself a strong sense of transformation, which is reflected in his behavior and it seems to influence others, who take him as an immediate role-model. He is manifesting the ‘khushu’ or being able to worship with absorption that was outlined above. The resident Imam’s friend was asked how often he had dreams. He replied:

“Quite often I get each time I get dreams I get down and I pray, I pray well each time I get a dream I wake up and pray my tahajjuth (night prayers)... how grateful to Allah.” [*His dreams are about:*] “How about getting closer to God, to change my ways and to remind me who I am.. Allah and Rasulullah... to become like Mohammed (sic).” (Appendix 4H).

He was asked where he felt the dreams and replied, “In my heart”, and:

“In my mind because I think is this true and true to me? And I say this is the last chance that Allah is giving to you use it in the right way... I say to myself. Use it as good as possible because there’s no getting this type of treatment, which will pull you closer to Allah...remind me Allah. This is nice group where we can talk we can share about our Islamic things.” (Appendix 4H).

In the Prophetic tradition dreams are signs of process of transformation and this is said to be authentic for those in the path of God as cited in the hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ)⁷⁰⁸: “A good dream (that comes true) of a righteous man is one of forty-six part of an-

⁷⁰⁸ Narrated by Anas bin Malik; The Book of the Interpretation of Dreams, The translation of the Meanings of Summerised Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, Compilation Zain-ud-Din Ahmed bin Abdul-Lateef Az Zubaidi; Trans. Muhammad Mushin Khan, Maktaba Dar-Us-Salam, Riyad, 1994:1014

Nubuwa (Prophethood)”.

The resident Imam now talks about three inter-linking concepts of trust gained through knowledge facilitated by the Sheikh, with repentance or taubat being the door way to the heart and transformation, where he outlines:

“...unlike before relating to trust (sic)...if something is wrong my brain is fighting inside that it is wrong (sic). Sometimes, something it’s true it’s wrong and then I think yes this is wrong. But I just learned that al Quran said... doesn’t shop lift or take something.”

When queried how that trust came to him, he alludes that:

“It come to me, because one thing I know I have that...alm or knowledge.. and then you do amal (action) when you salah you clean all your body. What you do is tauba (repentance), then the hidayah (inspiration) - can go inside your heart. If you don’t do tauba, maybe that hidayah – inspiration is from Satan... and not Allah gives you. My heart is very cool doing that amal and then guru gives you another.” (Appendix 4J).

The professional artist talks about the immediate environment and his experience of getting close to God:

“Very difficult, but my mom always tell me just make sure you are close to Allah then things will be easy, which I try and Alhamdulillah (praise the Lord). You know I never miss my salah. I try to be a good person, so I am more relaxed. ... the people who surround me are totally different kind... So, I can go through that, you know.... and I learnt to be more patient (sabar). It looks very funny; it looks so weird, sometimes I was thinking like my mom doesn’t love me that’s why she sent me here but after experience and everything, if I look at the positive side I have learnt a lot.....” (Appendix 4U).

His initial resistance and adjustment to the group has changed and this is noticed by his change in mind set to accept people and be patient, and this turned out for him to be a wider exposure. As indicated in the survey data (Appendix 3 Figures 4.9 and 4.11) patience is one of the foremost virtuous traits that people have benefited from. He further expounds:

“My salah! .. I was asking my mom that before this when I pray you know like I am catching up with time..but now when I pray it takes a period of time because for me I can do the taubat my salah tauba (prayer of repentance), I can feel that I am near to Allah. Before it was like some reaction...but now I feel like I have done so many bad things and how Allah can accept me for what I am. He gave me very good chance so I just have to make good use of it. Because in life He already gave me three chances.” (Appendix 4U).

He is referring to the turning point in his life, where God has afforded yet another opportunity for him to lead a life of prayer and repentance. The degree of change is indicated in ‘it takes a period of time’, meaning that there is no rush and he is able to take time and connect with God, when he says that he ‘feels that I am near to God’.

The resident who has travelled widely, having being a sailor in the past, encapsulates his previous state of mind:

“It’s when you keep thinking about drugs, you keep thinking about alcohol you know? But now no more. I stopped taking drugs for nearly five years now. So the drugs are no more here it’s gone. Before when I was under medication the drugs were still there you know?...Yes the thought is still there you know?” [*He was asked so how did it go away? and he underlines that*]: “I pray a lot, I dhikr a lot. Sometimes I used to wake up in the night, sit by myself it’s like repenting you know...” [*He adds*]: “Yes and that helped me to mix around that’s why I used to say to myself it’s better to be less talkative than more talkative. You make less sin (sic).” [*He was queried if he was saying that you are still not ready to go out, what can make you stronger? for which he outlines this experience*]: “Pray to God I know the more you pray to God the nearer you are to God I...” [*When asked do you feel... it? He says*]: “Yes at midnight normally it is in my mind...one thing with me I always have difficulty in sleeping since I was young until now. I can lie on the bed, I go to bed at nine o’clock I will sleep maybe at around two o’clock.” (Appendix 4V).

Here, a change in the orientation of the mind is witnessed facilitated by his engagement in prayers and meditation, and that he is feeling close to God. As he points out that the thought is still there and can be indication of a need for a greater immersion in what he is doing, in order to fully break the complex habit.

When he was asked is your mind is moving all over?, he says “Yes all over” and when further queried, do you think is there anything you can do to slow it down?, where he points out “Don’t think about it” and when asked is there anything you can do? he says “Yes I release my stress by smoking, I smoke about one packet a day that’s the only thing” and when asked ‘yes, you feel like you want to stop?’ he highlights that “Yes because I have been smoking for a while more than 30 years maybe now I stopped a lot I try and go like ten minutes without...Ten minutes then after that I start.” When queried but you know it’s bad?, he acknowledges that “Yes I know it’s bad at least it’s better than alcohol and all that.” (Appendix 4V). From the ex-sailor narrative, one finds that there has been progress especially in terms of a more focused mind, as compared to a ‘scattered mind’ and in feeling his closeness to God. Some chronic habits, however, seems to still persist. When asked the question from the above seeker is there anything that you have learnt? he now he points out that “The thing I learnt is you have to go in line, before I was far away from God, very far away.” When further queried, so why do you think that it is why are you nearer to God now than before? he shares his experience:

“Before maybe I was too occupied with my work and now since I don’t work, I got nothing to do.. you share in prayers with everybody so you have to pray, also before you force yourself to pray and you fight, then after, it slowly comes and automatically you know (sic)? Then you start praying with your heart....before you were praying just to show people. Yes like if someone is there, then you start praying after midnight, then this thing comes slowly.” (Appendix 4V).

The reference to ‘go in line’ is to participate in the rituals, and the remembrance of God, that is a part of his new (disciplined) environment. The night prayers seems to have yielded him some special experiences, while overall ‘then things come slowly’, meaning his closeness to God. The need for connection with the heart seems to recurring themes from those interviewed as a means of connecting to God. When asked if that seems to be a rule, he points out that:

“Some people take for granted...pray just to eat, but it is not only that. So one day is just sitting there alone for Isa (night ritual prayer) and I said there, I feel quiet, I feel lonely and I told him... Lonely because of my past life. Before I used to be very happy. Now I just have to wake up at midnight and pray. Because this thing will come to you and when you keep on doing it, you come to live it.” [*He says that this is the advice of the Sheikh, and that he followed it.*] “Before when I pray my mind it used to be scattered..... my mind was everywhere. But then I got to know.” [*So this realization has come to you after coming here or was it there before?*] “After coming here, before when I sat there, I did not need anything. I would stay out womanizing, taking alcohol and now, none of that.” [*So is it the environment or is it the prayers or is it the repentance?*] “The repentance on things, prayer, the more you pray, it will come through then you have the people...” (Appendix 4V).

His reference to ‘happiness’ here is to his earlier care-free life of indulgence and dependence on drugs, which seems to have made him happy but led him to becoming infected with HIV and made him dependent on drugs. His reference to loneliness is linked to his non-indulgence in things that he used to do. There is a sense of realization that is, ‘when you keep doing it, you come to live it’, which is the process of self-realization and a degree of internalization of his change of behaviour. The above seeker now talks about his family and his relationship with them:

“... those closest to me is my younger sister...she comes to see me. She will never miss, she comes every weekend (sic)...” [*Does she see the change in you?*] “Yes...She is very happy that I change at least now and she said you have started to become a human being....(sic).” [*So what is it to be like a human being? What is the difference and which is better?*] “Now to start believing in something. You have to start believing in something but now yes the goodness of Allah is with me. Now I know the meaning of praying. Before I do not know.” (Appendix 4V).

Being a human being refers to having a sense of meaning and direction and believing in something and in this case in God.

5.7.3.6 Dhikr – Its Nature & Type:

The Centre Manager discusses the organization and some of its methods:

“The Naqshabandiyah... I think there is a lot of terminologies is Sufism (sic).. one is about sirr (silent remembrance) and jihar (loud remembrance) and these are the differences of the methodology of dhikr,..... This one I don’t know

whether it's practiced or not khatham or dhikr, that is, in our practice especially the uzla (retreat)before we do the sirr (silent) and jihar (loud) - then we have this hkatham haja khan, which is reading the fathiha .. number of times which is six and twelve times and then the sura Ikhlas (Qur'anic verse), then the minimal of a hundred times.... the Ikalas probably like a thousand times I think. This is within uzla." (Appendix 4S).

What is outlined here is the methods of dhikr from the loud pronunciation (jihar), to the sirr (silent), where God is remembered in your heart. This is proceeded by the recitation of the Qu'ran several times. In terms of contemplative practices (chapter 2.3 – contemplative tree), one sees stillness practices like silent dhikr and cyclic practices of ritual prayers as well as generative practices of loud dhikr and Qur'anic recital. The Manager of the Centre says:

"You say one time if it total or full lizaja (permission granted by the Sheikh)...Yes.. You say one time Allah it is like mentioning it five trillion times Allah said by all the living cells in the body. I think that that one into some of them." *[Here he is referring to the effect on the residents and it was pointed out that one of the residents's mentioned this where he responds that]* "I am very happy. You know why? I approached the scientific sought of angle So when I tell them from the tip of your hairs to the tip of your toes, every cell is also saying the same thing Lah illah illah lah (no God but God). If you say one thousand you plus another three zero there it becomes twenty-four zeros. This is very good.... that is the reason the reason why the tasbih or beads is just a trigger. Just to keep the rhythm on and on, because without the tasbih you can still say inside..... Sometimes you forget as well." (Appendix 4L)

The reference here is to illustrate the use of the special type of beads that they use, where you click on rapidly and the sound of this is said to synchronize with one's heartbeat. This then sets the word of God in motion, which is a specific method in their Order. Here he is alluding to the human factor of forgetfulness, where collectively gathering and guidance helps. The Manager expounds further on the methods that he used to teach the seekers:

"..and explaining about Gods' creation... and I told them, if you look at the sky on a very clear night, you see lots of stars. Millions of stars. In your brain, I said we have also millions of cells...Neurons brain cells, with both the grey matter and the white matter (sic). And these neurons are the units of the brain cells. They are sparkling like those cakerawala – (stars). They find this there is very interesting, where some of them sleeping they woke up. So that makes me, I

mean, what is more interesting here? Otherwise, they get up and go and they also get very fed up (sic).” (Appendix 4L).

One of the residents, who is the friend of the resident Imam to join and expresses his urge to take part in the dhikr and his experience:

“First of all, before I was becoming a part of a group in dhikr group (sic), every day I see the people going to it and my heart was itching to go.... So after one month, I told them that I wanted join. I was really happy that I was in dhikr group and that I can learn how to dhikr. But then how to be in the dhikr group and I got close to Allah? Until I get .. my dreams, I saw that I am dhikring in my dreams so whether I don’t know is it Satan or is it me? Is it me or is it Satan in my dreams that I was dhikring with?” (Appendix 4W).

Not all residents join the collective dhikr group, which is held on a weekly basis outside the Centre: the choice is left to them. They join of their own volition and when they feel ready for it, since some are recovering from the physical ailments, while others are not mentally ready. His reference to ‘dreaming’ about dhikr is evidence of his eagerness to partake in it, where his conscious thoughts are being reflected in his sub-conscious processes. The reference to not knowing if this is from God or Satan is a key point, which necessitates the guidance of a Sheikh to distinguish between one and the other. When asked what else have you learnt from the Sheikh, the above seekers said:

“By watching and hearing how to dhikr and what is the right way to dhikr....(sic)... after that we learnt the right way to (sic), I tried to give it up but no... then I saw that this thing is good for me and good for everybody who really wants to change their ways who really wants to go in Allah’s ways and spiritual ways...see when you dhikr you get closer to Allah straight away.. there’s no other way....” (Appendix 4W).

What are distinctly outlined here are some key elements of the ‘social learning theory’⁷⁰⁹, where one models by observing the leader and others in the group, that is peer modeling. This latter type of modeling is significant in the sense that the Sheikh sets an example and the actual practice of it takes place with peers who help the seeker to practice it over time. This is, for example, seen in the resident Imam teaching the ex-

⁷⁰⁹ Albert Bandura, Social Learning Theory, Psychology (DHK, USA, 2008), 286

sailor or the friend of the resident imam.

The Centre Manager when queried, ‘Where does the dhikr and all that fit into this?’, says, “Yes at all the prayer time we have some dhikr (sic)” and concerning the residents he points out that: “10 out of them goes for dhikr with Tuan Guru, they join us.” This is out of 30 residents. Some of them have gone for Suluook (retreat). He adds that for this, “Yes, it’s in isolation sort of area...in Kuantan in Pahang (two sub-centers). We have a surau – prayer place out there” (Appendix 4A).

The practice of dhikr is cultivated during the five times prayers, while collective dhikr is done both with the general seekers and the residents in the presence of the Sheikh, where it is held in different sub-centers. This is an example of a third of the residents actually taking part in spiritual activities outside their own center together with the other general seekers. This is where after prayers in a nearby mosque, and following a lecture, the collective dhikr takes place, where both the loud (jihar) but mainly the silent or sirr dhikr is done under the patronage of the Sheikh. During this process some of the selected senior seekers who go around facilitating the individuals in their method of doing the dhikr⁷¹⁰. The above seeker also flags that:

“So you know about the dhikrullah, one day you have to sit you have to find your free time, you don’t miss your dhikr. You have to dhikr every day, you have to dhikr at least 5000 times. How to use the tasbih or beads.... You go and do business (sic); you do on one principle. You want more; you want profit, so you make more than that.” (Appendix 4N).

The reference here is to invest in spiritual acts, which will yield results. It is to be noted that regularity is the key to developing the practice and getting into the depths of it and

⁷¹⁰ The researcher was a participant observer in two collective dhikr sessions that took place one in Kuala Lumpur and the other in Kuang in the house of the Sheikh.

this forms a Prophetic⁷¹¹ tradition, where when he was asked what deed are most loved by Allah, he said, “The most regular constant deeds even though they may be a few.” Here one observes that by the use of the beads the dhikr is accelerated, where a method has been developed to count many times within a short span of time.

The professional banker expresses his feelings:

“Dhikrullah is the basic, where your Ibadah will be so beautiful, so when you already know Allah so your Ibadah is very...., you are feeling so scared when you know Allah through dhikrullah.....The fiqh (law) is important but the most important is the dhikrullah (sic)..... Because actually when you dhikrullah you know wherever you go what you are doing...you always dhikrullah in your heart. In your whole being you always dhikrullah.” [*When asked what kind of dhikr:*] “Dhikrullah since my late mentor that was Sheikh Imam Bin Mohammed Arif. I sat a lot with him so he taught me dhikrullah by only saying Allah, Allah....Sirr (silent), when Jihar (loud) we will do Lahi la ha ill (No God but God)and that’s Jihar. We got two types of dhikrullah sirr and Jihar.” (Appendix 4N).

A distinction is made here to the Islamic laws or fiqh, which is important, while dhikr is vital in that it brings about experiential learning, where one could get to ‘taste’ the Beauty and Majesty of God. A key point that he makes is to take the dhikr or remembrance from its immediate surroundings to the external environment, when one is performing normal activities, which means that it has to be internalized. This forms the essence of developing God consciousness in everyday life. When asked if it is silent dhikr, he says:

“Yes silence. Silence in your whole being. You can do it anywhere, for example, in the toilet, but you cannot do in by Jihar its Haram (not permissible) (sic).” [*So if I understand you right you say that basically the normal activities are good, however, we need to do dhikrullah to go deeper?*] “What I am are saying is that basically without dhikrullah (sic), first of all you have to do dhikrullah and it takes time...without dhikrullah it is difficult to change behavior. It is very difficult to change behavior...actually that’s why I just told you just now, before bai’ya, (oath) I still prayed but I was thinking who Allah is. I don’t know who Allah is because that time I didn’t have any dhikrullah, you know lack of dhikrullah and istikhfar (repentance).” (Appendix 4N).

⁷¹¹ Narrated by Aisha; The Book of Ar-Riqaq, The translation of the Meanings of Summerised Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, Compilation Zain-ud-Din Ahmed bin Abdul-Lateef Az Zubaidi; Trans. Muhammad Mushin Khan, Maktaba Dar-Us-Salam, Riyadh, 1994:987

Three essential factors of change are articulated here: firstly, the need to have God consciousness at all times and this is accomplished by doing dhikr; secondly, this is essentially a methodology, which can vary from order to order; thirdly, seeking forgiveness from God. These points of significance are corroborated by the survey data as seen in Appendix 3, what was most profound spiritual experience is awareness of the Majesty of God (Appendix 3 Figure 4.24) and the first ranked beneficial act being ‘individual silent dhikr (remembrance) (Appendix 3 – Figure 4.28). The above seeker puts it into historical context:

“Yes, actually Allah is not teaching Rasulallah to read, Allah is teaching Rasulallah to dhikr the translation is real. That time there is no books or something that Rasulallah cannot read. So what does Allah see as something he is asking us to do. This meaning you have to dhikrullah and think of Allah. Many people will dhikrullah but they might be somewhere else. Believe me, that is why we have a clinic for 10 days.” (Appendix 4N).

When he is discussing the Prophet (ﷺ), the pointer here is that the message that Angel Jibril brought from God is not essential to read since the very first word pronounced was ‘iqra’ or ‘read’ since the Prophet (ﷺ) could not read, it is to be God conscious and thus it is of vital importance. The above seeker further explains the essence of dhikr:

“1994 or 1995 I was with Sheikh J. Sidiq [*current Sheikh*] after that I gained something that is through dhikrullah Allah teaches us, it’s not from any voice. When Allah is not happy you can see the things that are from Satan (sic)... Our focus now is dhikrullah and just asking about Allah and seeing that when you dhikrullah there is something coming in from your ear something or someone is whispering to you and then you can see something is not, when you close your eyes you can see something inside there. That is stopping you from dhikrullah, actually, this is the obstacle that stops you from thinking of dhikrullah (sic).” (Appendix 4N).

This act of whispering or ‘was-was’ that humans have of the ‘inner voice’, or prompting, is explicated in the Qur’an in Sura Nas⁷¹² that he refers to, which prompts people to do things that are evil and diverts one from the path of God, which he refers to. This can be linked to the concept of darkness, which if you indulge in can take you

⁷¹² Sura Nas (verse 114) Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyad July 2003; 649

down, while the concept of light, which is being God conscious, is that which takes you to God.

The Sheikh underlines that dhikr “means mindfulness in consciousness....meaning you don’t think of anything else apart from Allah”. When asked ‘is it light to the heart’, he says “Yes Noor (light) ala Noor (light upon light), it means because first Noor is wahy and second Noor is Mohammed.” The translator of the Sheikh explains that:

“What the guru says is you have to do something about it and one of the main method we use is dhikr. When Ali (companion of the Prophet) asked Rasulullah (Prophet) to teach him bought ibadah, the best ibadah, he said, you must dhikrullah to strengthen your iman....(sic). You don’t learn very much you also got to go for his (Sheikh) classes and learn about the actual practice of the dhikr and the tarika (the way).” (Appendix 4X).

The concept of mindfulness⁷¹³ is currently a growing trend globally, which essentially means to become aware of oneself and one’s thoughts without evaluating it. In this context of the Sheikh’s usage, it refers to a heightened sense of awareness about yourself and that God is watchful of you (muraqaba). The Manager of the Centre discusses the details of the dhikr:

“So the first one after Bai’ya, you must say at least 5000 per day, and that one is focused onto your Qalb (heart) and later on after you have done it for some time, after you have joined the ruh (spirit – right side in line with the heart), sirr (left side above the heart), khafi (right side above the heart line), akhfā (solar flexes), nafs (in the fore head region) and Kullu jassad (from top of the head right through the whole body), then you will get your promotion to the next lathif (spiritual organ)....” (Appendix 4O).

Here the Manager is talking about the remembrance of God being done at the various spiritual subtle organs (lathaifs), which have physical points in the body, where one with each one starts with the qalb (heart) and then the ruh (soul), the sirr (inner secret), khafi (the inner most secret), the akhfā (the secret of the secrets), the nafs (self) and

⁷¹³ Jon Kabat Zen who developed the MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) Therapy defines mindfulness as a state of awareness with a sense of non evaluative observances, *The Neurobiology of Meditation and Mindfulness*, Esch, T. (2014): 156

Kulla Jasad (from top of the head to the bottom) (Appendix 5). This is a methodology which is very unique to the Naqshabandi Order and Appendix 5 illustrates the essential points of focus. The above seeker expounds on distinguishing experiences and the need for a Master:

“After all, .. only sometime it does (experience) and it is a gift from God actually. But there is another thing it could also be the devil, but you must be able to distinguish and that is the main reason why we have the Guru. You have to tell your experience to the Guru. During the dhikr I feel like some sought of vision, visualize, but the most important part, is the part that you feel within your heart. So that is the reason why we have to be close to the Guru, and there is this terminology Shoeba, the closeness with the Prophet. So sometimes, if there is any problem you approach the guru and tell him this is my problem (sic) and especially with regard tosomething....” (Appendix 4O).

In this tradition of tasawwuf (inward science), the need for the Sheikh is paramount since everyone needs to be guided especially in relation to religion and developing ones character⁷¹⁴. The Centre Manager explains that, “All the dhikr that we do is Jihar... No sound or anything, all from the soul.” He was queried if ‘jihar’ was the loud dhikr to which he responded that:

“In fact if you may interpret it, you’re actually letting your soul do, this is the concept of Wuquf ul-Qalbi⁷¹⁵. So, that is Waquf ul Qalbi, there’s no work, there’s no sound. it’s nothing actually. But we sort of trigger the heart by pushing the beads. That triggers the thing about – it’s all in the soul. it’s all in the soul.” (Appendix 4O).

He is talking about the use of the beads (rosary) in a certain kind of way that it creates a click sound and he was asked, is that why you do the pushing of the bead, to which he responds that:

⁷¹⁴ “The best of creations, the Messenger (saw) also had a teacher, his teacher was the Angel Jibraeel. If the leader of mankind, Muhammed (saw) was in need of a guider then we are more in need of a guider and a Sheikh. The Prophet (ﷺ) then became the teacher of the companions and the Sheikhs of the nations of their time. He diagnosed the spiritual diseases of the companions and created the quality of Ihsaan in their lives. They reached the highest level in all aspects of their lives. There is, therefore, always need for a man to have another person as his guide and instructor, who can practically demonstrate to him whatever knowledge he wishes to learn or whatever aim he desires to achieve. This is the very same reason that Allah sent Messengers and Prophets (ﷺ) who were made to instruct and practically demonstrate to all of Mankind”, Tassawwuf – The importance of a Shiekh, Last retrived 25th March 2017, <http://www.inter-islam.org/faith/tassawwufshk.htm>.

⁷¹⁵ The assessment of the wuquf qalbi is articulated in some details by Syed Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar and Che Zarrina Sa’ari, 2011

“...that’s a trigger, because as long as it moves, they install ... then the inside is removed.” [*You mean it synchronizes?*] and “Yes synchronizes. Not necessarily because even if you touch the one...it is triggered.” [*The researcher observed that during the dhikr sessions there was no noise. One observation was that there was a click sound thus asked, “How can you count 5,000 times?”*] “The Jihar (loud) part, if possible and time permits we need to do at least 1,000. There we spend about half an hour— twenty minutes to half an hour to get to 1,000 times Jihar. But in the 1,000 is so quick actually...a few seconds.” [*Do you repeat Allah, Allah, and Allah?*] “Yes, so quickly. There’s nothing, its mobile. it’s just like electronics-mechanical... We have the mechanical clock— tick, tick, tick, tick, but the initiation is via your batteries and also you are electronic within. We also have the digital cloak which is electronic, fully electronic and that has no moving parts. The same thing is with jihar and sirr. Jihar is a moving part because you have to move your lips and your vocal chords.” (Appendix 4O).

The symbolic metaphor here is to the internal landscape within oneself having a clock work mechanism, which is activated by a physical trigger process in this case it is the beads, which in turn infuses the name of God within one’s heart. When asked about the nature of silent dhikr (sirr), the resident Imam says it is “Depth of heart. The was-was (whispering), where you fight back - you get whatever you want to do”. In terms of it having an effect on him and what kind of an effect, he says, “Yes! Contended or happy, no anger only love.” He reflect that the most important thing he had learnt was “dhikr first....it changed my life. Before I do Salah but no dhikr ‘top up’. It has the power shine or ‘top up’.” He says, “Sirr (silent) and jihar (loud)...You do the dhikr in your heart. Okay!” He adds that he “does it everyday” and “learnt it from the Sheikh.” When asked about its effect, he outlines that:

“Self healing from inside...Need for guidance from the Sheikh. Need to change and not be a hypocrite. Thinking of how to change. When I came here 360 degree change..the environment, stories, study, dhikr...The dhikr sirr and jihar changed my mind and habit and after feel peace...” (Appendix 4T).

It is underlined here that the link of dhikr with the heart and the transformation that is triggered as a result, while ‘feeling peace’ seems to come from a composite of methods including silent and loud remembrance of God, the guidance of the Sheikh, the learning, the stories told and the immediate environment. The survey data corroborates this sense

of peace by the seekers (Appendix 3 Figures 4.26, 4.27, 4.31 and 4.32), and this can be validated by the neuro-science data⁷¹⁶, which indicates the changing pattern of brain waves and a creation of a sense of peace. The question was posed to the Manager of the Centre, who has been with the Sheikh for 17 years, of what he has learnt and how he has translates this into his life, and he outlines that:

“To begin with, it goes back to the principles of the practice of the dhikr. The symbols of the practice of dhikr, where there will probably will be the changes from one makam (spiritual station) to the other (sic). Everybody has to experience the first one, probably even me.” (Appendix 4Y).

The reference here is to the changing states of consciousness, which comes with practices, where seekers move from one spiritual state to the other. Makam referred to here are spiritual stations, where one goes from one station to another and then at some point achieves a state or hal, which is more stable, which is described as a journey that the seeker goes through and this is well articulated in some scholarly⁷¹⁷ works. The above seeker adds that:

“I was saying about the changes, because to me – just this is my whole sought of impression – if you’re practicing dhikr then probably if you’re totally involved then you would achieve faster, but to the seven stages makam or something like that. But because I am engaged with a lot of worldly things and role. So it is not that easy to come to destiny, because you need total devotion, it is important in terms of...of course I have sort of neglected my duty and my ability to do dhikr and join the congregation, listen to the talks by the Guru’s or the guidance. And in cases they have to make decisions in everything. I normally refer to him for advice.” (Appendix 4Q).

What is pointed to here is the difficulties of progressing through the seven stages of consciousness due to diversion of worldly distractions. These seven states of consciousness are articulated in Chapter 2.1 (Figure 2.3.2). This aspect of learning is further expounded by him:

⁷¹⁶ Fatima Ibrahim, Wan Abu Bakar Wan Abas and Ng, Siew Cheok, *Salat: Benefit from the Science Perspective*, (Department of Biomedical Science, University of Malaya, 2008),

⁷¹⁷ Shihabudeen Swarawardha, Arif-ul-Marrieff, Lieut. Col. Wilberforce Clarke (SH. Muhammad Ashraf Publisher, Lahore, 1991. and Imam Muhasibi: *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, Margret Smith, (Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1950)

“Yes, if you follow up the Naqshabandi discipline, everyday you must... dhikr and you hope Allah can help you....You are trying to be a Khalifah (vicegerent on earth)....if you dhikr for 15 years then Allah will give you something you’ve never thought about before...Your brain will think a lot faster...You must take the time. One day you must make time for Allah (sic), maybe two hours out of 24 hours (sic). For me that is not enough. Everyday, the entire day you must khusus (specific) ... someone says that is time due to Allah only. Nobody should disturb you, give your heart.” [*He questions himself*] “Why did you not do salah today (sic)?, why did you not dhikr last night? and then you give a bad reason, no way.” (Appendix 4Q).

He is pointing to the need to allocate time for worship, for remembrance of God, which tends to deepens one’s experiences. Here it is the question of oneself or taking account of oneself, what was termed as ‘muhasaba’ (see chapter 2.3) and an increased level of awareness that one brings upon oneself, what is termed as nafs-ul-lawwama or the critical self (see chapter 2.1 Figure 2.1). The resident Imam continues:

“Now in here, everyday at a certain time you must just say, Allah. Allah, help me. Allah gives me rizk ..give me to eat..... So, how do we say thank you to Allah it is by doing or praying and take two hours out of 24 hours. Leave your work and sit....and in early morning it is you and Allah (sic).... I want to know, where the will power comes from? Who gives it to you (sic)? I learnt that— the thing for me is very very depths of my heart.... Now, if you do this, if you wake up at 2 o’clock in the morning and go up to subhu (morning prayers) and again sleep for a while and like somebody shakes you, you and then you take a bath prepare you and say Allah (sic). So, in here, I get it... So, before you want to stick to your thinking. When your eyes are closed, you sleep. Now, I don’t think like that. If your heart sleeps, you sleep. If your heart does something like Allah, Allah, Allah, you’ll never sleep. It’s only your eyes that are closed. Your heart is still carrying on – Allah, Allah. That is a good for your nafs (self). I do fasting. My people get lunch while I fast. I come sit around and they see that I’m fasting.” (Appendix 4Q).

There are some vital aspects that are underlined in the above narrative. First, the sense of gratitude by offering prayers, Second, making ‘space’ for oneself by allocating time to contemplate. Thirdly, his reflection and will power, where it translates into what he says ‘the very very depths of my heart’, which is seen to be manifested here. Fourthly, the need to be consistent in one’s actions and this ties in with the Prophetic hadith, that even if you do a little, do it regularly. Fifthly, the change of habit patterns to waking up early. Finally, the internalization of the dhikr, which if done properly and regularly

manifest itself even at a sub-conscious level.

The professional banker outlines his experience with dhikr:

“When you dhikrilura (the act of doing dhikr) you are happy (sic). You know before, I was hot tempered and it is very difficult to dhikr. Before treatment [*Islamic reflexology*] early morning after subuh we have to dhikr first and that is 22,000 times and then.. salah (ritual prayer)... Because you know if the patient tends to be good or bad, it's from Allah. it's not us. We only just do our job. We are from Allah. It is Him that we ask to cure this human.” (Appendix 4Z).

The reference to treatment here is to Islamic reflexology, which is done to get rid of physical ailments, as well as mental impurities. This is preceded by intense dhikr – remembrance of God – and a self-realisation that the origin of one's whole being is from God and that He is the healer, while Satan on the other hand afflicts you. The above seeker continues:

“Allah says we argue, we get sick because of Satan... So that I can always remember and dhikrullah to you.... But it is just for Allah my life, my tongue and my whole being. I want to dhikr and then here, so in verse 41-42...Allah said....”

He cites the divine scriptures Sura Sad (38)718: 41-42: in relation to this:

وَإِذْ كُنَّا نَبْعُدُكَ أَيُّوبُ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ ۖ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ ﴿٤١﴾

أَرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

“And remember Our servant Ayyub (Job), when he invoked his Lord (saying): Verily, Shaytan has afflicted me with distress and torment. (Allah said to him) Strike the ground with your foot. This is (a spring of) water to wash in, cool and a drink.”

The banker further explains:

“Allah said are you keep the earth and there will be very cool water coming out. So you take your bath there and drink it. So that is the problem of drinking water with ice. So the Western people they say, it is not good for your health, they say it is not good but in Islam but it is very good (sic). Don't take warm shower, it is very bad, the jinni I created from the very hot....” (Appendix 4Z).

⁷¹⁸ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 335

The concept of the cool being good for you and the hot being not is not a mainstream Islamic view but a certain interpretation or perspective of this verse. As a part of the Islamic reflexology treatment, an ice water bath is given as a means to purification to try and cleanse oneself.

In response to the question, “What else have you learnt from the Sheikh and other peers?”; the friend of the resident Imam says:

“Through friends by watching and hearing how to dhikr and how to do it in the right way to dhikr, like fatiha to Tuan Guru, and through our eyes we can really concentrate after dhikr and we see that we are dying well be buried...” (Appendix 4H).

This reference to ‘watching and hearing’ and doing are key aspects of modeling the Sheikh and the peers, apart from the remembrance of God. It is a Prophetic tradition⁷¹⁹ of remembering about death every day, so that it sobers one’s mind and gives it the right perspective. However, a point to note is that ‘one should not long for death’⁷²⁰ as the Prophetic tradition states, since life is precious and one needs to maximize one’s time on earth. The friend of the resident Imam, when asked how he thought the personality of people changes, answered: “Because I saw the changes. You see myself, I am actually a soft person I like to help people, I like to do things right so the thing then come to me so it’s more better and better each day.” (Appendix 4H). He was then asked, “what things come to you?”, to which he says:

“To help people here like on their last few months. I met my roommate and then he passed away, so if I don’t change myself I will be like him... but he cannot do anything, cannot get up by himself, cannot eat by himself, you must feed him and so I don’t want to be like him. I want to die peacefully on my bed, without any sickness that I won’t say trouble people, I don’t like to trouble people. My late Father said you are so soft hearted, when you don’t have money you like to

⁷¹⁹ Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Remember often the destroyer of pleasures,” by which he meant death. Sunan ibn Majah 4258

⁷²⁰ Narrated by Anas: If I had not heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying” You should not long for death, I would have longed (for it); Narrated by Aisha (r.a); The Book of Wishes, The translation of the Meanings of Summerised Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, Compilation Zain-ud-Din Ahmed bin Abdul-Lateef Az Zubaidi; Trans. Muhammad Mushin Khan, Maktaba Dar-Us-Salam, Riyadh, 1994:1027

help people. When I have money I will spend on my friends. When I have, I will give, when I don't have I don't mind, I will help people but I know Allah will give me...." (Appendix 4H).

This reflects a state of heightened awareness surrounded with people who are unwell, and to see people pass on in life. Different personalities may react to it in varying ways but with him being a 'soft-hearted' or compassionate kind of a person, he takes a lesson to change his life himself (sic). The above resident here outlines some of the obstacles of the path:

"But yes, like Allah says, I will send Satan to disturb you. To see how well you can fight yourself. I hope one day I will be someone to help to cure people and I will bring more friends here to change their lives like what I have been through... I tried to bring someone but it's difficult he cannot set his mind and soul here, so he stayed for round one week and went away, he is on drugs too. But I like to bring friends who really want to change their lives, to anyone who wants to get involved with dhikr. I would like to do that I still got a lot to learn from guru and the dhikr group." (Appendix 4H).

Here is someone who seems to be changing for the better, with an aspiration to heal others, as well as to bring about changes to others who have an issue of addiction. When he says that he brought a friend who was a drug addict but he went away, he points to the fact that there needs to be a degree of self-realisation on the part of the seeker to anchor himself/herself to the path that can lead to change. In terms of learning from the group itself, the above seeker points out that:

"How to really give, how to really pronounce the word dhikr and listen how they dhikr in the right way... Yes this is from the seniors and one day I would like to belajar (learn) to dhikr in..do dhikr in one place for several hours... then we can get into the real dhikr" (Appendix 4H).

This indicates an example of how the seekers try to model his peers and in this case for learning the method of dhikr, that is from their peers and not only the Sheikh. This supportive learning is found to be a key facilitative elements amongst the seekers.

The resident Nurse discusses about her encounter with the Sheikh:

“Where is the truth, what am I doing down there and how I missed the lectures? I miss going to the tawajju (spiritual attention from the Sheikh) but how am I going? I feel that basically helpless. So when you taffakur (reflect) and of course the dhikr, I do it every day (sic).” (Appendix 4I)

When asked if the Sheikh taught the above seeker dhikr, she says:

“Yes loud (dhikr) one at home. We ladies we do not do, we do the loud one when we go to Tuan Guru’s house. And we only do the dhikr (silent). That one is a daily practice, we have to do it. Before the food....Once a day but it is better to do.... just once a day, even that.. you miss, you really feel so sad like really you have lost something, and then so just let Allah open the passage” (Appendix 4I).

Here she is pointing out to being with the Sheikh and receiving his spiritual attention (tawajju). The reflection (taffakur) here is on ‘shoeba’ or being with the Sheikh, while interacting with him and listening to what he has to say and trying to emulate the Sheikh. It is noted that the women are not excluded as the researcher observed their participation in the Sheikh’s house. Here, men and women sit separately from each other but do the same dhikr and listen to the same lecture. When asked about how the dhikr has affected her, she says:

“Dhikr has of course affected me a lot, it’s the basis of our existence, the more you practice dhikr and the more you are closer (to God). The guru always tells us that everything, the whole universe all are in dhikrullah (remembrance of God), so how come we are not in dhikrullah? (sic). So that is a lot to do with tafakkur (reflecting) - we have to do that a lot and that will affect a lot on your ahklak (morality), will do a lot to blend in you know. you have to let Allah nourish you with that (Appendix 4I).

The above seeker adds that:

“It is a gift (dhikr and its manifestations)...because when you find difficulty you have to let Allah help you with that... If Allah feels like you’re ready to be gifted then Allah gifts you at that time. So you cannot be impatient knowing that you put yourself in that station, which is not meant for you, yet so that is wrong and that’s when all the nafs and the Satan will all come in. So you always have to be aware about the practice of dhikr is so important. You always have to be aware of the Satan is always trying to destroy the relationship with the Khaliq (Creator). Realise the position of abdi (servant) the more you feel that you are abid ...slavery...keep polishing as the Tuan Guru says until you die... (Appendix 4I).”

There are three fundamental aspects that she is outlining, firstly, of doing dhikr through a cognitive process of reflection (tafakkur) using the mind. Secondly, the dhikr that you do through your heart, where you separate the mundane thought process by focus on the name or attributes of God. Thirdly, she is alluding to the ‘whispering’ or ‘was-was’ that one’s experiences in the process, where one needs persevere until God gives one spiritual ‘openings’. Fourthly, the concept of abdi-khalaq (slave-Creator), which defines the position of humans in relation to God, enabling him/her to humble themselves to the Lord, while gaining the aptitude to serve others and could enable to cast the ego aside. She further expounds on the relationship between worship and morality:

“Yes Ibadah also has an impact on your ahklāq... guru also impact on your akhlāq because when you also keep getting close to (God) because almost every day, as long as there’s a lecture of rule... in the mosque... We always follow, so there in the lessons that he imparts to us, also knowledge... for people who remember Akhlāq (morality) it’s not just that we stay at home (sic). Our Ibadah at home is not only on the Ibadah even when you are treating other people or looking after the sick it’s all Ibadah isn’t it? so whatever you do, the servitude to the Lord, then it is the ibadah...” (Appendix 4I).

She is outlining several factors that impacts on morality including worship, the teaching of the Sheikh, and the rules of fiqh (Islamic law). Here she is articulating the holistic concept of worship, which extends well beyond mere ritual worship, to an over-riding commitment relating to things around one, including ‘visiting the sick’. The concept of servanthood to God, a vital element in Islam is underlined, which put things into context, where the Lord is supreme and all else is subservient to Him.

The resident Imam was asked about his expectation when he joined the organization:

“Let’s say I want Allah to forgive me whatever I have done before. The rubbish things of my Akhlāq (morality)... Nobody can say what is wrong with you... or this person very small (sic). But then you still must follow up and then... truly.. when you do... like you leave... the wrong parts (sic). If you go straight that day-by-day in your heart, you think you are very small, if Allah doesn’t hurt you, nobody can do anything....Allah will not let it happen. Now that trusting of Allah is 100 per cent..” (Appendix 4J).

Now the above seeker questions himself:

“Before you just say that Allah gives your life so I go anywhere, I don’t know how to salah, I don’t do fasting, I don’t do salawat (praise on the Prophet). So why you do like that? and you know the punishment is very very hard.... say whatever, it is Allah who gives punishment (sic)?... it is the longing, not for getting everything. I learned that I know that I am very scared.” (Appendix 4J).

The reflection here of the seeker is upon himself, his past life of sins and the new awareness that is being generated of finding a higher cause of forgiveness with God. He refers to being consistent by stating ‘day by day’ focusing on the heart, and by humbling yourself ‘a small being in the bigger scheme of things’. He outlines the need to fully trust God, which is the concept of tawakkul (exert effort and then put your trust in God), where everything flows from Him. The resident Imam spoke about trust, where he was asked, “What kind of trust is this trust?” to which he answered:

“Trust, my heart is very trusting of.. Allah (sic). Whatever you think, it’s not like that. That is same like if I give you honey, you eat that honey. I saw you eat the honey and then I will tell you how about the taste of this honey (sic). You say it is very sweet and I also say that is very sweet but how sweet is it really? (sic). I would say, I don’t know what the difference is....” [*Is the trust in the body or outside?*] “It comes from... your heart...really. Trust is not being sacred and hoping that Allah will keep you. You know Allah sees you everywhere, whatever you do, whatever is inside your heart Allah. Is this right or wrong?...What Allah gives you and more? What you know about the world the secrets of dhikr in the Quran?” (Appendix 4J).

The reference here is to the depth of the trust and its variation from person to person, and knowing that God is watchful of whatever you do, which essentially refers to the concept of ‘wuqf al qalb’, that God is watchful of you and paying attention to your heart. The shift here is seen here both in terms of this perception and orientation of synchronizing the words and deeds to produce the harmony. The concept of ‘taste’⁷²¹ or experiential learning occupies a special place within the realm of tasawwuf, where the ‘opening’ that comes through the divine varies from person to person, thus the varying

⁷²¹ Martin Lings, *What is Sufism?* (Sohail Academy, Lahore, 1983), 7

tastes of sampling honey or experiences that the above seeker is outlining. When asked “how do these things happen to you?”, he points out that :

“Guru checks first? Tuan guru checks and says yes (sic). So there is sulook for 10 days (retreat), I go to it one time,..... La Illaha Ilallah (no God but God)...One whole day you must dhikr, break that part and then sleep for only like two hours and then wake up and take a shower and then dhikr... you can do the salah and all this... All of this maybe around 100,000 (times of remembrance) or over in around ten days and then when your heart be changed, you also see as guru says how it’s easy.. my heart is very relaxed, cool....” (Appendix 4J).

This is getting into the depths of remembrance of God, with the Sheikh guiding, where you, yourself, are pushing beyond normal boundaries. The concept of ‘uzla’ (retreat) is akin to the Prophetic practices of ‘iqthikaf’ (seclusion in the mosque), which at times opens up new vistas for the seekers and leads the heart or oneself to become more composed and relaxed, which is backed by the emerging evidence of neuro-science⁷²², where vital signs like the basal metabolism slows down and it is beneficial to the mind-body (see chapter 2.4) and corroborated by the seekers in the survey (Appendix 3 Figures 4.25, 4.29 4.31). When queried about the Sheikh’s role and the experience, the above seeker says:

“How you are different during the 10 days in sulook (sic). You do dhikr... Allah, Allah, Allah. Rukun Ihsan [*pillars of excellence/virtue/sincerity*], you know Ihsan (sincerity), if you do Ibadah Allah sees you, even though you never get to see Allah (sic). There is a word with a secret meaning... Only just Allah and you, Allah gave you and then Allah start up to see anybody that is secret you and Allah alone.” (Appendix 4J).

The actual experience of indulging in dhikr is cited here, where it is only the seeker who tastes it, really knows it. A reference is made to the concept of ‘ihsan’, which has a range of meanings from virtue to excellence and sincerity. This is seen as a door to gain proximity to God and it refers to the Prophetic hadith⁷²³, where in being asked what is ‘ihsan’ stated that ‘seeing God when you worship, while you see Him not He sees you’.

⁷²² Fatima Abdulla et al, Salat, Department of Bioengineering, (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2008)

⁷²³ Prophetic hadiths No: 2 narrated by Umar Ibn Khattab reported both by Bukhari and Muslim in An-Nawwai’s Forty Hadiths, Trans, Ezzadin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson Davies, Holy Qur’an Publication, Damascus, 1977: 28

There has been much emphasis on repentance or taubat, where he describes the process and its ensuing merits:

“Firstly, you must take a shower.... then in your heart you say (sic)...is salah again, you shower only for proper cleaning....” [*When asked is that intention and how often he does it, he says:*] “Yes to clean my heart, mind, my arms, zahir (outer) and my body for the wrong before (sic)...it is for thanking Allah and then you take shower. Before that you must take Wudu (ritual ablution), first and this showing wudu parts, everything you can do, every time you go to God.” (Appendix 4J).

The process here is gaining outer cleanliness and then through repentance gaining the way to inner cleanliness from the wrong that one has done to one’s body and mind. The wudu or ritual purification is a preparation for prayers and constitute both the physical washing and the mental washing away of any sins that one has done through the five senses. When asked ‘did Tuan Guru tell you this?’, the seeker says:

“Yes. Five times and then do another... ruku (bow) sujjud (prostration) same fardh (obligation) and then you get chance then do second raja (one complete ritual prayer cycle). Then you repeat al fatiha (opening verse of the Qur’an) one time and then second sura al ikhlas (the 112 verse of the Qur’an).... Three times. And then you will do sujjud it is always like salah fardh (obligatory prayers) and then salaams of the prayer (taslim) ...take your tasbih (rosary)... and then has been inside your heart asthagfurlillah... that means Allah forgive me.” (Appendix 4J).

The process of seeking repentance has been taught by the Sheikh, which in this case involves a kind of ritual prayer, while using the ‘tasbih’ refers to a louder form of dhikr, and seeking forgiveness in your mind.

The professional artist discusses about his expectations from joining this organization:

“One thing is that when I came here, I only wanted to know the right way of how to do the dhikrullah because I always got the wrong impression (sic). I mean the wrong people, they have a different idea of these tariqa (spiritual order), sulook (the path) and tasawwuf (inward science) and I was not happy with the attitude towards it (sic). So when I came here, when I told Hadji Idris [*Centre Manager*]... I just want to know the right way... Because I think that when I look at Tuan Guru for me he is like so cool, so relaxed so that is the right way. Not like, you have to be angry, scold people that is so wrong. So, I am

looking forward for the dhikrullah and I hope I can do on my own...” (Appendix 4U).

The clearing of a misperception is seen here about some tariqa or Orders being labeled as not following ‘proper’ Islam. However, the seeker himself has come to a realisation that the Sheikh and the Order has something to offer him and which he can benefit from, where in this case the change coming through the exemplary model of the Sheikh being so cool, relaxed and non-threatening.

The Manager of the Islamic Reflexology outlines the concept of the inter-linking between the head and the heart where he says (Appendix 4K):

“That switch, we have to mention Allah’s name. He only gives you that nice iman (faith), He can only give you life (sic).. So you have to do what in the sura Imran (third verse in the Qur’an) said below (sic). So you have to mention His name everyday morning and night, day and night until he breaks through.... Sometime people get sometime people don’t get.” [*He cites the following Qur’anic verse, Sura Al-Imran (3)*⁷²⁴:191]:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

“Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about creation of the heaven and the earth, (saying): Our Lord! You have not created this without purpose, ‘glory to You! Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire.”

A clear reference to the remembrance of God in all states and situations, while reflecting on the birth and sustenance of the universe laced by a sense of meaning and direction. The reference of the seeker of intense dhikr “until He breaks through what you contain” is the ‘opening’ that some seekers gain to nearness to God, which could manifest in various forms (see Appendix 3 Figure 4.24 - for spiritual experiences), where some get it and others do not. The above seeker elucidates:

⁷²⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 2, Darussalam, second edition, Riyad July 2003; 345-346

“Your soul can... Flow limpahan noor.. (flow of light).” [*Is this limpahan and that really gives you when he taught?*] “When your heart is ready, when you are not ready, you are thinking of something else, it won’t go through.” When asked will it (sic) stop over the flow into the heart and that you said that it is difficult to explain but it is a type of knowledge correct?, to which he respond “Yes”.

He was then asked whether it is a type of knowledge, was it spoken about in the dhikr, and were other different concepts spoken about in dhikr. He answered:

“Intiba, iqbal and mustol... Yeah Intiba is waking up. Iqbal is focusing on Allah and nothing else..Your soul is free it is Mustol (sic)...” [*Is it being born again and is it nafs al muttamiina (the soul at rest)*] “Something like that.” (Appendix 4K).

The concept of the flow of energy or light is captured here, which happens when the heart is ready, which is difficult to conceptualise but it must be experienced. He refers to different states of consciousness, that is awakening of the consciousness to the reality – ‘intiba’; the state of focusing on God and nothing else ‘iqbal’, and the state of liberation of the soul ‘mustol’, where you are free from worldly encumbrances. When asked, ‘is there anything else?’, he expounds:

“You mention about doing more dhikr putting ourselves down (sic), so that Allah can empty the glass (sic). We remember what the words in the Quran.....we always remember. That’s the first thing how to honor the tawhid (oneness of God). It’s a very interesting question yes. How do you honor the tawhid? (sic). By mentioning Allah name then it is how you honor the tawhid. Allah, Allah. There is a tricky question there, how do you say in English? (sic) It is tawhid is a kind of a belief. And how is it to improve and glorify...amid practically, only practically.” (Appendix 4K).

From this conversation it was inferred it is by thinking about Allah and by remembering His name both in the heart and in the tongue that one confirms the belief in His oneness – tawhid. His reference to an empty glass means to let go of the pre-conceived notions that one has in one’s mind, so that the mind and heart is free to receive the Grace of God. The Manager of the Centre outlines his perspective on the remembrance of God:

“You say one time Allah and it is like saying it five trillion times. Allah said by all the living cells in the body. I think that that one sinks into some of them (sic).” [*It was said that some of the residents were referring to this*] “I am very

happy. You know why? I approached the scientific sought of angle other than just telling them puji (praise) this puji that. So when I tell them from the tip of your hairs to the tip of your toes every cell is also saying the same thing La Ilaha illa Llah (there is no God but God)... This is very good... that is the reason the reason why the tasbih is just a trigger. Just to make the rhythm just to keep the rhythm on and on because without the tasbih (beads) you can still say inside...distraction all around. Sometimes you forget as well.” (Appendix 4L)

The above Manager details out the dhikr and the mechanisms that are used in the process by way of an analogy:

“Yes the focus but with the tasbih, it keeps you going. Without the tasbih, it is difficult to start. So that is the trigger actually, for example asthma has got a lot of triggers (sic), even a slice of orange will affect your breathe (sic). I bring in all the medical facts and why not so that it makes life interesting. Because I am a scientist.” (Appendix 4L).

It was highlighted that one of the residents was saying yesterday “but I did not realize that the cells in the body actually speak.” The Manager adds that:

“I say there is literally you do not have one soul. But as whole, it is counted as one. But it is a combination of the five trillion, five hundred trillion cells. Every cell is alive at a moment. If you do not believe me, just take one drop of blood and put it on the slide and see under the microscope. You see the living cells there. There is an advantage of being a scientist.” (Appendix 4L).

The approach is not from the Sheikh but the Manager of the Centre, who is applying his knowledge of science to give a scientific exposition, firstly, by the whole body remembering God since each cell has life and thus this has a compounded effect, and secondly that things have a trigger and in this case the physical click of the tasbih is said to initiate the dhikr in the heart. The above seeker further expounds:

“...and explaining about Gods' creation. Neurons brain cells, both in the grey matter and the white matter. And these neurons are the units of the brain cells. They are sparkling like those cakerawala, (stars)...this is very interesting some of them (residents) sleeping they woke up (sic). So that makes me, I mean, what is more interesting here? Otherwise, they get up and go and they also get very fed up.” (Appendix 4L).

In order to overcome this apathy the Manager says:

“Bored yes. That is why I encourage them to read or talk in any language. And encourage them to you know? We are starting a new sought of trend about the Nashid (Islamic oriented songs). Nashid is the holy songs...the holy place the praise of God, the attributes of God, Allah.. Allah kaayum and all those things. At least if you sing or lie down you sing about the nighty nine attributes of God. That is better than just dreaming about nothing or at least you want to Salawat. That is even better as I said because God says ‘I and the angels say I am good tidings to Mohammed.’ Yes so, I say God has commanded you to say it and you just do not care a damn.” (Appendix 4L).

The technique is to enrich the sessions by introducing elements, in this case Islamic songs that motivates the seekers, as well as not getting into a state of rumination but orienting one’s mind towards God, so that the mind and the heart is engaged and is in a state of God consciousness.

Methodology of Dhikr (Remembrance of God): In order to justify the use of the points in which the dhikr is done, on the physical locations in the body, which corresponds to the subtle spiritual organs or lathaiifs, the above seeker (Appendix L) cites several Qur’anic verses Sura Al-Khaf (18),28:⁷²⁵

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ. وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٨﴾

“And keep yourself (O Muhammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart. We made heedless of Our remembrance, and who follow his own lusts, and whose affairs has been lost.”

This reference by the Manager is to the first subtle spiritual organ, which is also termed as ‘lathifa’. This is the heart or ‘qalb’ located just below the physical heart according to the Naqshabandi system. This interpretation could be taken as a specific instance of interpretation to focus on God, without being distracted by anything else. A more

⁷²⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyad July 2003; 142

contextual interpretation of this verse is made by Ibn Khathir⁷²⁶, referring to the Prophet sitting with those who remembers Allah and those who praise Him in the morning and evening, despite being rich or poor, strong or weak, and not with those who are immersed in worldly things. He makes reference to the Qur’anic verse linking one of the lathaif’s (the second subtle spiritual organ) Sura Al-Isra (17), Verse 85⁷²⁷:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾

“And they ask you concerning the Ruh (the spirit). Say: The Ruh (the spirit) is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord, And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little”.

Muhammad Asad⁷²⁸ explains that both Imam Zamarkhashi and Imam Razi refer to the inspiration as the soul. This refer to the second lathaif, the ‘ruh’, or the spirit, which is located on the right side and in parallel to the heart (Appendix 5). Ibn Khathir’s⁷²⁹ commentary explains that ruh is the origin and essence, while the nafs consists of the ruh and is connected to the body. He, then refers to the third lathaif called the Sirr (inner secret – third subtle spiritual organ) and links up the Qur’anic verse, which says Sura Taha (20), Verse 7⁷³⁰:

وَإِنْ يَنْحَرِبْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾

“And if you speak aloud, then verily, He knows the secret and that which is hidden.”

This is referred to as the third lathaif called the ‘sirr’, which is located on the left side but above the heart in this system (Appendix 4L). In reference to this above verse, Muhammad Asad⁷³¹ writes that: ‘He knows not only man’s unspoken, conscious

⁷²⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 143-145

⁷²⁷ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 76

⁷²⁸ The Meaning and Explanation of the Quran by Muhammad Asad, (Islamic Book Trus, Kuall Lumpur, 2011), 470

⁷²⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 78

⁷³⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 320

⁷³¹ The Meaning and Explanation of the Quran by Muhammad Asad, Islamic Book Trus, Kuala Lumpur, 2011), 562

thoughts but also all that goes on within the sub-conscious self.’ He then refers to the fourth lathaif, termed Khafi (Appendix 4L), where he quotes the Sura Al-A’la (87),7-8.⁷³²

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾

“Except what Allah may will. He knows what is apparent and what is hidden. And We shall make easy for you the easy”.

Muhammad Asad explains: i.e. all that is intrinsically beyond the reach of human perception (al-gayb): the implication being that since human knowledge must forever remain imperfect, man cannot really find his way through life without the aid of divine revelation. The last sentence is outlined: i.e. towards an ease of mind and peace of the spirit. This is the fourth ‘lathaif’ on the right side parallel to the ‘sirr’ and this is called ‘khafi’, while the fifth is at the center of the solar flexus and called the ‘akhfar’ accordingly to the Naqshabandi system.

The Manager says that, “And then lathif al nafs Allah araf...The sixth lathaif is now referred to in terms of its link to the lathaif nafs”, as per Sura Al-Araf (7)⁷³³:

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

“And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear and without loudness in words in the morning and in the afternoon, and be not of those who are neglectful”.

Ibn Kathir’s⁷³⁴ commentary says that Allah wants that He be remembered more often in the morning and afternoon, in secret and not loudly, with earnestness and fear, where it is recommended that dhikr is not performed in a loud voice.

⁷³² Ibid, 1132

⁷³³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 4, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 248

⁷³⁴ Ibid

The seventh lathaif referred to is called the Sultan Azka, where the Qur'anic Sura Zumar (39), 23⁷³⁵:

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَابًا نَقَّشَ مِنْهُ جُلُودَ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ
رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ بِرَبِّهِ هَادٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

“Allah has sent down the Best Statements, a Book, its parts resembling each other, (and) oft-repeated. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it. Then their skin and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah. He guides therewith whom He wills; and whomever Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide.”

This dhikr, which is done from top down and embraces the whole body is the central dhikr, where it affects the five trillion cells in the body⁷³⁶ accordingly to the above seekers view. He makes reference to nafi isbath – illahulaha illah (No God but Allah). When asked ‘What is that?’, he say it is “Lah illah illah la.....not even Jihar (loud) it is still Sirr (silent). Nafi Isbat is an Arabic word actually that means, nafis is to deny.....” (Appendix 4L). Here, the whole methodology of doing silent dhikr is mentioned at the seven points within the body, in order for the body to be consumed by it. The focus is to deny or negate everything except God.

With regards to the above verse, Ibn Kathir’s⁷³⁷ commentaries refer to parts of the Qur’an resembling one and repeating another, while Muhammad Asad⁷³⁸ uses Razi’s explanation and says that it points to statements of polarity of light and darkness, general and specific and to consistency. Ibn Kathir comments on the second part of the verse: while the fear of the Lord makes their skin shine and due to hope for His mercy

⁷³⁵ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 378

⁷³⁶ This citation by the above mentioned seeker is to demonstrate their magnitude of cell, a more accurate estimation is underlined by Smithsonian as “..Guessing based on volume gets you an estimate of 15 trillion cells; estimate by weight and you end up with 70 trillion, Carl Zimmer at *National Geographic* explains”: last retrieved 16 December 2016; <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/there-are-372-trillion-cells-in-your-body-4941473/>

⁷³⁷ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 8, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 380

⁷³⁸ The Meaning and Explanation of the Quran by Muhammad Asad, Islamic Book Trus, Kuala Lumpur, 2011), .846

and kindness their skins and heart soften the remembrance.

The Manager now discusses about the methods used within the organization:

“Probably that is a thousand times (doing dhikr), I think the bigger the group the less you read then after that we continue to read the isthigfar (forgiveness) and with sirr (silent remembrance). Those are the practices that hkatham hoja khan (recital of the Qur’an) you can decide but probably you will know. These are the quality of the Sheikh ...this is the adab (code of conduct/courtesy) towards the murid (seeker) and towards the sheikh. Mannerism. The brothers and sisters in Islam adapt.....” (Appendix 4S).

Once again it is seen that there is a combination of methods apart from dhikr, the isthigfar or repentance and concluding prayers, as well as a code of conduct or behavior both towards the Sheikh, as well as towards the seekers.

The resident Imam, as well as his resident friend, both discuss their experience of the path (Appendix W): “So certain of the other people are going there (for dhikr). Maybe the hidayah (inspiration) is from Allah (sic). Hidayah is a good gift from Allah to somebody. If your heart is very clear... Allah will keep you wherever you are.” He was asked, “So if your heart is clear Allah can be with you?”, to which they respond:

“Yes. You have dengki...means bad feeling for other people... and you like to talk about people...(sic). You see something that you do not want and.... say no to it, you go to in your heart and sirr (silent dhikr) (sic).....” [*The other resident says:*] “And nobody can change you or anything. You shall do it, that is, change yourself (sic)...nobody can depend on your life; you yourself have to depend on your own (sic).” (Appendix 4W).

The expression here is emptying of the heart of ill feelings and infusing it with God, so that one’s heart clears itself of the debris that it has collected over time. This process of consultation with your heart, a process called ‘isthigara’, where one prays to God with your heart and seeks for a sign. This forms (sic) the basis to bring about change. This

closely links with the Qur'anic⁷³⁹ verse, “Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves” .

The friend of the resident Imam was asked, “now you have got the information about the different methods how are you going to process the information yourself?”, to which the resident imam replied, “I have to learn how to get this done deeply....” When asked ‘What kind of deeply is that deeply?’, he outlines that:

“By going to Kulliyyah (lectures), by dhikring, by humbling with people, the way that we talk, the way that we give things, the way that we are scared of Allah. Normally, everything that is strong we don't do (sic). But it is very hard to get these ten things (virtuous traits).... Even me at the moment, but one day I will get. Insha Allah, if Allah opens my heart and softens my tongue to speak and to read Quran Insha Allah I will be someone. I would love to go deeply, more deeply.” (Appendix 4W).

This reference has already been made to the ten virtuous traits that the seekers are trying to inculcate (chapter 2.5). The verse in Sura Khaf⁷⁴⁰ is relevant here, where God says, “and We increased them in their guidance”. The friend of the resident Imam points out that:

“You never do that alone without Allah...but the best of me is after I got into the dhikr almost two months ago (sic). I have been in dhikr and I saw changes in me (sic). You see I don't set alarm to get up for morning prayers (subuh), now I set up my own mind. I get up before five, I mean 4:45 am.... I have a shower and I will be down there for dhikr early, after my taubat (repentance) I do my dhikr. Before I got into dhikr, I get up after the azan (call for prayer)... I want to challenge him [*the resident imam*]... So I set my mind. I don't need to set on the phone I set my own by 4:45am I will be up by myself. No need to even knock on my window (sic).” (Appendix 4W).

What is seen here is the setting up of a process of practice for worship, which in-effect is a discipline, as well as internalization of habits, as in establishing a pattern such as

⁷³⁹ Sura Ra'ad,(13) Verse 11, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 5, Darussalam, second edition, Riyad July 2003; 249

⁷⁴⁰ Qur'an Sura Khaf (18):13, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaukh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6 , Darussalam, second edition, Riyad July 2003; 120

waking up on time without prompting. What is evident is that the resident Imam has set a standard and his friend takes up the challenge and here is acting as a role model. When asked “And why do you think is the reason ?”, the above seeker says:

“Getting to know Allah is the key because you always speak about Him, you always talk about Him and you remember Him so He remembers you. So wake up, you want to come to Me, you speak My name, you call My name , I will be there anytime you need Me by your side, let’s say like the song. ...If you remember Him, you think about Him He will be there for us anytime. He will be for us and He will listen although we can’t see him but he can see us and what we are doing. We want to look for Him but we can’t see Him. But He can see what we are doing.” (Appendix 4W).

Here, what is seen is the rendition of the saying – hadith⁷⁴¹ – of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you”, which has been internalized by the seekers, where His mercy is underlined. The Sheikh provides insight into the nexus between morality and worship:

“The Ahklaq (morality), depends on the state of your heart. There are two aspects, firstly, the emotions and second the sifat or attributes. If the heart is good, the deeds and interactions will also be good. Allah does not count your deeds only but he accounts for the values in your heart.” (Appendix 4F).

As the Prophet (ﷺ) says⁷⁴², “Action are but by intentions and every man shall have that which he intended.” The cleaner your heart, meaning, and focus on God without the excess baggage that is carried by worry and indulgence, then this is reflected in one’s behaviour. When asked what the meaning of changing one’s heart was, he replied:

“It is through adapting the path., with the remembrance of God (dhikrullah). When Ali (r.a.) asked the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to teach him ibadah, he said O Ali you must remember Allah in your heart and in your voice. A Prophetic hadith state that that in order to strengthen the Iman (faith) remember Allah as much as you can through laillah ha illahla (No God but God).” (Appendix 4F).

⁷⁴¹ Narrated by Abu Abbas (r.a.) a Prophetic recorded in at-Tirimidi as a sound hadith, Hadiths 19, Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson Davies, The Holy Quran Publishing House, Damascus, 1977:68

⁷⁴² Narrated by Umar Ibn al-Khattab a Prophetic hadith recorded in al-Bukhari and Muslim, Hadith no:1, Ibid, 1977:26

The reference to adapting the path is what is termed as ‘tarkiyath’ or spiritual grooming, which entails one coming under the guidance of an accomplished Sheikh and adopting a spiritual path.

5.7.3.7 Night Vigil (Tahajjud): This refers to the night prayers, which are done in the very early hours of the morning before the breaking of dawn.

The Manager of the Centre explains about getting into the depth of worship (Appendix 4O):

“...and the other thing is that as a Sufi, prayer alone at night when nobody knows that you are praying is just as good, as you’re praying not in terms of the rewards (sic). So, we are not bothered. I’m not trying to say that you don’t have to go to Mecca and pray, no. The things we perform here is just as good as you go to Mecca. So, you perform well here... what’s the terminology— keeping the night alive.”

When asked if this refers to a special prayers or night vigil called tahajjud, he says yes and also refers to another optional prayer, which he does:

“Qiamullail [*optional night prayer*] - I do it personally. I do a lot of before and after the dawn prayer. So, I get both of the two worlds.” [*He expounds that:*] “Before and after dawn. Before because that’s the time when there’s no sound, it’s very quiet,. Nobody knows what you are doing. And before dawn, get up by around 4 or 5 am and then you just say you’re..... and then you wait for the prayer call. Sometimes, I go to the mosque, after that, I come back and still do... So, me and my wife...” (Appendix 4O).

As noted, the residents who were interviewed seems to pray the night prayer (tahajjud), where the immediate environment is calm, without clutter, and thus it has an effect on the body and mind, as this is a time where one can get connected with oneself and God without expectations of reward. The resident Imam, talks about repentance (Appendix 4J), where he says:

“Salah taubat (ritual forgiveness prayer) we do every day (sic)...around fajr (morning prayer).... I do before dua (supplication) before dua taubat (supplication of forgiveness) and then go salah dhuha (an optional prayer after morning prayers)...about..maybe three times...Yes then follow up shukur salah (prayer of gratitude)... and tahajjud (night vigil).....” [*When queried about the time, he says:*] “...yes in the night from 3:00 early in the morning part of night and.. then sleep ... afterwards.. you are thinking of what time can I wake up around? if you do like that, a malaika (angel) will shake you ...wake up... you must remain with Allah and now this is very nice for me”.

Once again there is evidence of a string of acts of worship while giving gratitude to God – a ritual prayer of repentance before the ritual morning prayers, which can lead to an awakened state of mind. This also serves as a process of detoxifying oneself of one’s sins and bringing about a sense of reconciliation. What is witnessed here is what is termed in tasawwuf (inward science) an ‘opening’ from God, where someone ‘will shake you and wake you.’

5.7.3.8 Supplication (Dua): Supplication to God formed one important act of worship and this is reflected in the survey data in Appendix 3 Figures 4.10, 4.16, 4.27, 4.28. Here the resident Imam highlights his experience of the process (Appendix 4Q):

“Yes now I pray to Allah. Salah taubat (ritual forgiveness prayers) ... I give my face to your face, give my heart to your heart. If You do not forgive me, where do I go...(sic) I... mention my faults.. forgive me. Now I want to say, I want to know Allah.... and then.. I mention my faults...to come to Rasul (the Prophet (ﷺ), Bismillah IL Raman IL Rahim (in the Name of Allah the beneficent and the compassionate). Yes, then I finish al sura fatiha (opening verse) and then sura inshirak (verse 94 – opening of the heart...)” (Appendix 4J).

One of the divine hadith that plays a central role in people finding the ‘mental space’ is where God says in a Prophetic tradition that⁷⁴³:

“...O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and you were then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you...”.

⁷⁴³Narrated by Anas (r.a.), who said that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say this and it is related by Tirmidhi, who said that it was a sound hadith. Hadith 42, An-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith, Trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, The Holy Koran Publishing House, Damascus, 1976;126

This kind of saying has found its way into the discourse of Muslims and provides a channel for making amends with God and with oneself.

The resident ex-Sailor talks about his experience (Appendix 4V):

“Yes and that helped me to mix around that’s why I used to say to myself it’s better to be less talkative than more talkative. Less sin you make...” [*Asked what will make him stronger:*] “Pray to God I know the more you pray to God the nearer you are to God I know... At midnight normally it is in my mind...one thing with me I always have difficulty in sleeping since I was young until now. I can lie on the bed, I go to bed at nine o’clock I will sleep maybe at around two o’clock...mind moving.. Yes all over.” [*He was asked about hinderances and what could slow progress down:*] “Yes I release my stress by smoking, I smoke about one packet a day that’s the only thing....” [*Do you feel like you want to stop?*] “Yes because I have been smoking for a while more than 30 years maybe now I stopped a lot I try and go like ten minutes without...Ten minutes then after that I start... Yes I know it’s bad at least it’s better than alcohol and all that.”

One key aspect which is emerging especially amongst the residents is that they see changes within themselves and this is evident in a number of discussions that have been articulated in this case study. It is to be noted that most of them have been in the center for a relatively short time, with a few having been there for a much longer time (Appendix 3 Figure 4.5). The real test for the residents will be when they go back into mainstream society and integrate, seeing if their changes still hold and they do not revert to their old habits.

5.7.3.9 Serving Others & Solidarity (Futhuwwa & Ukhuwah): The concept of serving others forms one of the central aspects in Islam. In this light, one of the residents says:

“So now there is the one which I’m now encouraging our residents here. All these years you have never prayed. So when you come here the first thing is you must perform the compulsory prayer... and even taking your friend to the toilet, feeding him, helping him to change, dress up, clean his bed that’s also a... Sometimes it is more than the reward, higher than the prayer.. Just one sought of counseling that we give, and that also becomes a motivation to them. So there will be a lot ukuwath (brotherhood).... and this feeling of brotherhood amongst these residents. Even reading the Quran for the person—reminding of death—

and of course saying remembrance of so they are encouraged to sit with the Quran and help a lot. Even giving Salam and greetings. Salaam /alaikum is a.... So those are the things, small things but it makes a lot of difference.....” (Appendix 4O).

Serving others forms one of the cornerstones in ‘tasawwuf’ (inward science) for developing the self since it enables one to go beyond oneself and one’s ego, from being selfish to moving towards selflessness, which is the epitome of a self-actualised or spiritual being. The professional banker says about ‘ukuwath’:

“...And then there is a lot of cooperation and helping one another. Apart from that we learn that the taalim part (education), we learn a lot of things from him, especially those pertaining to the tasawwuf or Sufism.” (Appendix 4O).

This seeker comes to serve the center over the weekend, where he works in the garden and cooks for the residents reiterating service to others. The concept of ‘ukhuwat’ or serving others forms a core construct for the development of the self. In this light, Imam Qushari⁷⁴⁴ outlines three fundamental aspects of true companionship: i) keeping the companionship of those above you is essentially service; ii) those below you need sympathy and compassion in the one who is followed, and harmony and respect in the follower; iii) those who are peers, preferring others to oneself, while sustaining the standard of chivalry.

5.8 The Well Being and the Worshipper

5.8.1 Impact on the Seeker: This section looks at the impact of worship and morality on the seeker, which subsumes spiritual experiences. A more elaborate discussion is made in chapter 6, while here the data set and the perspectives of the seekers are recorded and interpreted where relevant.

⁷⁴⁴ Imam Qushyari’s Risala, The fundamentals of Sufism, 2002:357

5.8.2 The Heart – Brain Connection: One of the most recurring themes that is very significant to this research is the frequent citation of the heart and brain connection, as it is captured in the various narratives of both the residents and those who are general but seekers. The resident Imam and his resident friend, when asked about the heart brain connection and whether it is something that they have heard from someone or on their own, comment:

“Our own and not... heard from someone”. [*Asked about the type of heart-brain connection:*] “...for me, brain receives whatever we can think of... and the heart is very special...” [*The friend adds:*] “Very fine. To me when I set my brain, all right, in my heart I say I cannot lie to myself. I did that before, now I have changed a bit, so if I lie to people that means I have lied to myself. So the brain connects to that. The brain and mind and the heart must come together in one, so when your brain sees something your heart must commit to it (sic). We try hard...” (Appendix 4M).

An interesting convergence is made here of the intention, emotion, the process of thinking and realization of the brain – mind and heart coming together, that is, a cognitive frame of reference, with the intention and with emotion referring to the heart – about ‘not being able to lie now as before’. Thus it is not the thought process only, but the commitment of the heart and emotion that fuses it all together. The resident Imam responds to the question is there a difference between the brain and the heart by saying that:

“Yes difference, now for example, you close your eyes... You look where your kitchen in your house is.. where is your book in your library you know that. Who sent the picture to your brain? Is it your heart...or is it your brain.... Only just, look at whatever... the heart can sense... the heart can go everywhere. The heart can move...” (Appendix 4M).

In reference to what he is saying, there could be a mix up between memory, imagination and the spiritual heart at one level, as from a metaphysical perspective, the memory is

contained within the faculty of the spiritual heart as articulated by Imam Ghazali (1995)⁷⁴⁵.

The question was posed “so when you close your eyes and then you are going to the library, what is it, is it the heart or the brain?”:

“Heart leads first then the brain...when you close your eyes, seems like you talk to your heart...like you talk to your brains. When you talk to my heart, I know where the book is ... I have to tell you where the book is. You just go there and you pick the book. You know the book is there every day, you set the brain you are moving your hand to take the book or to pick it....Seems like what I said, the memory is your heart... The memory is heart and then the speed is in your brain..” (Appendix 4M).

The researcher summarises his understanding to ensure that he has got it right, to which he says that:

“...so basically..the information that you collect by talking, hearing, tasting, touching all the senses that you are getting goes into the brain, and the brain will tell out what to do. But the heart is different you say. The heart is when you close your eyes... ”(Appendix 4M).

Here there is an attempt to delineate the functions of the brain and the sensory perceptions, with that of the heart, which functions beyond the sense perceptory level, where reference is made to the heart becoming activated ‘when you close your eyes’.

The resident Imam expounds this concept further:

“I will make it simple, I give to you example, somebody is blind, he can go everywhere, why is this (sic)? Even as he sees, he can walk, he knows his way where there is a tree and that is the heart. Very simple, example that I will give you is that if from when you are born today you are blind (sic). ..Logically if you are blind, you cannot see...most things you know is by the hearing it.. because you cannot see....” (Appendix 4M).

The friend of the resident imam says:

⁷⁴⁵ Imam Ghazali's, book of destructive evils, Ihiya ulum-din (revival of the religious sciences),(Islamic Book Services, New Delhi, 1995):3-50

“Light...better than light. This proceeds inside your heart to your whole body... But sometimes we can connect with people by using our hearts and our minds.”(Appendix 4E).

Here the respondent is relating this to telepathy and how the heart scans and detects persons, whom you happened to be thinking about. The description ties with the nature of the soul, which Imam Ghazali⁷⁴⁶ uses synonymously with the heart having the power to know through the process of intuition. In referring to the Qur'an, the above resident poses a series of questions and then responds to it himself:

“In the Qur'an, Allah said We say salawat (praise on the Prophet). So why do you never do that?...for me..why are you never following Rasulallah....(sic) like my Guru, do all the practices - sunnah. I mentioned to myself that I must do that....” [*Who taught you to recite and that you do many things?*] “It comes from Allah....Tuan Guru does amal (good deeds) to do something you must do it properly, while struggling smartly and then get it with your brain and your heart. Your brain and your heart are the same, you learn sura al fathiha (opening Qur'anic verse) your brain and your mouth say Alhamdulillah about al fathiha your heart will read al fathiha.” (Appendix 4J).

The resident Imam is pointing out the heart-brain connection, where there is synchronism of intention and worship. Thus, it is not only saying that it is cognitive, where memory is involved, while this only becomes meaningful when the heart feels it and thus it becomes internalized. The resident Imam and another resident point to an interesting aspect of worship, which is the heart-brain connection (Appendix 4M):

“That's why in the Quran Allah said... you listening, are you hearing....Allah teach you how good your eyes, ears and your mouth are where is the rhythm (sic). That process is faster. Better than light process... Light...Better than light. The proceed inside your heart so your whole body..” [*The other resident responds:*] “But sometimes we can connect with people by using our hearts and our minds”.

He demonstrates this by using an example:

“So for you have seen like that you go to around supermarket, you see somebody crossing you. Your heart says is this doctor Ahmed. Suddenly he faces you say hi to you... your heart is very powerful. He does not hear you, he doesn't know whether you are around, then he is facing you (sic). Oh doctor it is a heart connection.” (Appendix 4M).

⁷⁴⁶ Imam Ghazali,, Book of Religious Learning III,1 Ihiya ulum-din (revival of the religious sciences), (Islamic Book Services, New Delhi, 1995,4-10 ...

Here the seeker is outlining a process of telepathy, whereby one feels (in the heart) that he/she is going to meet someone and this transpires. He is relating this function to the heart, which is able to scan and feel this presence. One could say that this is a coincident but if this occurs more than once, the tendency is to think otherwise.

A query is posed to the residents, you said you went to the Kulliyah (lectures) and you heard the Sheikh speak out, how will process the information of what you have heard? One of the resident responds, "I have to find out the means to learn how to get this done deeply." A further query of what kind of deeply is that deeply? and he highlights:

"By going to Kulliyah, by dhikring, by humbling with people the way that we talk, the way that we give things, the way that we are scared of Allah or this thing I cannot do, everything that is hard so we don't do (sic). But it is very hard to get this ten things (virtue) done. Ten elements, is very hard. Even me at the moment, but one day I will get. Insha Allah, if Allah opens my heart and softens my tongue to speak and to read Quran Insha Allah I will be someone. I would love to go deeply, more deeply." (Appendix 4M).

Here the process of learning is highlighted as going through a series of experiences: some are cognitive, such as listening to and absorbing the lectures, and by a process of interaction and humbling oneself. There is also the process where the heart is involved, like dhikring, where one shuts off some of the sensory processes and tries to focus on the spiritual heart. This is where one negates everything from one's heart except God, which is a pathway to God within the tradition of tasawwuf.

The Head of Reflexology outlines "What they used to call second born." When queried 'so what's the difference between the first birth and the second birth what is it?', he points out "The difference will be thawado.. how do you say that in English? And you have nothing to be strong for except Allah, you have nothing accept Allah. You follow what Allah ta'ala (Allah the Highest" He was asked, 'so you stop depending on

these things and you depend on Allah only?’ and for this he says, “When everything else happens, we refer to Allah, so we don’t have to argue much... That’s one way. For example, I tell you, when you put Allah’s name to... what is called touching... you pull one of Allah’s name and you pull the whole world. Allah’s name must be very heavy. .. But when you glow, automatically those things flow inside your heart, you can explain those things...” (Appendix 4C).

The reference here is to the ultimate trust in Allah, a concept of ‘tawakkal’, where everything is contingent on God. Thus, the reference is that ‘when you pull Allah’s name, you pull the world’. The concept of the ‘glow’ is related to what is called an-nur or the light, which is said to develop in the faces of those who get closer to God and is a well known notion within Islam.

This can be related to the nature of God, who is نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ‘Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills’⁷⁴⁷. This not only manifests in this world but also in the next life as the Qur’an⁷⁴⁸ indicates that those who maintain their ablution and prayers

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ”Some faces on that day will be radiant”. The Manager of the Islamic reflexology (Appendix 4K) outlines some aspects of the inner transformation, and when asked about this switch from head to heart says:

“That switch we have to mention Allah’s name, he only gives you that nice iman (faith), the life he only can give you. So you have to mention his name everyday morning and night, day and night until he breaks through whatever you contain now that’s a very difficult part, sometime people get sometime people don’t get.”

⁷⁴⁷ Al-Qur’an, Sura (24): Verse 35, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 6, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 83

⁷⁴⁸ Al-Qur’an, Sura (80), Verse 38, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 10, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 366

He then quotes a Qur'anic verse "Sura Al-Imran (3)749 Verse 191:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

“Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): Our Lord! You have not created this without purpose, glory to You! Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire.”

A saying of the Prophet (ﷺ)⁷⁵⁰ is that: “Pray while standing, and if you can't, pray while sitting, and if you can't even do that, then pray lying on the sides.” It refers to contemplating on the signs of the sky and the earth, which is manifest of the great ability and might of the Lord. Here the term ‘breakthrough’ is mentioned by the above seeker in terms of getting into the realm of God consciousness, where you break through the mundane mind set and get an ‘opening’ from God into another realm. This is one aspect that has emerged in some interviews of being close to God, and having a type of spiritual experience, which is elaborated in the next section.

5.8.3 Impact of Worship on Self and Others: The state of mind (Appendix 3 Figure 4.26) before prayers forms a base line to understand varying levels of consciousness. For most, when they approach ritual prayer, they state that they are calm (69 percent), while others have a range of emotions including agitation and anxiousness (both 22 per cent), with frustration (9 per cent) and anger (6 per cent) following.

Apart from the obligatory acts of worship, which constitutes the ritual 5 times daily praying, there were several acts of voluntary worship cited (Appendix 3 Figure 4.27), which signify different levels of worship, with the highest scores being: supplication to

⁷⁴⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 2, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 345-346

⁷⁵⁰ Recorded in Al-Bukhari that Imran bin Husayn transmitted this Prophetic saying cited in Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged by Shaikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri), Volume 2, Darussalam, second edition, Riyadh July 2003; 347

God (75 per cent), loud group dhikr (72 per cent), and optional prayer (69 per cent). The silent group dhikr as well as silent individual dhikr scored 62 per cent followed by darood or recital on the Prophet (59 per cent) and listening to sermons (50 per cent).

The various acts of worship were listed and the respondents ranked them in their order of priority, with the scores being as follows: silent individual dhikr ranked first (22 per cent), while 19 per cent did not provide a score. This was followed by dhikr in general (16 per cent), followed by ritual prayers both obligatory and voluntary having a score of 6 per cent (Appendix 3 Figure 4.28). As seen in Appendix 3 Figure 4.20, the respondents were asked to score on the effects of worship on their general well-being, with the highest being the physical effects (28 per cent), followed by physiological (23 per cent), emotional (28 per cent), social (13 per cent) and cultural (10 per cent), with a small response for other non-defined options (4 per cent). All of these responses indicate a sense of well-being by being involved in the various acts of worship.

In Appendix 3 Figure 4.30, 18 per cent of the respondents observed 'changes within oneself after joining the group', while highlighting the types of changes ranging from: in 'the way I treat myself and 'the way I talk to people' both scoring 16 per cent each. This is followed by 'the way I behave with my friends and family' (14 per cent), 'the way I treat those who are less privileged' (13 per cent), 'the way I do my acts of worship' (12 per cent), and 'the way I conduct my day to day life' (11 per cent). It is to be noted that these groups of seekers had changed their life-style, and intensified both their obligatory and optional acts of worship and their sense of change.

As shown in Appendix 3 Figure 4.31, two marked changes were observed by the seekers within their respective group, that is people observing their salah prayers on a regular basis (22 per cent), accompanied by 'a sense of calmness' (13 per cent), with a section not scoring at all (13 per cent). There were several other changes indicated, with much lower scores including 'better morality' (akhlaq), 'having good relationships', 'feeling good', 'feeling grateful' etc, each having a standard score of 3 per cent. Appendix 3 Figure 4.32 represents the effects of worship on family and friends, with the highest scores being, 'the ability to better relate to them' (63 per cent), 'ability to better listen' (59 per cent), and 'ability to compromise' as well 'as cooperate', being both 5 per cent. There was also ability 'to better understand' (41 per cent), 'be more patient' (31 per cent) and 'be generous towards others' (28 per cent).

5.8.4 Spiritual Experiences: When it comes to sharing information about spiritual experiences, there is a natural reluctance, and this evident from the survey data (Appendix 3 Figure 4.24) as only a few made reference to it, while a large number of respondents did not respond to it at all. For the few who responded, some of the experiential aspects were being aware of the Majesty of God, a state where God is watching you, having the courage to avoid prohibitive things, having a sense of calmness and absorption in prayers, while one reported having a sense of fear as well as self-realization.

From the interview data, there were a number of items including dreams which comes true, kinds of telepathy, premonitions and some states of mind which were not possible to capture in words but some examples have been already cited in the cases of the resident imam, as well as the Head of Islamic Reflexology. In terms of the most profound learning (Appendix 3 Figure 4.28) from joining the originations, this ranged

from calmness (16 per cent), learning silence (6 percent) and group remembrance (9 percent), increased understanding (3 percent), being mindful of others (3 percent), greater peacefulness, while there was a number of respondents who did not state anything (44 percent).

The evidence of the impact of worship and morality on the seekers mentioned in this chapter and derived from the data-set (interviews and survey) from both from the Sheikh and the seekers will be discussed in the light of the emerging humanistic and neuro-science evidence in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION - A SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT MODEL

As is evident in the review of literature (chapters 2 and 3), there is a plethora of literature on Islamic Spirituality known as ‘tasawwuf’ or in modern parlance ‘sufism’, which deals with morality as well as worship. The immersion in these spiritual practices for purifying and developing the inner self is advocated by Muslims but especially by spiritual orders commonly known as ‘tariqas’, which have their own Sheikhs. Criticism has been leveled against Sufism and tariqas, especially with the emergence of the ‘salafi’ types of movements focusing on perceived deviations, unorthodox ritual practices, and the reverence of its Sheikhs. A study on the nature of the ‘tariqa Islam’⁷⁵¹, which attempted to ‘deconstruct’ it from within points out that:

“Having noted the existence of the same harmonizing form of reason in both tariqa and orthodox Islam, one can once again see that this discourse could never have continued within the Islamic Space unless it had based itself on the solid core of Islamic epistemology and its structure of ideas. At this core is fiqh with its analogical reason and its possibilities for harmonization... tariqa Islam would not have ensured the conditions for its epistemological survival in the Arab Islamic space without having imitated the structure of jurisprudential reason which is based on analogical reason as a collective principle of knowledge that holds sway over the discourse of orthodox Islam.”

Essentially, what the study highlights that the modeling of the tariqa is largely within the Islamic orthodoxy, even though one discerns variations in the methodologies of rituals and dhikr that the different tariqas utilize. Thus, it cannot be dismissed, as is done by some quarters, that it is not within the Islamic space. In this context, it is appropriate to decipher the thoughts of one of the most influential in the Malay World, Haji Abdul bin Abdul Amrullah (Hamka), who was known as multiple titles of rational sufi, moderate sufi, a sufi without a tariqa, says authentic Sufism (tasawf sejati):

⁷⁵¹ Tariqa Islam: Layers of Authentication, Hassan Marzouqi, June 2013, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, 20-21, 44

“true Sufism does not enjoin the fleeing of man from the realities of life, True Sufism serves as a guide for one to confront the challenges of life. True Sufism does not encourage the flight to forest other than to immerse in the heart of society. Because the society needs spiritual guidance.”⁷⁵²

“...cleanse the soul, educate and refine the emotions, enliven the heart to be in constant prayer, and enable the character (while) suppressing greed and gluttony, battling excessive lust that goes beyond what is needed to achieve calmness.”⁷⁵³

“...modified tasawwuf as a remedy for modern materialism judged scripturalist Islam (i.e. the narrowly dogmatic and legalistic Islam of his fellow Muslim modernist) insufficient sustenance in the modern world...rule-focused Islam calls upon only ‘the brain’ (otak) and ‘logic; (logika), neglecting the esoteric faculty of spiritual feeling (rasa zauq). Without cultivating the inner spiritual faculty, people find it difficult to resist the materialism of the modern world, and also the vices of the body that have always been with us ... Spiritual exercises not only to offer intellectual assent to his faith, ‘clean the heart (hati) and enable the believer not only to offer intellectual assent to his faith, but feel ‘close to God.’”⁷⁵⁴

What is best exemplified in terms of what the contemporary scholars and thinkers (as a case in point as outlined in the works of Hamka), has already been dealt with in great detail in the seminal works of Imam Ghazali⁷⁵⁵, where he was able to build a bridge between Islamic orthodoxy and the mystics, for it to become both acceptable and holistic.

The quintessential point that comes through all of the spiritual works referred to in chapters 2 and 3, as well as from my own empirical investigation is that, the key focus should be the unification of the sense-perceptions and cognitive faculties, with that of spirituality and the heart. This does not seem to be apparent in many literature and it can

⁷⁵² Hamka, *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (Kota Bahru, Pustaka Aman, 1967:56) in *Reorienting Sufism: Hamka and Islamic Mysticism in the Malay World*, Khairudin Aljunied, Indonesia, No. 101 (April 2016), pp. 69, Published by: Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5728/indonesia.101.0067> Accessed: 29-03-2017 17:36 UTC

⁷⁵³ Hamka, *Tasauf Moden*, 6 in *Reorienting Sufism: Hamka and Islamic Mysticism in the Malay World* Author(s): Khairudin Aljunied, Indonesia, No. 101 (April 2016), pp. 75 Published by: Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5728/indonesia.101.0067> Accessed: 29-03-2017 17:36 UTC

⁷⁵⁴ Hamka, *Perkembangan*, pp 105-125 in *Julai Day Howell, Indonesia's Salafist Sufis*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 44, No:5 (September 2010), pp, 1040, Cambridge University Press; Last retrived 28th March 2017; URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40926540>

⁷⁵⁵ Imam al-Ghazali's *Deliverance from Error and the Beginning Guidance*, Trans. W. Montgomery Watt, Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 2005.

be that it has not been well articulated. This aspect is discussed as a part of the research in a later section, which deals with the heart-brain connection. Part of the issue within the modern day context is that, on a general note, the Ulama's do not seem to take the pain to expound on both on the internal and external dimensions of Islam and its inter-linkages, while Muslim themselves do not find time to read traditional scholarly works. If this was done, then it would lay a sound foundation for a wholesome life based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, while dispelling some of the more problematic issue emanating from theologian (mutakallimun), the authoritative instruction (batiniyyah), the philosophers and the mystics (Sufis).

There have been multiple research studies on various tariqas⁷⁵⁶ covering the spatio-temporal landscape in terms of its objectives, their historical resistance role, impact on local communities, nature of the dhikr, gender dimensions, ritual and practices, genesis of the movements and its misrepresentations. It is rare, however, to see one that attempts to establish a causal model pertaining to the its leadership and the impact on its seekers in the light of the related sciences as this research demonstrates.

⁷⁵⁶ Ritual activities of Tariqas in Zanzibar, Chiaki Fujii, African Study Monographs, Supplimentary Issue, 2010, 4, Koyoto University, Japan, Last retrived 28th March 2017, <https://doi.org/10.14989/108281>

Picturing Islamic Authority: Gender Metaphors and Sufi Leadership in Senegal Author(s): Hill, J. Source: *Islamic Africa*, Vol. 5, No. 2, En-gendering Islamic Authority in West Africa (Winter 2014), pp. 275-315

Pasilov, B & Ashirov, A. REVIVAL OF SUFI TRADITIONS IN MODERN CENTRAL ASIA: "JAHRI ZIKR" AND ITS ETHNOLOGICAL FEATURES *Oriente Moderno, Nuova serie*, Anno 87, Nr. 1, (2007), pp. 163-175

De Jong, F. The Sufi Orders in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Palestine: A Preliminary Survey concerning Their Identity, Organizational Characteristics and Continuity. *Studia Islamica*, No. 58 (1983), pp. 149-181

Gammer, M. The Beginnings of the Naqshbandiyya in Dāghestān and the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus. *Die Welt des Islams, New Series*, Vol. 34, Issue 2 (Nov., 1994), pp. 204-217

Bousfield, J. Adventures and Misadventures of the New Sufis: Islamic Spiritual Groups in Contemporary Malaysia. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (AUGUST 1993), pp. 328-344

Van Bruinessen, M. Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia. *Die Welt des Islams, New Series*, Vol. 38, Issue 2 (Jul., 1998), pp. 192-219

At the core of the spiritual order is what can be termed as spiritual modeling⁷⁵⁷ as this study demonstrates, which is a neglected field within the light of traditional religions as well as contemporary spirituality. This is in spite of the very valuable skills and knowledge that spirituality offers as seen in its adaption within mindfulness based therapies including MBSR and MBCT.

This study develops a Casual Model of Spiritual Leadership and Self-Development. This model is built around the patterns of variables that have been identified from emerging data, generated from both the survey data, as well as the interview data set. The survey response forms a more precise response from the seekers, while the interview data captures their original flowing narratives. The flow of these two primary data streams are integrated with the secondary data from the literature reviews, as well as with relevant theories and concepts. Apart from traditional Islamic sources, relevant evidence from neuro-science and humanistic theories are woven into the fabric of the discussion to augment the ensuing synthesis of the discussion. This makes it relevant to the contemporary context and thus produces a powerful narrative of the inward aspects of Islam, which are generally lesser well known as compared to the Hindu or Buddhist meditative tradition.

The structure of this chapter is as outlined below, with the sections/sub-section cited within brackets: First, the Organisational Features of the Order (6.1); Second, presentation of a Model of Spiritual Leadership and Self-Development (6.2); Third, the Calling of the Seeker (6.3); Fourth, the Efforts of the Seeker (6.4); Fifth, the Spiritual Order – The Sheikh as an Exemplar (6.5); Sixth, the Membership of the Order (6.6);

⁷⁵⁷ Oman D. & Thoresen, C.E. Spiritual modeling; A Key to Spiritual and Religious Growth? *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 13 (3), 149-165, 2003

Seventh, the Performance of the Order (6.7); Eight, the Rewards of the Seekers (6.8); Ninth, the Outcomes of the Order (6.9).

6.1 Organisational Features of the Order

6.1.1 Creed and Direction of the Order: Given the critique from some quarters of the Islamic faith with regard to Sufi types of movements, attention was given to understanding the creed and the direction of the Order. As was evident in both the interview and survey data, this is a mainstream Order, with the belief in the Oneness of God and testifying that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the final Prophet. It is observed that all of the obligatory acts prescribed by the Shari'ah are being performed in addition to the optional acts relating to prayers, fasting and remembrance of God (dhikr). The objective of the Order is to inculcate the Oneness of God and exert efforts to achieve Ma'arifa (divine knowledge of God). There is special focus on the dhikr both the silent (sirr) and the loud (jahir), following the Naqshabandi way (see Chapter 5.2). The principle of remembering God is replete in the Qur'an and Sunnah and the Order strives in this direction. Therefore, the methods are well grounded as a matter of principles enshrined within the Qur'an and its replete reference to dhikr (see chapter 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3). What is not evident in the Sunnah may be the particular methodology used for dhikr of this Order specifically, which forms the Naqshabandi way. This can be a basis for critique: one can, however, argue that this is adopted based on the general principles of remembrance in Islam, with the particular methodology being developed later on.

6.1.2 The Order and its Methodology: The Naqshabandi Khalidiyyah model is based on the transmission of its 'silsila' or lineage, which carries with it the related knowledge base. It traces its organizational roots from Malaysia through Indonesia to different parts

of the world, based on the origins of its Sheikh or leadership (Appendix 2). As seen in the case study (chapter 5) one of the central drivers of the spiritual change is by the Sheikh himself and in this sense the ‘Order is good as its Sheikh’, as Knysh⁷⁵⁸ has outlined in his detailed study. The methodology of the Order itself is not seen to have changed significantly over generations as indicated by previous researchers⁷⁵⁹ who investigated the Order. These researchers paid particularly attention to its method of dhikr termed as ‘wuquf al qalb’ or the remembrance of the heart. This Order practiced both the jahir (loud), as well as the sirr (silent). This is well articulated by a key information in one of the few ethnographic studies⁷⁶⁰ in Central Asia, that says:

“..if in the khufi dhikr a Sufi makes the dhikr only by soul (Qalb), in the jahri dhikr, the Soul (Qalb), the body (Badan) and the Tongue (Til) of a person participates.”

Interestingly when one compares other Orders, namely Naqshabandi Haqqani⁷⁶¹ or Naqshabandi Awaisiya⁷⁶², both of which have significantly different ‘silsilas’ or lineages, the essential methods of the silent dhikr and the focus on the subtle spiritual organs, known as ‘lathifas’ are essentially similar. This refers to some congruence in the methodology pertaining to dhikr or remembrance of God particularly in the Naqshabandi tariqa in spite of its variance in certain aspects. This is, however, some opposition to the method of dhikr as outlined here:

“Yet to many an outsider the Naqshabandiyah system of dhikr lathaif (system according to which the dhikr is circulated progressively through the seven subtleties of the body each of which has a spiritual location and proximity to the Truth or Haqiqa) appears most ‘unorthodox’ and would not meet with the

⁷⁵⁸ Knysh, A. Contextualising the Salafi-Sufi Conflict (From Northern Caucasus to Hadaramawth), *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43.4, 2007, 527

⁷⁵⁹ Syed Hadzrullathfi Syed Omar and Che Zarrina Sa’ari; The Practice of Wuquf Qalbi in the Naqshabandiyyah Order and the Survey of its Practices in Malaysia, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Volume. 2, N0:4, March 2011, 96

⁷⁶⁰ B. Pasilov and A. Ashirov. Revival of Sufi Traditions in modern Central Asia: “Jahir zirk” and its Ethnological features. *Oriente Moderno, Nuova series*, Anno 87, Nr 1, Studies on Central Asia, 2007, page 171.

⁷⁶¹ Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, The Naqshbandi Sufi Way: History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain, Kazi Publications, Inc; 1995, 411-415 and 435-439. The original Sheikh of this particular Order is from Cyprus.

⁷⁶² Mualana Allah Yar Khan, An Objective Appraisal of the Sublime Sufi Path, Trans. From Urdu “Dalael-E-Sulook” Abu Talha (Idarah-E-Naqshabandiah Owaish, Pakistan, 1976), 45-73 and 280-281. The original Sheikh of this particular Order is from Pakistan.

approval from Wahabi (the movement seeking to root out all ‘innovations’ in Islam) or modernists alike).”⁷⁶³

Even though the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions have not undertaken this method of dhikr, the above opposition is counteracted by the citation of hadith qudsi (divine inspiration from God) cited in al-Bukhari⁷⁶⁴:

“Allah has angels who wander in the paths searching for those who remember Allah... then they surround them with their wings up to the nearest heaven... thereupon Allah says ‘therefore, I call you to witness that I have forgiven them’... the angels then say, ‘among them there is so and so who is not one of them, as he has come for some (other) purpose’. Allah says, ‘they are such persons with whom ever sits is not to be miserable.’”

“I am as My servants think I am, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me to himself, I remember him to Myself; and if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering better than it. If he draws near to Me a hand’s span, I draw near to him an arm’s length; I draw near to him a fathom’s length; and if he comes to Me walking, I do to him with haste.”⁷⁶⁵

“Abu Ma’bad, the freed slave of Ibn Abbas said “In the lifetime of the Prophet, it was the custom to remember Allah (dhikr) by glorifying, praising and magnifying Allah aloud after compulsory congregational Salah (Prayers). Ibn Abbas further said, “When I heard the Dhikr, I would learn that the compulsory congregational Salah (prayer) had ended.”⁷⁶⁶

The first two authentic narrations clearly outline the importance of dhikr, as well as people gathering for this purpose. The methodologies of how the dhikr is done have not been articulated in the above hadith except that it is the remembrance of God, which is done individually and/or in groups. The third above mentioned reference cited in sahih Bukhari points out to loud dhikr (jihar) being done at the Prophet’s mosque after ritual prayers. This is in spite of some opposition against loud dhikr, which was said not to have been performed during the time of the Prophet, where somehow this has been lost

⁷⁶³ In John Bousfield (1993):334

⁷⁶⁴ Narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ra) as he heard from the Prophet (ﷺ), A Selection of Authentic Qudsi (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi Forty Hadiths, Muhammad A. Abdul-Fattah and Reima Youssif Shakeir, Dar Al-Manarah, 2004, Egypt, 28-29

⁷⁶⁵ Narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ra) as he heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) with citations in Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, A Selection of Authentic Qudsi (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi Forty Hadiths, Muhammad A. Abdul-Fattah and Reima Youssif Shakeir, Dar Al-Manarah, 2004, Egypt, 26

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Bukhari; Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English), Book on the Characteristics of Salah, Ibid, Chapter 43, 478; Compilation Al-Imam Zia-ud-Din Ahmad bin Ahmad in Abdul-Lateef Az-Zuaidi; Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, Riyadh, 1994), 257-258

in terms of it being a closely adhered practice especially in the context of the Middle-East.

6.1.3 Nature of the Order: Some of the distinct features of the Order are that it:

- i) includes both men and women, with their participation in the dhikr and the lectures even though the participation of men is greater;
- ii) The ruling of the sharia is followed where they are segregated but have access to what is going on;
- iii) in terms of socio-economic strata it has people from the various social classes and therefore is not an elitist Order;
- iv) in terms of education the subjects' qualifications varied from degree holders to those who have completed their secondary education;
- v) the age range of the subjects also varied from the younger group, with a large slice being in the middle age range, with a few older subjects;
- vi) the most predominant reasons for joining the Order was to prepare for the next life;
- vii) the expectation from joining the Order was to develop themselves spiritually and do service to others.

This Order from an Islamic point of view and in terms of following the Prophetic model (see chapter 3.2, Table 3.2.1) of social justice of inclusion of the poorer classes and the females is well placed and not elitist as would have been in some cases, which is largely dominated by the richer and the middle class.

6.2 Towards a Model of Spiritual Leadership and Self-development

6.2.1 An Overview - Spiritual Dimension: This thesis was informed by Louis Fry's⁷⁶⁷ research on 'spirituality and work place' but it is essentially different, given its subject matter, content and methodology. Louis Fry's articulation was contextualized within the framework of the Prophet, where the essential qualities of spiritual leadership was articulated in terms of vision, altruistic live and hope, as well as faith in chapter 3.2 on the spiritual leadership of the Prophet (see chapter 3.2 and table 3.2.6).

Even though spiritual leadership subsumes both transformation as well as situational leadership elements, it differs from them and is distinct. As Fry⁷⁶⁸ states, given that the spiritual leadership model⁷⁶⁹ is an 'intrinsic' one, motivated mainly by internal factors, it distinguishes itself from the transactional model of leadership. The latter largely depends on extrinsic, where the performance is dependent on external rewards and governed by maintaining organizational stability but not necessarily promoting change or enhancing growth. The spiritual leadership model is one where there is a meeting point for the values and goals of the individual with those of the leader and the organisational values and culture. This is exemplified by the Prophetic model and his set of values and behaviour, which was congruent to what he set out to his community of followers, which now forms a basis for emulation as outlined in Chapter 3.2, tables 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.2.5).

⁷⁶⁷ Fry, L. Towards a Theory of Spiritual Leadership, *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003), 693-727

⁷⁶⁸ Fry, L. Towards a Theory of Spiritual Leadership, *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003), 698-700

⁷⁶⁹ There are four necessary and sufficient that needs to be satisfied in terms of development of a theoretical model, while it must specify: i) the units or variables of interest to the researcher. ii) congruence as defined by the laws of relationship among units of the model that specify how they are associated. iii) boundaries within which the laws of relationship are expected to operate. iv) contingency effects that specify system states within which the units of the theory take on characteristic values that are determined and have a persistency through time, 198; Fry, and Smith, 1987 in Louis Fry, Towards a Theory of Spiritual Leadership, *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003), 721

Spiritual leadership is based on the development of virtuous traits and aligned with the Islamic framework (see chapter 2.4), while it is noted that it cuts across the value systems of other faiths be they Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and others. Therefore, it is seen as having universal traits spread across numerous cultures including indigenous ones. Thus, kindness, forgiveness, compassion, honesty, patience, courage, trust, wisdom, and loyalty are those which facilitate the development of the self and the soul, as evident from the data extracts from this research (see Appendix 3 Figures 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18). This corroborates the findings from the literature review as articulated especially in the works of Sheikh Ibn Hazm⁷⁷⁰ and Imam Ghazali⁷⁷¹ (see chapter 3.1 Riazat-Efforts in the way of God).

Interestingly virtue-vices framework is seen within the context of a wide spectrum by the above two mentioned scholars, where the excess of both impacts one's behavior as seen in the works on these above mentioned eminent scholars. I subscribe to this notion of the spectrum, where anything in excess even virtue if taken to its extreme, for example, overt distribution of one's wealth without saving or investing for one's family can cause a negative impact. Thus, this is where wisdom comes in and in this light Islam in essence is called the middle-way (ummatan wasathan) by the Prophet.

The comparison in the Table 6.1 shows similarities of Louis Fry's conceptualization of the qualities of leadership with the data extracts generated from this research. As seen in the Table 5.1 there are close similarities with both sets, while the current research data is much more elaborate. The Virtuous and the Vices Tree (Figure 5.1 and see chapter 2.3, figure 2.3.1 – the contemplative tree) derived from this research is framed this

⁷⁷⁰ Ibn Hazm (1998)

⁷⁷¹ Imam Ghazali (1995)

within the continuum of both ends of the spectrum, one signifying traits conducive to self-development, while the other are vices or ruinous traits (Appendix 3 Figures 4.13, 4.14, 4.15, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21). The virtuous traits are evident in those who have self-actualised⁷⁷² or becoming a full human being⁷⁷³ (from a psychological viewpoint) and moving from the state of consciousness of the nafs-ul-ammara bi'su (animal self) to nafs-ul-lawama (the critical self) and nafs-ul-mutuminna (the self as peace). Chapter 2.1 deals with this aforementioned graduation process in some detail. The next section attempts to develop a causal model for spiritual leadership and self-development.

6.2.2 The Spiritual Leadership and Self-development Model: From this study, it will be difficult to single out one act alone that is seen to positively impact on the seekers and their behavior. It is more a systemic and a combination of behavior that is seen to bring forth a sense of discipline, giving people a sense of core-values, meaning and direction, as well as some measure of peace.

The above inferences derived from the full data of multiple factors set clearly testifies to the evidence from the literature review from the conceptual frameworks on worship (ibadah) and morality (akhlaq) in chapters 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1, 3.2). This conceptualizes multiple methods and tools relating to worship as seen in the tree of contemplative practices figure 2.3.1, as well as diseases of the heart and its treatments in table 2.2.2, to the value system and characteristics and acts of worship of the Prophet outlined in tables 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 (chapter 3)

⁷⁷² Maslow, A. *Towards a Psychology of Being*. New Jersey: Martino Publishing, 2011.

⁷⁷³ Rogers, C. (1991), *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist View of Psychotherapy*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.

Even though spiritual modeling⁷⁷⁴ is largely an intrinsically motivated model as per Fry, this thesis argues that the extrinsic factors are vital to bring about this spiritual fusion. In this sense, it differs from Fry's model.

Figure 6.1 below adopts Fry's causal model of spiritual leadership but goes well beyond it, given it is modeled on primary data set generated from this research, which is framed within the Islamic spiritual tradition. It underlines both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, which are required for the effective functioning of this causal model based on the evidence gathered from the spiritual order Naqshbandi Khalidiyyah. The causal model⁷⁷⁵ is developed and presented by the researcher in Figure 6.1 below, where each of the essential components are elaborated, with the definition of the variables⁷⁷⁶ outlined below.

There are three control variables, namely, 'calling', 'leadership-values' and 'membership', they are key, where if they were taken out the model will collapse. This is also called the constant variable. The independent variable is the 'effort', which is also called the change variable, where if it were to change, it affects the other variables especially the dependent variable. It is also called the cause variable. The dependent variables are the 'reward' and performance', that which can be measure or observed and it can change. It is also called the effect variable. The outcome viable in this case 'knowledge' and 'state of contentment' forms the outcomes of the whole process.

⁷⁷⁴ Models are a descriptions of how something works, a generalized, deleted, and distorted copy of an original, a template for how to think or act. A complete model has a theory, a set of variables, guidelines for using them, and patterns or technologies for using it. Modeling is a process of observing and replicating the successful actions and behaviours of others. Modeling involves identifying the variables that make up an experience, discerning the sequence of internal representations and behaviours, and presenting as a way to accelerate learning an expertise in L Micheal Hall and Bobby.G. Bodenhamer, Figuring out People: Reading People Using Meta-Programs (Crown House Publications Ltd, Wales, UK, 2006): 355

⁷⁷⁵ Footnote 7 outlines four essential and necessary conditions for development of a theoretical model and in this case the model of spiritual leadership and self-development.

⁷⁷⁶ What are Vairables in Science? – Definitions, Types & Examples, , BBB, Accredited Business, 2013-2018, Last retrieved 3rd March 2018, <http://study.com/academy/lessons/what-are-variables-in-science-definitions-types-examples.html>

Table 6.1 - A Comparison of Louis Fry's conceptualization of Qualities of Spiritual Leadership with the Research Data extracts from Thesis

Vision – Derived from Louis Fry (2003)	Vision – Interview data from this research	Altruistic Love – Derived from Louis Fry (2003)	Altruistic Love – Survey data from this research	Reference of the research survey data
Broad appeal to key stakeholders	Appeal to the General Seekers & Ex-Addicts of different socio-economic groups	Forgiveness	Forgiveness	Chapter 4 (Annexes 3 Figures 4.1 to 4.6 & Figure)
Defines the destination and journey	This World (dunya) and the Next (Akhira)	Kindness	Love	An Islamic Worldview (Al Attas, – Chapter) & Figure 4.....
Reflects high ideals	High ideals set against the Qur'an and the Sunnah	Integrity	Integrity	Appendix 3 Figure 4.....
Encourages hope-faith	Hope (amal) and Faith (taqwa) fundamentals of Islam	Empathy/compassion	Empathy /Benevolence	Sheikh's reference to Qur'anic verse -
Establishes a standard of excellence	Virtuous – Excellence & Sincerity (Ihsan)	Honesty	Honesty	Jibreel Hadith referred to by the Sheikh (Chapter 4 – Appendix 4.....)
		Patience	Patience	Appendix 3 Figure 4.1
		Courage	Courage,	Appendix 3 Figure 4.1
		Trust/loyalty	Trust/ loyalty	Appendix 3 Figure 4.1
		Humility	Modesty	Appendix 3 Figure 4.1
			Wisdom	Appendix 3 Figure 4.1
			Diligent	Appendix 3 Figure 4.1

6.2.2.1 Concept of Futuwwa (Chivalry):

One of the threads which comes through the case study is the concept of al-futuwwa⁷⁷⁷, derived from the Arabic lexicon 'fata', which generally refers to 'any young man of virtue'. This has array of meanings derived from its place in history and the context

⁷⁷⁷ The origins and meaning of al-futuwwa, Amir al-Hajj Tahir Abdullah, Institute of Islamic – African International, SANKORE, Last retrieved on 18 March 2017, www.siasi.org, <https://www.google.com.sa/search?sourceid=chrome-psyapi2&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8&q=Propher%20Mumhammad%20on%20Futuwa&oq=Propher%20Mumhammad%20on%20Futuwa&aqs=chrome..69i57.15030j0j8>

within which it was used. It quintessentially represents a ‘code of conduct’ adhered to which arises from societal norms or results from spiritual initiation⁷⁷⁸. It predates Islam and has become one of the central concepts within Islam. There are several conceptions of futuwwa⁷⁷⁹, which range from ‘always paying attention to the care of others’, ‘over-looking the faults of others’ and ‘not counting oneself superior to others’. This is encapsulated in the Prophetic model as outlined in identifying the key traits of the Prophet as well as his profile ranging from generosity to equity and highly considerate – see Tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 (chapter 3). This model somehow seems contrary to the general perceptions of those who practice Islam as portrayed by the media and some quarters of society.

Prophet Muhammad⁷⁸⁰ (ﷺ) says, "God Most High attends to the needs of a servant as long as the servant attends to the needs of his Muslim brother." Imam Qushayri's conception points out that "The fata is the one who destroys the idol", substantiated by his comments that "the ideal of all men is their ego."⁷⁸¹ This concept of moving beyond one's ego was captured both in the interviews as well as the survey data. Out of several examples, a few are cited here: where the professional banker was seen devoting his time at the residential center to work in the garden and cooking for the residents; while the residential imam helped others with improvements in their practices; to his friend caring for those dying. The Sheikh and his wife were found to be caring for the residents as highlighted by them, which reinforces their stay at the center.

I found that the seekers immediate environment was conducive for fostering their growth but his should not be mistaken to perceive that there was not discipline. As a

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁷⁹ in Al-Qushayri (2004:214)

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid, this tradition is repeated on the authority of Zayd bin Thabit

⁷⁸¹ Ibid

matter of fact, a sound routine and a sense of discipline was instilled by the Center Manager, where the resident seekers followed suit, while the Sheikh was found to be kind, one feels and observes that the ground rules are followed by the seekers. This is one of the factors that makes the system work effectively.

6.3 The Calling - The Self and Seekers Need for Spiritual Survival

6.3.1 Calling: One of the most fundamental themes expressed by seeker is the calling, what one would call hidaya (inspiration from God) that is bestowed on the seeker. At a human level it is rooted in the process of self-realisation of the seekers, which was found to be a key trigger to seeking and finding an Order, where they can find direction and meaning in life (See Appendix 4 – H, I and chapter 4). Thus, there are two facets of the calling, one from God, and the other from one's own volition. This is the calling that sets the seekers on their spiritual journey and they are rewarded depending on their efforts, which influences their performance.

As seen from the survey data, they are motivated to 'prepare for the next life', 'learn better behaviour', 'do good to others', 'have the company of the like-minded' and 'learn spiritual practices' (Appendix 3, Figure 4.6). Seekers profess an expectation that they 'have changed themselves for the better', 'become calmer', 'gain blessings', to have 'learned more spiritual practices' and 'to have learned more about faith' (Appendix 3, Figure 4.7). Calling forms a 'control variable', where if removed from the model would make it falter and thus forms one of the most fundamental triggers.

6.4 Efforts: This effectively forms the 'independent variable', which influences the 'dependent variables' that in the model are 'performance' and 'rewards, which are dealt

with in the proceeding sections. Effort is linked with the concept of ‘tawakkul’ or exerting effort and then putting trust in God. This is framed within the context of the eventual outcome that God knows best and there is ‘khair’ or goodness or not good, which results from it. The concept of ‘jihad’ or struggle is closely associated with effort, whereby one’s struggle through life and this is where prime importance is given to the virtue for patience as evident in the survey data (Appendix 3 Figure 4.16, 4.17). This is buttressed by supplication to God (dua) (Appendix 3 Figure 4.10, 4.16) and coming to terms with oneself from one’s sins and past life, that is, seeking forgiveness and repentance (tauba) (Appendix 3 Figures 4.11, 4.17). This is akin to the critical awareness stage (nafs-ul-lawaama) as outlined in chapter 2.1.

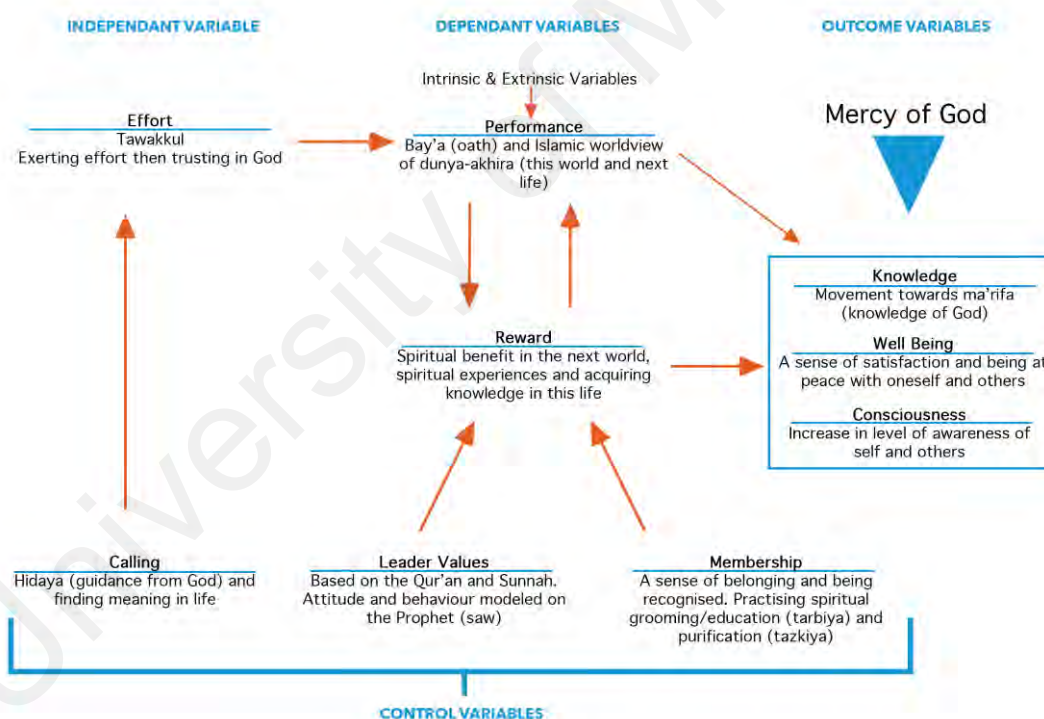


Figure 6.1 - The Causal Model of Spiritual Leadership & Self-development

6.5. The Spiritual Order – The Sheikh as Exemplar

6.5.1 Spiritual Leadership and Values: One central concept that defines ‘tasawwuf’ or the inward science of Islam is akhlaq or morality, and this is exemplified by the Qur’anic statement, ‘And indeed, you are upon a noble conduct, an exemplary manner’⁷⁸² and that ‘he is an example of good conduct’. The Sheikh himself models on the Prophet (ﷺ), who epitomizes the Qur’an, and his ways including speech and conduct have been codified as ‘sunnah’ or traditions to follow. The Sheikh or the Exemplar is one of the most critical ‘control variables’ after ‘calling’, where is his part was absent then it will make the whole model collapse, with perhaps rare exceptions of those who are able to develop themselves without a Sheikh.

One’s behaviour in all circumstance becomes very crucial and data from the seekers indicates that the nexus between worship and morality unfolds as being one inexplicable entity, which cannot be separated from one another. Thus it can be seen from the whole data set, including in both survey and interviews, that worship is paramount and so is behavior (Appendix 3 Figures 4.10, 4.11, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.22, 4.24) and this is seen in the transformation of the seekers over time (Appendix 3 – Figures 4.30, 4.31, 4.32) while concurrently, the seekers are trying their utmost to model the Sheikh especially in terms of his behavior (Appendix 3 Figures 4.16, 4.22). The section under Membership elaborates on the leadership as well as core value system within the category of spiritual grooming (tarqiyath). This is corroborated by the scholarly writings on values and its importance of overcoming vices or ruinous traits articulated in chapter 2 (Figures 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 and Table 2.2.1, Table 2.2.2) and inculcating virtues-praise worthy traits as outlined in chapter 3 (Tables 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.1).

⁷⁸² Al-Qu’ran Sura, 68:4

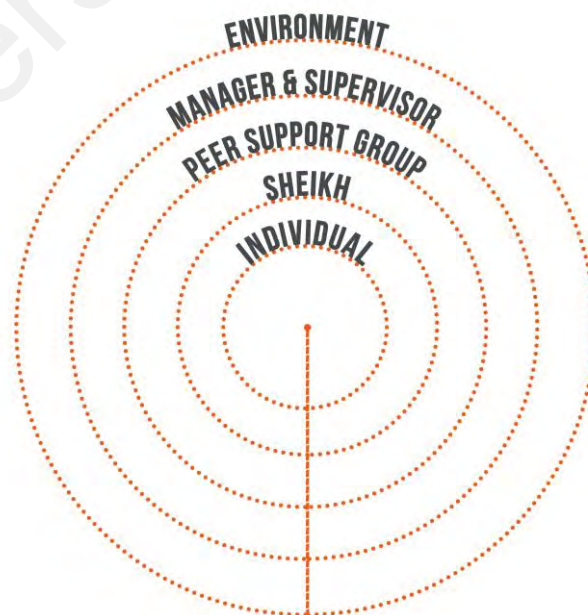
6.5.2 The Sheikh as the Exemplar: In terms of role modeling, the Sheikh plays the central role in the whole process of re-modeling of the murids or seekers (see Appendix 4F, 4G and 4X). Based on the data set (interviews Appendix 4) and the Venn diagramming developed below in Figure 6.1, which indicates the perspective of the seeker where the Sheikh is seen as the person who is the closest to them. Thus he is seen as an immediate role model (Appendix 3 Figure 4.8). The Sheikh is seen by the seekers as being loving, wise, forgiving, honest and someone who can be trusted (Appendix 3 Figures 4.8, 4.9). This affinity is reinforced further when the seekers, after having inherently accepted the Sheikh, adopt the methods of worship of the organization, the rule of conduct, and swears allegiance through a process of oath taking (bai'ya). Taking the oath or Bai'ya was seen as one of the most crucial and recurring theme in all of the interviews (Appendix 4).

This affinity to the Sheikh enables the seeker to turn his attention and energy to the path that is being set for him by way of a combination of spiritual acts, both those that are obligatory and the optional or voluntary acts. The combination of the Sheikh's lead is seen in the kulliyah, that is lectures, and the group dhikr, which brings all seekers together in his presence. During this time the dhikr is conducted both in a loud manner, and then followed by the silent one, which reinforces solidarity and togetherness with the Sheikh, as well as with the other seekers. Kynsh⁷⁸³ point out that what is relevant to the seeker is the Sheikh himself, and not necessarily the order-tariqa or the 'silsila'. Even though this is an important point, I would state that based on the emerging data from this research apart from the role of the Sheikh, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors outlined in this study is of utmost importance. Thus, Kynsh's point is partially correct and that it should be qualified.

⁷⁸³ Alexander Kynsh, Contextualising the Salafi-Sufi Conflict (From Northern Caucasus to Hadaramawth), *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43.4, 2007, 527

It is seen that after the Sheikh, the closest are the other seekers who are resident with them, that is, the peer group. From the data it is evident that especially the resident Imam, as well as the other seekers, teach and guide each other (Appendix 4). Given that the residents who live with each other day-in-and-day-out have an intricate routine starting from the very early hours of the morning and ending at night, whatever the Sheikh teaches in the group or individually is discussed, refined and internalized by the seekers. This, thus, provides a powerful platform for un-learning, learning, and reinforcing the intricacies of comprehended learning.

Given that the mind is consistently engaged in scripting, there is a tendency for it to get involved in ‘rumination’, whereby one’s mundane scripts are repeated over and over again, which can lead one into a state of anxiety and eventually depression (Esch, 2014).⁷⁸⁴ Thus the guide or Sheikh is required in order to distinguish between what appears not to be right and what is aligned with the Islamic framework.



⁷⁸⁴ Esch, T. (2014): 155

Figure 6.2 - Venn Diagram of the affinity of the Seeker

The next layer of beneficial interaction is the Manager of the Centre (Appendix 4A, 4D, 4L, 4O, 4R, 4S) and his supervisor (Appendix 4P), where both of them not only manage the administration and the logistics of the Centre, but are themselves seekers. This provides both of them the platform to give their own thought processes to the residents. This is best illustrated by the Manager of the Center by virtue of his scientific training discussing about the millions of cells in the body, which gets activated during the prayers or dhikr where all of them are in a state of remembrance of God, and is echoed by the residents during their interviews (Appendix 4).

It has to be said that the immediate environment where love, cooperation, and spiritual practice is performed gives them some meaning to the residents since they are living without their families. The care by the Sheikh and his wife, both of whom here are mentioned, provides the family care and orientation to the residents. The ground rules and discipline set by the Centre Manger and his Supervisor for the residents forms a boundary, within which the residents operate and this is important given the past lives of the resident who were ex-drug addicts and promiscuous in their life style. This active cooperation and sharing with each other and keeping their residence clean and tidy, all goes towards ordering their lives.

6.5.3 The Sheikh's Impact on the Seeker: In terms of role-modeling, it is important to see how the Sheikh imparts his behavior to the seekers. The figure above derived from the survey indicates that most of the respondents indicate that they learn by the Sheikh 'setting an example', which was followed by 'demonstrating things himself from time to time', by 'admonishing you' and by 'establishing ground rules' (Appendix 3 Figure

4.22). This shows that both observational skills on the part of the seekers play an important role, which is primarily non-verbal, and this is then combined with the demonstration that the Sheikh does from time to time, which is also an active form but that which is still silent. The essential teaching of the Sheikh on anger management (Appendix 3 Figure 4.16) impart to the seekers to be silent, say a prayer, get advice from others, supplicate to God, be patient and says salawah (praise on the Prophet).

6.5.4 Neuro-Semantic & Neuro-Linguistic Programming Modeling of the Sheikh:

Here a technique and format from NS-NLP⁷⁸⁵ has been utilized, to capture the essential features of the Sheikh, aimed at gaining a better understanding of why and how he functions. Within NS-NLP there are meta-states, which is a sense of awareness of what is going on: while meta-programmes are a process used for formalising or structuring one's thinking, emotions and perceptions⁷⁸⁶ (see chapter 3 on methodology), in this sense it is a filter through which one see the world and in this case, an attempt is made to capture some aspects of the Sheikh's meta-states and meta-programmes.

The NLP modeling format was populated by the author based on the survey and the interview data, which was validated by explaining and sharing it with the Centre Manager (Appendix 4R). This is presented in figure 5.3 below. Each of the main components are elaborated below:

⁷⁸⁵ The author is a Master Practitioner of Neuro-Semantics and Neuro-Linguistic Programming and has been certified by the INSI, Colorado, USA while having undergone training with Andrew Tham in Malaysia. NS-NLP is an approach to outline how people think and function and the processes that are involved in it (Chapter 3 on methodology has elaborated on it).

⁷⁸⁶ L Micheal Hall and Bobby.G. Bodenhamer, Figuring out People: Reading People Using Meta-Programs (Crown House Publications Ltd, Wales, UK, 2006): 9

Skills: The Sheikh has several skills in that apart from being a spiritual guide, he is an academician and writer, while being able to skillfully mentor the seekers, both the residents as well as the general seekers. He is able to speak in public, as well as offer one-to-one counseling to the seekers.

Strategies: The most impactful elements that can be discerned about this Order are that it has a holistic approach to spirituality and dealing with its seekers. By this it is meant that those residents who are taking medication continue to do so, while they are taught to develop their spiritual activities, which is a combination of lectures, dhikr, one-to-one counseling, repentance, supplication, learning patience, Islamic reflexology, and various types of prayers including obligatory and optional. The approach of the Sheikh is one which is very composed, as one seeker put it ‘staying cool’ (Appendix 4U) and is an iterative approach to teaching and learning, which provides the seekers time to reflect, test things out, and internalize them. The combination of techniques above mentioned are used by the Sheikh for the general seekers, where the Sheikh rotates his locations by using mosques, the Orders sub-centers, and his own home.

Screen Play on the Mind: The Sheikh uses a combination of techniques to imprint on the minds and hearts of the seekers, including sharing narratives of the Prophets, his companions and other role-models, by writing about the field of ‘tasawwuf’ (inward sciences), public speaking, interactive methods including group gatherings and one-one-counseling.

States and Intensity: This is difficult to capture given that there is an array of activities undertaken by the seekers to which the researcher was not privy. However, the varying

states of energy, with high intensity was observed during the group loud and silent dhikrs, which is done with voice (auditory) and with the breath (kinesthetic).

Strategies: Integrated approach to spirituality including treating mind-body

Screen Play on the Mind: Evoking the role of the Prophet and past Sheikhs, sharing narratives, demonstration virtuous behaviour, Writing, Reading Stories.

Primary States (movie mind): $\underbrace{Va+Vk}_{} + \underbrace{Av+Ak}_{} , \underbrace{Kv+Ka}_{} ,$

Processing Information

Meta-States: Significance, Connected, Excused, Feel the self,

Gestalt State: Growth (Self) & Contributions to the life of other

Meta – Programmes:

Focus	(Thinking) Cognitive	(Feeling) Emotional	(Choosing) Conative	(Meta – Meaning) Semantic
Meta-Programs:	Representation VAK/Language Epistemological Intuitior-Sensor Conceptualizing- Experiencing Philosophical Why/Origins How/Solutions Understanding- Getting results Information Kind Quantity- Quantitative	Persistence (Patient)	Goal Striving Perfectionist Optima list Management Delegate, Collaborative Flexible	Self-Experience Mind, Body, Emotions Will Self-Integrity Harmonious, Integration Responsibility Healthy Responsibility Time Zones Past-Present-Future Values List of Values: Needs-Wants Important-Urgent

Frames: In oneness of God

Belief: In the hereafter (next life)

Values: Serve others, forgiving, tolerant, charitable, gratitude, humble, polite

Decisions: To lead others towards God

Identification: Main Stream Islam with focus on the inward sciences (tasawwuf)

Understanding/Background Knowledge: Qur'an, Sunnah, Tasawwuf,

Attractors: Service to God

Figure 6.3 - Modeling Template for Leader-Sheikh Behavior⁷⁸⁷

Primary States⁷⁸⁸: There is a combination of many aspects on how the mind and body receive information and how it is processed and disseminated. The Sheikh uses the visual (V) and auditory (A) modes, that is, through his lectures (A) and discussion he evokes imagery (V) to explain things of importance, where for example he cites verses from the Qur'an and narrates the Prophetic hadiths. In reality, there are combinations of the VAK (visual-auditory-kinesthetic) that is used in different combinations (see Figure 5.3). He then explains these verses and sayings, which lends itself to the auditory aspects and some visualization (Av). The Kinesthetic visualization (Kv) element is pronounced in the group dhikr, where there is intense sensation and interaction between the Sheikh, as well as those facilitating the dhikr, where pronunciation of the word of God and the breathing movement with focus on God are kinesthetic, while selected

⁷⁸⁷ The data for developing the meta-modeling template for the Sheikh has been derived from the series of interviews with the seekers and from the survey data, which included both the residents of the rehabilitation centers, as well as those how are general seekers. The meta-programme was crossed with one of the most senior seekers who was also the Manager of the residential center and thereby validated.

⁷⁸⁸ States consists of mind-body-emotions, the sum total of all neurological and physical processes within and individual at any moment in time, a holistic phenomenon of mind-body-emotions, moods. VAK is used for the sensory representation systems of Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic. The last one (K) includes smells (olfactory) and tastes (gustatory). The 'auditory' is used for the sense of hearing; a basic sensory representation system. 'Kinesthetic' are sensations, feelings, tactile sensations on surface of skin, proprioceptive sensations inside the body, includes vestibular system. The 'visual' refers to seeing, imaging, the representation systems of sight in L Micheal Hall and Bobby.G. Bodenhamer, Figuring out People: Reading People Using Meta-Programs (Crown House Publications Ltd, Wales, UK, 2006): 352,354,357

seekers go around and offer guidance to the seekers who tend to ‘worship God as they see Him and if they do not see Him, He sees them’ (visualization).⁷⁸⁹ During the sessions, one finds a ‘flow of energy’ (Ka – Kinesthetic auditory) given that the whole group is performing the dhikr simultaneously. The psycho-physiological changes and effects on the seekers are well corroborated by neuro-scientific work (see chapter 2.4).

Skills: Mentoring, Writing, Counseling, Coaching, Public Speaking, participating.

Meta-States and Meta-Programmes (see Figure 6.3): These states are of a higher level order and differ from the primary states of information processing by the seekers. The meta states or programmes refers to what makes people ‘tick’ and motivates them and in the case of the Sheikh, it can be stated as being that of making significance, feeling connected and the development of the self. For example, within the core-values framework (see figure 5.,4) it can be stated that a movement away from the ruinous (evil) to the virtuous traits provides the trajectory for the seekers to develop themselves. To this effect, the Sheikh uses a variety of means to teach and share (Visual Auditory Kinetic) with the seekers including the philosophical approach of raising key questions about the meaning and purpose of life (Cognitive), to exercising patience and being compassionate (Emotional-Feeling – emotive states).

The conative (meaning) aspects are seen in the Sheikh striving to set goals for the seekers, while trying to do things to perfection. His style of management is very much decentralized as evident in him delegating his khalifas or deputies to lead and conduct their own sub-centers, while he attempts to work in a collaborative manner so that the deputies and the seekers feel empowered. One of the key aspects of the Order is the

⁷⁸⁹ Jibril Hadith, where the Prophet (ﷺ) fed back to Angel Jibril of what is Ihsan or a state of excellence. An-Nawawi (2004) hadith, No:2. A Selection of Authentic (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi’s Forty Hadiths. Compiled by Muhammad. A. Abdul-Fattah & Reima Youssif Shakei (Egypt: Dar Al-Manarah)

mind-body integration, where the focus is on 'eating to live', and an intense form of worship, which are aimed to unravel experiential learning from within, which is the essence of the meditative process. In this sense, there is the aspect of de-learning and re-learning and developing the ten core values that were articulated by the resident imam and his friend and that were outlined in the previous chapter on the case study.

Gestalt State: This is the highest order state, which forms the core-construct or values of the Sheikh, or to put it another way, why is the Sheikh is doing what is doing. The response based on the survey and interview data can be outlined as being promoting the growth of himself spiritually, as well as to the development of others and in this case it is the seekers' spiritual growth.

Frame of Reference & Belief: The main frame of reference is the belief in One God, with the belief not only in this life (dunya) but the hereafter (akhira). In this sense, the core values of the Sheikh as seen both in the interview and survey data includes serving others, forgiving, exercising tolerance, being charitable, gratitude to God, polite to the seekers etc; (see Appendix 3 Figures 4.9, 4.10).

Values and Decision: One of the key findings is that the Sheikh and the Order have developed a core value system and this is wide ranging and includes serving others, being forgiving, tolerant, charitable, gratitude, humble, polite (see Figure 5.4 derived from this research).

Identification and Attractors: Given that there are critiques of these types of spiritual Orders, it was important to identify their source of guidance, which in this case was the

divine writ (Qur'an) and the Prophetic actions and saying (hadiths), as well as following the inward tradition of 'tasawwuf'. The fundamental attractor is service towards God, with the aim of gaining knowledge possibly leading towards 'ma'rifa' (divine knowledge) and experiential learning.

6.6 The Membership of the Order: Similar to the 'calling' and the 'leadership of the Sheikh', 'membership' forms an important 'control variable', without which the stated outcomes variables cannot be accomplished as a general rule: that is, it is key to transformation. There is a sense of belonging to the Order, which is apparent in the various dialogues manifested in the interviews and that this Order is different to others that they had experienced. This is solidified by three main aspects that form the approach, methods and tools of the Order, known as tarkiyath (spiritual grooming), tarbiyath (education), and tazkiyath (purification), and with the organization and these aspects are highlighted below. Goleman best captures this when he points out the need for overing negative emotions by retraining one's attention, change of perceptual habits, sitting in the company of those who have transformed (see chapter 2.4.2.2).

6.6.1 Approaches, Methods and Tools – Tarkiyath (Spiritual Grooming) - Tarbiyath (Education) –Tazkiyath (Purification)

6.6.1.1 Tarkiyath (Spiritual Grooming): The role of the exemplar or the Sheikh as already seen in previous sections is most fundamental in setting the pathway for the seeker. It is from the Sheikh that the seekers emulate both the verbal and non-verbal aspects including behavior, and receiving the concepts and values, which they try and internalize.

One of the most significant findings of this study, apart from the role of the exemplar, is the methods of worship that are the core value system, which is the driver and the motivator both from the point of view of the Sheikh as well as the seekers. From the perspective of the Sheikh, he uses the framework of the attributes of God as a core value system for the seekers to model on (Appendix 4F). This can be broadly categorized into the Jamali attributes, which refer to the beautiful attributes of God, where this subsumes Most Loving (Al-Wadud), The Subtle One (Al Latif), Compassionate (Ar-Rahman.); Most Merciful (Ar-Rahim), Giver of Peace (Al Mu'min), Exceedingly Forgiving (Al Ghaffar) to name a few. The other category is the Jallali attributes, which includes The Sovereign (Al-Malik), The Mighty (Al-Aziz), The Lord of Majesty (Dhul-Jalalu.), Powerful (AL- Muqtadi.), The Avenger (Al-Muntaqim), to name a few.

Some of these, especially the ten core values have been transmitted by the Sheikh to the seekers, and this is explicitly evident in the dialogue that pursued with the resident Imam and his friend (Appendix 4E), where they outline these ten, which they try to emulate during their course of life, namely: Baraka (blessings), Shakur (gratitude), tawakkal (trust), tauba (repentance), sabr (patience), zuhud (spiritual poverty), raja (hope), rida (acceptance) and takuth (fear).

The survey data extracts refer to the most important traits for the development of the self, as well as the worst vices from the perspective of the seekers and this can be developed as a tree of virtues and vices as illustrated below (Figure 6.4). Vices include: Anger (1), love of this world (2), heedlessness (3), false hope (4), ostentation (5), arrogance, desire to inflict harm, anxiety, stinginess, avarice, envy, superiority, vanity, boasting, seeking reputation, fraud, wantonness, inequality, cowardice, and emotional

attachment to the world. This has been captured in chapter 2 in table 2.2.1 on ruinous traits and its treatment detailed out in table 2.2.2.

It is interesting to flag the most important traits that the seekers identified in the Sheikh (Appendix 3, Figure 4.9), which were: patience (59 percent), humbleness (53 per cent), forgiveness (50 per cent), love (47 per cent), wisdom (44 per cent), honesty (41 per cent) and trust (41 per cent). The most important traits that they identify in the Sheikh are mirrored in what the seekers feel is important to their own lives and is based on their own experiences (Appendix 4E). Concerning the vices that the seekers felt were detrimental, based on their experiences, they were listed as the following in order of rank: anger, heedlessness and laziness, superiority, arrogance, love of the world, forgetfulness, anxiety, fraud, greedy, materialistic, pride (Appendix 3, Figure 4.13). This closely corroborates with ruinous traits outlined by four eminent scholars, Sheikh Abul Hasan al Karkarni, Imam Mawlud al-Yaqubi, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and Imam Ibn Hazm al-Andalus (see Chapter 3.5).

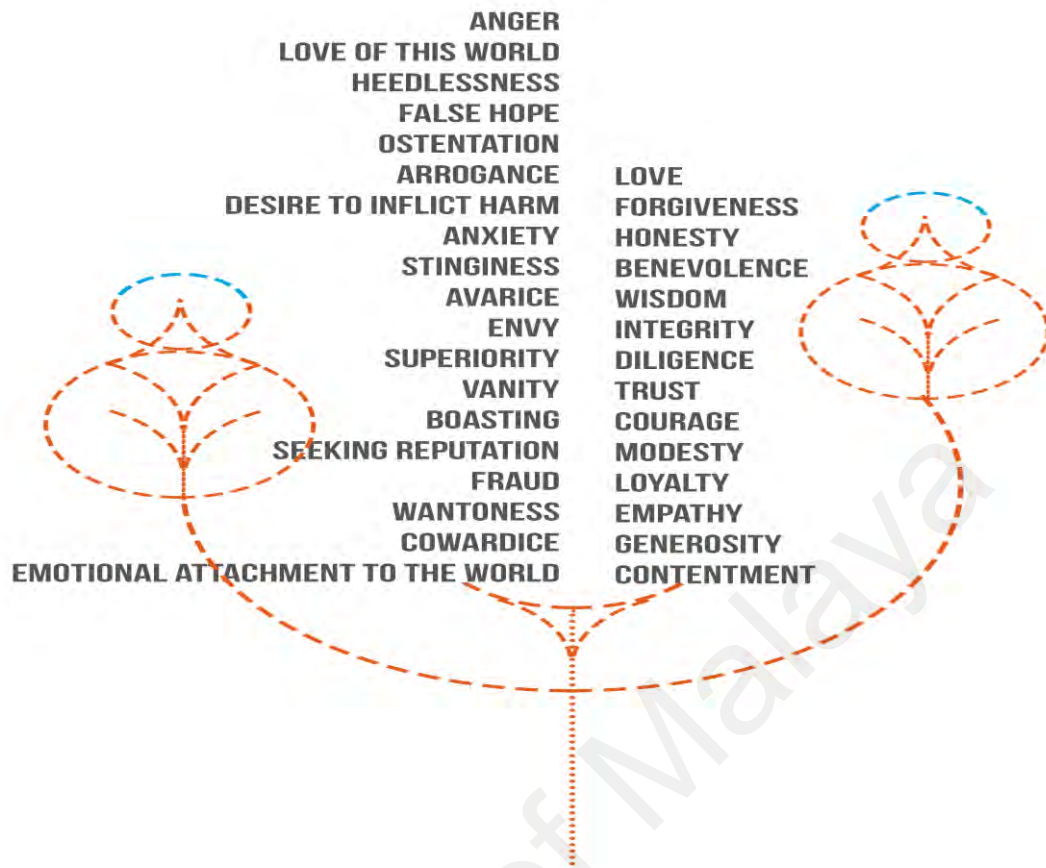


Figure 6.4 – The Tree of Vices & Virtues Traits from the Seekers Perspective

6.6.1.2 Tarbiyath: There were a number of methods that constituted educational aspects that were used within the Order and these were attending lectures (kulliyah), one to one counseling by the Sheikh, recital and understanding of the Qur'an, reading hadith or the tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ). As observed, this is a continuous process of learning. This is very much a cognitive function and involves memory, comprehension, and putting into practice what one has learnt.

6.6.1.3 Tazkiyath: Essentially this refers to a process of cleansing one's inner self, especially from vices, and learning to cultivate virtuous traits. These interaction of the seekers with the Exemplar or the Sheikh, triggers a host of spiritual acts, which is wide ranging, starting well before dawn with the physical purification of oneself (wudu), night vigil and prayers (tahajjud), is accompanied by the ritual prayers (salah), fasting

(saum), seeking repentance (tauba), supplication to God for the change (dua), methods of remembrance of God (dhikr), and Qur'anic recital and the reading of the acts and words of the Prophet (hadiths). As is evident in the interviews (Appendix 4) and the surveys (Appendix 3 Figures 4.9, 4.10, 4.16), seeking forgiveness, supplicating to God, ritual and obligatory prayers form a sustained method in this process of cleansing. The remembrance of God (dhikr) has a special place, where both the silent (sirr) and loud (jihar) is seen to have a profound effect (Appendix 4). These very much formed the Prophetic practices as seen in chapter 3.4, table 3.2.4 and what we see here is the emulation of this practice, where the standards are set by the Sheikh as followed by the seekers.

6.7 The Performance of the Order: This can be categorized as a 'dependent variable', which is influenced by the 'efforts' exerted by the seeker and his self. One of the key aspects, which is more metaphysical, is the blessings that God channels through the Sheikh to the seeker called tawwajuth (spiritual attention), also termed the spiritual beneficence. The seekers in this sense are supported in spiritual survival by the facilitation of their Sheikh, as well as them exerting their own effort or struggle (jihad). This point will be one of contention with within some quarters of main-stream Islam, where it can be argued that only God can facilitate ones spiritual growth and that the Sheikh has no power. My own thinking is that most of us need a mentor to facilitate our spiritual journey since the mind is complex and often we cannot see our own actions (blind spot – see chapter 3.1, figure 3.1.3 – the Johari window) and machinations.

One of the fundamental factors for aspiring to improve performance is experiential learning, both in terms of what one experiences during dhikr and prayers, which can

sometimes be shared, while at other times it cannot. This is combined with the aim of trying to perfect the outward practices reinforces performance.

There are many factors that influence performance and these can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic factors as outlined below.

6.7.1 Intrinsic & Extrinsic Factors Impacting Self-development: There are several factors that were flagged by the seekers, in general both the residents and the general, that lead to the development of the self. These can be divided into the internal and external realms. Each of these categories is briefly explained below. Both external and internal realms were found to be important for the seekers but as the survey data indicates the internal factors superseded the external.

Intrinsic Factors: There were a number of intrinsic factors that they highlighted as being the key:

- i) Self-realisation was seen as a vital aspect where the seekers found it to be a motivational factor to make the change;
- ii) The heart – brain connection was the most interesting finding, which is seen to trigger the change. This is further expounded in the next section;
- iii) Learning lessons, testing and refining was found to be an aspect, which facilitated internalization and habit formation;
- iv) Observation of the Sheikh and self-modeling over time formed the platform that made change possible;
- v) Testing new ideas, practices and concepts helped to re-define what they had learnt in the past, a trigger to change habits;

- vi) Self-reflection of what they had done in the past, which led to repentance and formed a base for a kind of self-purification formed a kind of glue to adhering to good habits;
- vii) Adaptation to the new environment and to the other seekers and changing circumstances as they observed the change, reinforced the change in behavior;
- viii) Dreams formed a vehicle for receiving messages of change and reinforcing their faith.

Extrinsic Factors: There were a number of extrinsic factors, a combination of which facilitated the interaction of the residents into the Centre, as well as helping the seekers with their personal growth as outlined below:

- i) One to one counseling by the Sheikh with the seekers, helping them to become centered, is seen to give the confidence to sustain their change;
- ii) Kulliyah – intermittent lectures by the Sheikh to groups in various locations, which the seekers attend depending on their proximity. The lectures vary from sharing the ten most virtuous traits to methods of worship and stories of the Prophets and the Sages;
- iii) Setting of ground rules and their reinforcement by the Manager and Supervisor of the Centre helped the seekers to structure their prayers and ritual acts, which helps them with the transformation;
- iv) Peer group facilitation was found to be very vital for the seekers to learn, adapt and internalize their change and transformation;
- v) The Immediate Environment plays a part in the residents, as well as the general seekers, play out their respective parts and observe practices, the

ritual, rules of conduct and the social interaction, which is seen to foster caring and is directed towards the worship of one God;

- vi) Needs based therapy, whereby residents get their required medical treatment combined with the spiritual practices, including meditative and contemplative practices, and this is reinforced with what is called Islamic reflexology, which seems to have a mental effect.

One observes that there are internal changes and states of these seekers, where some of these methods and devotional acts leads them to a state of deep meditation and hence a state of relaxation and a sense of peace, as reported in the interviews and survey data (Appendix 3 Figures 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.30, 4.31). This state of benefits to both body and mind is corroborated in neuro-scientific findings as articulated in chapter 2.4 by the research of Fatima et al⁷⁹⁰, Doufesh et al⁷⁹¹ and Aldahadha et al⁷⁹².

Self-restraint was seen as one of the areas that the seekers had to learn and up-hold, given their earlier state of promiscuity. Dreams were reported as a way of indicative change and reinforcement of their positive state of change. While the inner state was seen as crucial, the external environment facilitates and reinforces the change process: these include peer support, which we have seen as being paramount to learning and refining and being inspired by the peers.

The setting of ground rules and an infusion of a set of discipline (Appendix 3 Figure 4.22) by the Manager and Supervisor are seen to keep things in order and make things functional. Even though, for the residents, their families had abandoned them due to

⁷⁹⁰ Ibrahim F, Abu Bakar W, Abas W and Cheok N.S. (2008), 11-111

⁷⁹¹ Doufesh, H, Faisal T, Lim K.S, Ibrahim F (2012), 11-18

⁷⁹² Aldahadha B (2013), 668-676

their earlier unsociable and harmful behavior, it is seen that they are better able to re-connect with them, and this is seen to be serving a function of them gaining recognition and being accepted back into the fold.

6.8 The Reward for the Seekers: Reward like ‘performance’ is a ‘dependent variable’ and is influenced by ‘efforts’ of the seeker and the Grace of God. Rewards are intimately connected with ‘performance’ and reinforce each other. On a general note, the better the performance, the greater the reward, and this is dependent on the guidance of the spiritual leader, as well as the approach, methods and tools embedded within the ‘membership’ of the Order. The drive and motivation of the seekers comes from the spiritual reward or merits (amal) that they will get by performing these spiritual acts.

There are two kinds of rewards from an Islamic perspective, that is, the spiritual merits (amal) that one gets from participating in the religious or spiritual activities and preparing for the next life and this is made explicit in the divine writ; then, there are benefits that one reaps in this world, where God Himself says “only in remembrance do hearts find peace.”⁷⁹³ This is the peace and serenity that comes from the acts of worship including meditation (muraqaba) (Appendix 3 Figure 4.23.4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.29), which is now evidentially backed up by neuro-science data⁷⁹⁴ on well-being, as well as from observing the virtuous traits including patience, humbleness, honesty, trust, forgiveness, tolerance etc. (Appendix 3 Figures 4.9, 4.11, 4.12, 4.17, 4.18).

⁷⁹³ Al-Qur’an, Sura Ar-Rad (13:28)

⁷⁹⁴ Esch, T. (2014): 155; Andresen, J. (2000): 20; Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111; Ibrahim, F., Ahmad, W.W. (2008): 687-690; Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18.

Performance and rewards are intertwined, whereby one reinforces the other, and these serve as an engine for driving forth the quest and spiritual survival of the seekers, which is outlined below. Thus, there is a correlation between these two variables, which feed each other.

6.9 The Orders Outcomes – Well-Being and the Worshipper

6.9.1 Order Outcomes: The product of the whole process is the transformation that the seekers experience, where they have changed for the better, especially in the case of the residents overcoming addictions, and experience a sense of peace and togetherness with the peers and families as evident in the survey data results (Appendix 3 Figures 4.30, 4.31 and 4.32). The seekers experience benefits, which are physical, physiological, emotional, social, cultural and others (Appendix 3 Figure 4.29). This leads to a sense of well-being, the acquisition of knowledge, as well as to their strong commitment to their Sheikh and the Order. This essentially forms the key dimensions of human wellbeing within the Islamic tradition, which includes the spiritual, psychological, social, intellectual and the physical as outlined in figure 3.2.3 (chapter 3.2) and elaborated in this section.

The improvements in well-being highlighted above by the seekers in this research are well corroborated by an increasing number of scientific studies⁷⁹⁵ that have been recently carried out on Muslim ritual prayers, fasting and dhikr. Chapter 2.4 deals with these in greater detail and adds credence to the findings of this research. An ethnographic study in Central Asia points out that:

⁷⁹⁵ Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18; Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111; Afifi, Z. E. M. (1997): 231-235; Roky, R. Iraki L., HajKhida, R., Ghazal, N.L., Hakkou, F. (2000): 101-107.

“..that the ceremony of the jahri dhikr was quite often held for healing (curing) people from various diseases. In our field research, we also were witnesses of the still existing practice of treating people with the help of very important factors attesting this dhikr-i-arah.....in our opinion....an atmosphere of strict regimen and regular participation of patients in the sessions of the jahri represents very important factors attesting this”.

As already elaborated in chapter 2.4, wellbeing refers to the ‘absence of negative conditions or feelings, the result of adjustment and adaptation to a hazardous world.’⁷⁹⁶, which forms a process of healing. Thus, the aggregated impact of the communities of practices like the Spiritual Order under study, can go beyond the physiological and psychological realm and from an individual to a community and societal level, culminating in a global perspective. This is elaborated in chapter 2.4, table 2.4.2, which sums up the impact and implications at individual, community, societal and global levels.

Walsh⁷⁹⁷ captures the situation of the resident seekers of this study, when he states that: “Differences in just four lifestyle factors—smoking, physical activity, alcohol intake, and diet—exert a major impact on mortality, and even small differences in lifestyle can make a major difference in health status” (in Khaw et al., 2008, p. 376). He further states that there has been an under estimation by health care professionals of the role of life style changes on reducing multiple diseases, bringing about related psychopathologies, and on psychological and social well-being, while preserving and optimizing cognitive capacities and neural functions⁷⁹⁸.

⁷⁹⁶ Corey Lee.M. Keyes, Social Well-Being, Social Psychology Quarterly, Vol. 61, No:2, 1998:121

⁷⁹⁷ Walsh, R. Life Style and Mental Health, University of California, Irvine College of Medicine, American Psychologist, Vol. 66, Vol. 7, 579-592, 2011; Last Retrieved 25th August 2016; <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-66-7-579.pdf>

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid

6.9.2 Towards a Spiritual Learning Theory

The research data is used here to try and work towards a spiritual learning theory based on Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which postulates that people learn not through reward and punishment but through observing others, where he argued that 'most human behaviours is learnt through modelling.'⁷⁹⁹ Some key elements of the spiritual learning theory are:

- i) **Observing-Attention:** The seekers emulating the Sheikh-Exemplar by observing his verbal and non-verbal behavior (Appendix 3 – 4.19).
- ii) **Reflection:** The seekers reflect on what they have observed from the Sheikh, as well as test out the ten virtues that they have learnt from him.
- iii) **Self-Accounting:** The seekers are taking account of themselves vis-a-vis their past behaviours, which is a type of self-accounting.
- iv) **Supplication:** The seekers elicit change through intense daily prayers, supplicating God to change their situation, while asking others to pray for them.
- v) **Mirroring:** Based on this they research this behaviour and cross check or mirror it with their peers.
- vi) **Testing and Retention:** They retain these behaviours and test them over time.
- vii) **Reproduction:** The seekers physically reproduce these behaviours.
- viii) **Internalisation & Motivation:** The seekers then internalize these behaviours reinforced by their cohort, which provide the motivation for them to share.

⁷⁹⁹ Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory in The Psychology Book, DK, London, 2012, 288-289

What is different from Bandura's social learning theory is that there are some spiritual features taken from the Islamic tradition:

- i) **Reflection (Tafakkur):** After their initial and sequential observations the seekers are seen to reflect (tafakkur) on it.
- ii) **Self-Accounting & Rebuke (Muhasaba & Muataba):** They take account of themselves taking account of themselves (muataba) and their past behavior and the changes that are occurring to them.
- iii) **Supplication (Dua):** They allude that they supplicate to God (dua) to change their situation, as well as asking others to pray for them.
- iv) **Mirroring, Internalisation & Motivation:** Thereafter, they cross-check with their peers or mirror those who have been able to internalize it, which provides the motivation with others.

There are some narratives that are reflected, especially in the dialogue of the resident Imam and his friend, where for example he says, ““I wake up to.....Taubat (forgiveness)Yes what sin has been done (sic), what sin is forthcoming (sic), what sin has gone (sic), so Allah please open my heart to follow and soften my tongue to read our Quran because I will use methods like ritual repentance...” (Appendix 4M and Appendix 4J) and in the changes outlined by the professional banker, who says, “During the dhikr I feel like some sought of vision, visualize, but the most important part, is the part that you feel within your heart. So that is the reason why we have to be close to the Guru, and there is this terminology Shoheba, the closeness with the Prophet.” (Appendix 4O).

The female seekers highlighted that she went through a process of questioning herself:

“.. where is the truth, what am I doing down here and how I missed the lectures. I miss going to the tawajju (spiritual attention) but how am I going for it (sic), I feel that basically helpless. So when you taffakur (reflection) and of course the dhikr I do it every day.....” (Appendix 4I).

There is a need for more elaborate observations with other spiritual orders to cross-check the emerging patterns. The key mechanism that Bandura outlines is the cognitive nature of the process, which mediates between the observing and imitating. However, in the spiritual theory that is being postulated, there are non-cognitive factors related to the heart within the realm of contemplative practices that come into play. This is illustrated is the statement of the resident imam when he says,

“The brain and mind and the heart must come together in one, so when your brain sees something your heart must commit to it (sic). We try hard...” (Appendix 4M).

This, then, defines and distinguishes the social theory of learning from the spiritual theory of learning.

6.9.3 The Nexus between Worship (Ibadah) and Akhlaq (Morality)

6.9.3.1 Types of Worship & its Impact: Given the difficulty of having a working definition of prayer due to its complexities as well as its subtleties, Andersen⁸⁰⁰ divides it into two main categories, namely, the discursive and the non-discursive, which has already been outlined in chapter 2.4 (the well-being and the worshipper). The Islamic practices falls largely with the domain of non-discursive as defined by Andersen⁸⁰¹, which generally refers to “mental states that entertain a single thought/object serially, where the focus is on one God. This is characterized by the mind being focused upon a single object without voluntary discussion or involuntary distraction towards the objects.” This is as opposed to discursive practices, which are “mental states that entertain thoughts/objects serially. The mind focuses on a series of thoughts and images.”

⁸⁰⁰ Andresen, J. (2000): 20.

⁸⁰¹ Andresen, J. (2000): 20.

Ascertaining the practices within the Order under study, the obligatory and optional ritual prayers, the supplications, the repentance and especially the methods used during dhikr (remembrance of God) can all be categorized as a non-discursive method of practice. This is so since within all of these practices the focus is on a single object, namely God. Andersen⁸⁰² points out that the non-discursive methods are found to be more effective from a neurological point of view. For these practices to be effective, however, from a spiritual view point, the intention needs to be right, and it has to be done with 'khusu' or absorption as the Prophetic practice deems it to be. This spiritual position concurs with the physiological and neurological effectiveness when worship is done properly as the studies of Fatima et al⁸⁰³ indicate, which support the states the seekers felt (Appendix 3 Figure 4.29). Thus, there appears to be a correlation between observing proper worship as well as being indicated by the emerging results from neurological studies, and this seems to cut across all faiths as highlighted in numerous studies cited in Chapter 4.

6.9.3.2 Nexus Between Worship & Behaviour: One of the fundamental areas explored in this thesis is the nexus between worship and behavior, or to frame it another way, does worship have an effect on one's behavior denoting morality or adapting a core value system? It was found that there seems to be an inter-connection between the depth of worship and the behaviour of the seekers, and this seems to be achieved through a process of modeling or emulating the Sheikh, as well as the peers and others around them. Thus there seems to be a correlation between worship and its impact on behaviour, as both the survey and the interview data as outlined below.

⁸⁰² Ibid

⁸⁰³ Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111; Ibrahim, F. & Ahmad W.W. (2013), 687-690

One can discern from the survey as well as the interview data, the seekers experienced various states and behavior as a result of sustained worship (see Appendix 4A), including a sense of calmness, good behavior towards their family, respect towards their parents, returning to the right way or path, impact on morality (akhlaq) and being less anxious (Appendix 3 Figures 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32). It will be noted that these changes result from the sustained acts of worship by the seeker, which included multiple methods that were not the case with them before as they themselves stated. This impact on the mental states of the individual worshipper and their behavior does have a scientific basis.

There are a number of factors that are said to change one's behavior including repentance, remembering God (dhikr), which needs to be internalized, as well as taking the oath of allegiance. The deepening of dhikr, which is done within their retreat, is seen to have a profound effect and this is corroborated by the emerging evidence in neuroscience⁸⁰⁴ (see Chapter 2.3 and Appendix 3 Figures 4.15, 4.24, 4.25, 4.30; 4.31, 4.32) within the context of mindfulness meditation. This is very similar to the method that is used in this tariqa but goes much deeper since it is a regular activity combined with night vigil (see Appendix 4O, 4J), individual as well as collective dhikr and retreats (Appendix 4S, 4L, 4W, 4A, 4N, 4I). Contemplative methods within the Islamic framework has not been studied in any depth as compared to practices within Buddhism or in Hinduism (Yoga) and this forms fertile ground for future researchers to explore.

⁸⁰⁴ Andrew Newberg and Eugene D'Aquili, *Neuropsychology of Religious & Spiritual Experience*, in *Cognitive Models and Spiritual Maps*, Eds Jensine Andersen and Robert K.C. Forman (Imprint Academic, United Kingdom, 2000), 255

6.9.3.3 The Heart – Brain Connection: One of the most powerful messages to be articulated by the seekers is the connectivity of the heart and brain (Appendix 4M, 4E, 4J, 4K,4C). Table 5.2 and its illustration in Figure 5.4 show with reference to the brain and the heart in the context of spiritual development, the reference to the heart is much more in terms of impact on worship and morality, than that of the brain. In this case, 10 references were made to the heart and its effect on morality, with 26 references to its impact on worship, while in the case of the brain, two references to its effect on morality and 17 citing its impact on worship. While one may call these subjective perceptions, it demonstrates the well grounded feelings of the seekers themselves, which cannot be disregarded. This is also illustrated as a diagram in Figure 6.4.

Table 6.3 – Heart-Brain connection Respondent Scores

Dimension	The Brain	The Heart
Akhlaq (morality)	2	10
Ibadah (worship)	17	26

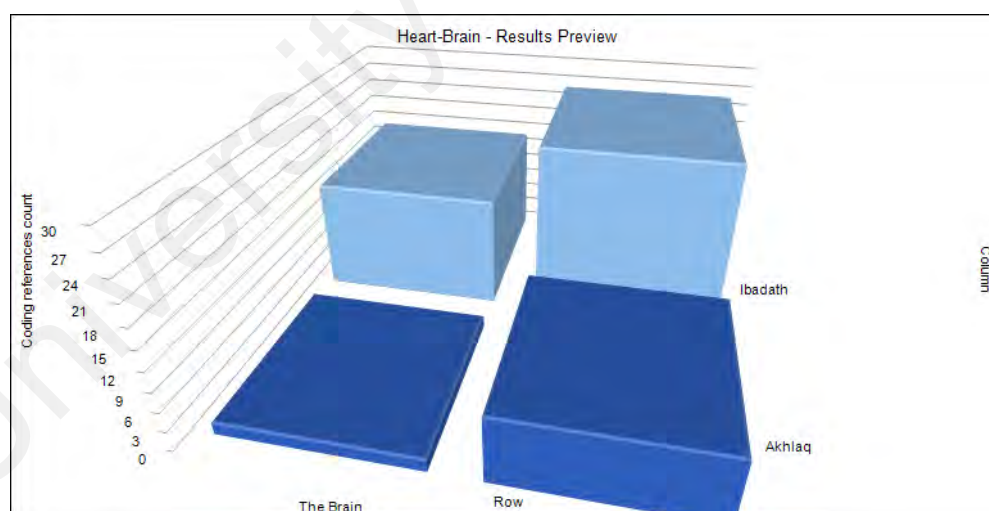


Figure 6.4 - The Heart- Brain Connection

This is best illustrated in the saying of the resident Imam, who highlights that “Before we prayed but only with our brain, and now we use our hearts” and “The brain and the heart must come together as one” (Appendix 4M). This means that before it was going through the motions guided cognitively, but now both the brain and the heart are being

connected to the prayers and to oneself. One key factor observed was the orientation of this Order with a concept called ‘wuquf-al-qalb’, which refers to the attention towards the heart and setting the frame of mind that God is watching you, a state known as ‘muraqaba’, a through a state of deep meditation. This is supported by the divine writ⁸⁰⁵, “Surely, God ever watches over you”, and the Jibril hadith⁸⁰⁶, “Excellence in religion is that you worship God as if you see Him, and if you fail to see Him, verily He sees you”.

This expression denotes learning the ritual prayer and just doing it for the sake of doing it, and then when greater awareness arises the heart comes into play. This can be conceptualized as represented in Figure 6.5, which shows the alienation of the brain and the heart especially for those who do worship because they have to or else who do have their minds and hearts away from them or their consciousness. When the connectivity of the heart and the brain come together as articulated by the seekers mentioned above, then this is seen to positively impact on both the state of worship as well as on morality or their values and behavior. This is reflected in terms of seeing the transformation of those who are ex-drug addicts and HIV patients, who have been able to change their behavior, as well as feel a sense of peace. This state of mind has been highlighted by many of the residents (Appendix 4M, 4E, 4J, 4K, 4C). Taking another perspective, there are those who pray but their behavior has negative emotions manifested, of envy, hatred, jealousy and/or other vices. It can be alluded that this is where there is less connectivity and less sense of peace.

⁸⁰⁵ Al-Qur’an, Sura 4:1

⁸⁰⁶ Jibril Hadith., An-Nawawi (2004) hadith, No:2. A Selection of Authentic (sacred) Hadiths with An-Nawawi’s Forty Hadiths. Compiled by Muhammad. A. Adbul-Fattah & Reima Youssif Shakei (Egypt: Dar Al-Manarah)

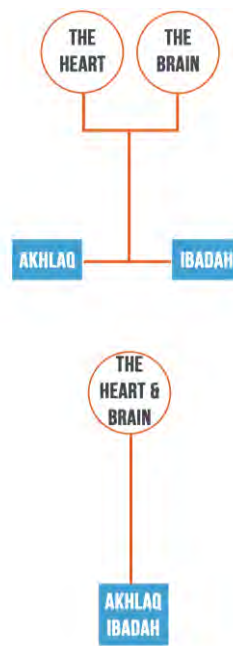


Figure 6.5 – The Heart-Brain Connection relating to Worship and Morality

6.9.3.4 Spirituality and Well-Being:

Apart from the spiritual dimension of being close to God and developing oneself, the emerging evidence points to the physical and mental well-being of seekers as evident in the survey data in Appendix 3 Figures 4.23, 4.25, 4.26, 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32. From the seekers perspective there is seen to be a correlation between worship and well-being.

The related evidence carried out on a more quantitative research approach has been flagged in Chapter 2.4 on Neuro-Science and Islam, where results of numerous studies indicates the well-being of the worshipper outlined in research carried out by Fatima et al⁸⁰⁷ on ritual prayers, Doufesh et al⁸⁰⁸ on the brain wave patterns⁸⁰⁹, and Said Nursi⁸¹⁰ on healing and prayers. This is further reinforced where Abu Raiya⁸¹¹ states:

⁸⁰⁷ Ibrahim, F., Abu Bakar, W., Abas, W. & Cheok, N.S. (2008), 11-111; Ibrahim, F. & Ahmad W.W. (2013), 687-690

⁸⁰⁸ Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18

⁸⁰⁹ Doufesh, H., Faisal, T., Lim, K.S., Ibrahim, F. (2012): 11-18

⁸¹⁰ This is a thesis on physical and spiritual healing through spiritual practices derived from the Al Qur'an by SalihYucel, Prayer and Healing in Islam, with addendum of 25 Remedies for the Sick by Said Nursi (Turga Books, New Jersey, 2010)

⁸¹¹ Hisham Abu Raya, A PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUSNESS: EVIDENCE FOR

“In a meta-analysis of 100 studies examining the relationship between religiousness and mental health conducted by Koenig and Larson (2001), religious beliefs and practices were related to greater life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect and higher morale in 79 (nearly 80%) of the studies. Of 12 prospective cohort studies identified in their meta-analysis, 10 reported a significant relationship between greater religiousness and greater well-being. Similar levels of positive association were found between religiousness and hope, optimism, purpose and meaning; of 14 studies examining these relationships, 12 reported significant positive associations among these variables and two found no association with religion.”

In the context of Islam, Abu Raiya⁸¹² research points out that:

“Overall, the results were noteworthy in several respects. First, the PMIR (Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness) was relevant to Muslim participants and suggested that Muslims adhere to different Islamic beliefs, adopt various Islamic religious attitudes, and observe a diverse array of Islamic religious practices. Second, Islam is multidimensional; factor analysis of the PMIR resulted in 6 factors (Islamic Beliefs, Islamic Ethical Principles & Universality, Islamic Religious Struggle, Islamic Religious Duty, Obligation & Exclusivism, Islamic Positive Religious Coping and Identification, and Punishing Allah Reappraisal) that possessed good to high internal consistency. These findings highlight the fact that Islam plays a central role in the well-being of Muslims and stress the need for paying more attention to the Islamic religion when dealing with Muslim populations”.

As indicated above, the results from both the survey and the interviews of this research indicate a sense of well-being even though this research did not use a robust quantitative methodology (PMIR) as utilized above. The data already highlighted in the case studies in Chapter 5, lays down some evidence indicating wellbeing indicating psychological, spiritual and physiological of the seekers (see Appendix 4.29). Apart from the above mentioned study, there is some emerging research that corroborates the findings of this research. There is a need for further studies in this direction of worship, especially in terms of gaining insight into different methods of dhikr and Qur’anic recitation, which form a deeper form of mindfulness research, which thus far has largely been done within other faiths especially Buddhism and Hinduism.

RELEVANCE, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY, A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, August 2008: 12

⁸¹² Ibid:ii

6.9.3.5 Human Development and Consciousness: An Islamic Perspective: One of the fundamental aspects of spiritual orders is to identify the obstacles seekers face during a process of gaining knowledge both outwardly, as well as inwardly. In this light, the Sheikh, during the course of the interview had drawn three stages of the development of the seekers, which coincides with the Qur’anic references to the development of the soul. Table 6.3 below highlights these aspects and then supports in finding ways and means to facilitate their growth process.

Table 6.3 – Levels of Self-development & Consciousness

Stage of Man (Awam)	The development of the Soul	Scriptural Reference	Levels of Consciousness
Awam	Nafs al-Ammara bi-su	“And yet, I am not trying to absolve myself: for, verily, man’s inner self does incite (him) to evil, and saved are only they upon whom my Sustainer bestows His grace!” ⁸¹³	Primitive level of human consciousness – 1 st Level – Biological ground of human reality – domineering self: aggressiveness & territoriality. Violent urge for survival
Awam Khawas	Nafs al-Lawama	The Lord says, “But nay I call to witness the accusing voice of man’s conscience!” ⁸¹⁴ To this Asad ⁸¹⁵ clarifies that the man’s reproaching soul is the sub-conscious awareness of his own short comings and failings.	A greater sense of awareness and consciousness – 2 nd Level: Search for human values & for fruitful and disciplined life. Critique of self-impulses and critique of dominant ego.
Awam Khawas al-Khawas	Nafs al-Muttumainna	The Lord says “(But unto the righteous God will say,) O thou human being that has attained to inner peace! Return thou unto they Sustainer, well-leased (and) pleasing (Him): enter, then, together with My (other true) servants – yea, enter thou My paradise!” ⁸¹⁶	A heightened level of consciousness and self-actualisation – 3 rd Level: Awakening to our true nature. Fulfilled or satisfied self. Human potential unfolding harmoniously, while ethical and religious ideas are in full flower (Sharia).

⁸¹³ Al-Qur’an, Sura Yusuf, 12:53

⁸¹⁴ Al-Qur’an, Al-Qiyamah (Resurrection), 75:2

⁸¹⁵ The Message of the Qur’an, Trans. And explained by Muhammad Asad, Al-Qiyamah (Resurrection), 75:2, page 1092

⁸¹⁶ Al-Qur’an, Sura Al-Fajr, 89:27-30

One can draw some parallel with the three stages that the Sheikh (Appendix 4F) has outlined with the stages of the evolving soul, cited in the Qur'an, which forms different levels of gaining knowledge or advancing one's state of consciousness. One can discern that these stages of consciousness have to correlate with the changing states and development of one's self from being self-centered to one that reaches out to others and is engrossed in a state of worship of God (see chapter 2.1, figures 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). This is inter-linked with knowledge and in Islam, one needs to understand the nature of knowledge, which has some fundamental differences as compared to the Western realm of knowledge.

6.9.3.6 Perspectives from Psychology: In order to put things into a contemporary perspective and drawing on humanistic sciences, the above underlined progression or the evolution of consciousness (Table 6.3) has parallel in psychology, where it can be viewed firstly through the lens; i) Concept of Self-Actualisation (Table 6.4), and ii) Concept of 'On-Becoming or 'Full Humanness" (Table 6.6). The Sheikh of the spiritual Order under study modeled the Prophet (ﷺ) as evident in chapter 3.2, tables 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.2.5). Therefore it would be relevant to draw out some parallels from the above two mentioned perspectives (see Table 6.4., 6.5, and 6.6).

Self-Actualisation: The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs⁸¹⁷ is represented as a pyramid, with the physiological or lower needs followed by security and safety, belongingness, esteem, and with self-actualisation being at the top of the pyramid or the highest stage. These are called D-Needs⁸¹⁸ or deficiency needs given that humans are driven because of their need to fulfill it and they are outline below:

⁸¹⁷ Learning Theories.com; <http://www.learning-theories.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs.html>; 2014

⁸¹⁸ Ibid

- Physiological: air; food, water, sex, and other factors related to homeostasis etc;
- Safety: Security of environment; resources, health, property etc;
- Belongingness: love, friendship, intimacy, family etc;
- Self-Esteem: confidence; self-esteem; achievement, respect etc;
- Self-Actualisation: morality, creativity, problem solving etc;

Table 6.4 – Values of Being (B Values) & Examples of those in Peak Experiences ⁸¹⁹

Values of Being	Qualities and Examples	Key Prophetic Examples
Integrated	Less spilt or dissociated; less fighting against himself; more at peace with himself; less spilt between experiencing self and observing self; more one-pointed, more harmoniously organized; more synergistic, with less internal friction.	Never argumentative, where he would leave if there was an argument, and saw anger as a kind of insanity. When asked about the Prophet, his wife Aisha stated “Verily, the character of the Messenger of Allah was the Qur’an” ⁸²⁰ , meaning that he practiced what he preached.
Aligned	As he gets to be more purely and singly himself, able to fuse with the world (refers to becoming one, without differentiation); Example like a mother being one with the child (he feels one with his community). This is going beyond oneself, where the person can then become egoless or selfless.	Aligned with himself and with his Community, which he saw as one body. This also signifies the Qur’an verse “..that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the whole of humanity” ⁸²¹ .
Fully Functional	At the peak of his powers utilizing his capacities at the best and to its fullest. Feels more intellectual, more perspective, stronger and more graceful than at other times.	Always seen to be full of vigour either in a state of worship, interacting with family or community. Always presented a balanced position and stated that his faith was of the middle way – ummatan wasathan.
Effortlessness	Ease of functioning. What took effort, straining and struggling at other times, comes effortlessly without much effort, that is comes of itself. One sees sure calmness and rightness, while things are being done wholeheartedly, without doubt or hesitation.	Many a time, when the community had difficulty and were struggling with things, he performed it effortlessly, example, in the battle of the trench, where he broke the rock, when others could not; his calm state amidst his prosecution in Makkah etc;

⁸¹⁹ Maslow, A. (2011), 97-135

⁸²⁰ Commentary on the verse “And verily, you are on an exalted (standard of) character” in At-Tabari, 23:529 cited in Al-Qur’an, Sura Nun, 68, Verse 4, (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 10, Second Edition, Darusalam, Riyadh, 2003), 103

⁸²¹ Al-Qur’an, Sura 5, Al-Ma’idah, Verse 32, (Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Volume 3, Second Edition, Darussalam, Riyadh, 2003), 157

Table 6.4 (continued) – Values of Being (B Values) & Examples of those in Peak Experiences

Values of Being	Qualities and Examples	Key Prophetic Examples
Prime Mover	More self-determined, fully responsible, fully volitional and for an observer becomes more trustworthy, more reliable, more dependable.	Was the prime mover of faith and consolidating the conflicting tribes of Arabia. He was known and the trustworthy- Al-Amin and was seen to be always dependable.
More Spontaneous	More spontaneous, more expressive, more innocently behaving, more natural, more free-flowing. Authentic identity.	The Prophet's speech, action and behavior were in unison. He preached, as well as he practiced. In this sense, he was an authentic person.
More Creative	More creative in a particular sense, with his cognition and behavior coming out of a greater self-confidence.	The Prophet used to mend his own shoes and stitch his own cloths, as well as doing all work that needed to be done.
Uniqueness	The uniqueness is manifested, where they are different from others during peak experiences.	His personality was unlike the others, unique in every sense, where people tried to emulate him in every aspect – a role model.
Here and Now	Fully present, while being free of the past and the future. He is beyond desire and does not rubricize in terms of fear, hate or wish.	Be in this world as a traveller said the Prophet. This implies that not being attached, living for the moment and not too pre-occupied with the past or future.
Completion-of-the acts	This person has a sense of closure of things, that is, a complete discharge, climax, culmination, emptying or finishing. Completion seen out in the world as a beauty, justice, end rather than means. The outer and inner world in some way related.	The Prophet said that "Even if you do a little worship, do it well and be consistent with it."
Pure Psyche & less a thing-of-the-world	More determined by intra-psyche laws rather than non-psyche reality insofar as they are different. Respecting-loving myself and respecting-loving the other each permit, support, and strengthen each other.	"Love for others what you love for yourself, to have complete iman (faith)" said the Prophet.
Non-Striving and Non-Needing	Everything now comes of its own accord, pouring out, without will, effortless, purposelessly. He just in and joy has been attained. His behavior and experience become per se, and self-validating, end-behaviour and end-experience, rather than means-behaviour and means-experience.	Within the Prophet life, the divine revelations (Qur'an) was revealed to him, which he dictated to his companions to record. In a similar vein, he was inspired out of which came forth the Hadith Qudsi or the inspired narrations.
Playfulness of a certain kind.	It is simultaneously mature and child-like. A feeling of gratitude, in religious people to their God, in other to fate, to nature, to people, to the past, to parents to the world, to everything and anything that helped this wonder possible. This spills into worship, giving thanks, adoration, giving praise; which fits into a religious framework.	The Prophet was playful with his wife and this is seen in the example of him racing Aisha on more than one occasion. He was very fond of children and it is recorded that he used to carry his grandchildren and pray with them. His worship and gratitude went beyond normal human endeavour as seen in series outlined in Table 6.

Table 6.4 (continued) – Values of Being (B Values) & Examples of those in Peak Experiences

Values of Being	Qualities and Examples	Key Prophetic Examples
Communication poetic, mythical & rhapsodic	A natural flow of a natural kind of language to express such states of being. This kind of authentic persons are like Prophets.	When the Qur'an was revealed and he used to chat to the Makkans eloquently, some called him a poet but divine scriptures re-asserted that he was not a poet or a sooth sayer but a Prophet.

Table 6.6 – On Becoming a Person⁸²²

Generalisations	Prophetic Examples
Openness to Experience – This is the opposite of being defensive. Openly aware of his feelings and attitude as they exist in him at the organic level. Thus more aware of reality as it exists outside of himself instead of pre-conceptions. He is able to take in the evidence in a new situation, as it is, rather than distorting it to fit a pattern which he already holds. An openness of awareness to what exist in this moment in oneself and in the situation is.	The classical example is of the Prophet when his delegation was prevented by the Quraish (Makkans) from proceeding to Makkah, to perform their pilgrimage. Firstly, the Prophet agreed to this and an agreement was drawn out between the parties to this effect and that they would proceed the following year. Secondly, since the delegation felt dejected and frustrated he took the advice of his wife Umm Salama to do the rites then and there, and this led to all of his companions doing the same. This changed the situation.
Trust on one's Organism: It seems that the person increasingly discovers that his own organism is trustworthy, that it is suitable instrument for discovery the most satisfying behaviour in each immediate situation. He has a relatively accurate perception of this external situation in all of its complexity. He is better able to permit his total organism, his conscious thought participating, to consider, weigh and balance each stimulus, need, and demand, and its relative weight and intensity.	From an Islamic perspective, guided by the Divine, there are many situational decisions of the Prophet that made him an example and turned the minds of others to accept him. For example, listening to others and discussing things through appealing to reason and doing this confidently as well as kindly, which changed the minds of the harshest persons. This was testified by the Qur'an when it was said, "If you had spoken to them harshly, you would have dispersed them." Another example is of the water carriers, who complained to the Prophet of waking up very early for prayers given that their work was arduous and he told them, pray when you wake up and he shorted the prayers when he heard the children who were with the women crying.

⁸²² Rogers, C. (1991), 115-128

Table 6.6 (continued) – On Becoming a Person

Generalisations	Prophetic Examples
A Locus of Evaluation: The individual increasingly comes to feel that this locus of evaluation lies within himself. Less and less does he look to others for approval or disapproval; for standards to live by; for decisions and choices. The key question of the creative individual – Am I living in a way which is deeply satisfying to me and which truly expresses me?	As the wife of the Prophet Aisha said, when people asked her about the Prophet, “He embodies the Qur’an”, meaning lives by it. Even despite of being a leader and the complexity surrounding him, he was seen to be with a smile most of the time, and prayed for people, was tolerant to people from all walks of life, and prayed long hours, and when asked by Aisha, why do you have to pray so much since your sins are forgiven, he responded by saying, “should I not be grateful to my Lord”. Whatever wealth he received, he gave it all and would not return home until all monies were distributed, while living an austere life and being satisfied with it.
Willingness to be a Process: It is that the individual seems to become more content to be a process than the product. One can see here both the expression of trust in the organism, and also the realization of self as a process. It means that a person is a fluid process, not a fixed and static entity; a flowing river of change, not a block of solid material, a continually changing constellation of potentialities, not a fixed of traits.	“Live in this world as a Stranger’ said the Prophet, where one does not own much and the focus is on living with the moment, for life is uncertain with all its vagaries and there could be no tomorrow. The Prophet said, “Be satisfied if you have a roof over your head, enough to eat and that you wake up in the morning for this is a blessing.”

Even though there are critiques to the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, where it is argued that needs are not sequential and can vary according to personalities and circumstances, it still remains a useful framework to understand the various human needs and its categories. In contrast to the above D-needs, B-Values or Values of Being as Maslow’s calls them are driven by personal desire to reach the highest in human potential. This is not triggered by any deficiency. These B-Values Maslow postulates are to be found in those who have self-actualised and have peak experiences as outlined below. For each of the B-Values that he has identified and explained, the Prophetic (ﷺ) life examples are given to best fit it.

It can be seen from the above table that, there is an emergence of a person who has had peak experiences and self-actualised, which is based on life experiences that have been largely drawn from the earliest biographies of the Prophet (ﷺ). This can be validated

against the work of Carl Rogers (Table 6.5), the founder of Humanistic Psychology based on his extensive experience with the method that he developed, called the client-centered approach.

Table 6.6 above captured some of the generalisations from his years of work that can be articulated, which are grounded in his experience on ‘becoming a person’ or ‘full-humanness’. From the well grounded generalization that has emerged from Carl Roger’s clinical work, the Prophet (ﷺ) fits into all four categories, being open to experience; trusting one’s organism (self); a locus of evaluation; and willingness to be a process. Thus, from the perspective of the work of both Maslow as well as Rogers, the Prophet (ﷺ) is seen as being self-actualised, as well as reaching the full human potential. Both from Maslow’s and Roger’s perspective, the Sheikh of the Order himself demonstrates some of these traits as outlined in the analysis of the NS-NLP in Figure 6.2 and as seen from the seekers view as indicated in Appendix 3 Figures 4.9, 4.16, 4.22 and 4.25.

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION

This research is unique since it attempts to develop a causal model of spiritual leadership and self-development in light of the various related sciences, while other studies have focused on multiple other dimensions of tariqa or spiritual orders. This study is augmented by the use of a combination methodology within IPA consisting of the ‘clean language approach’ with ‘NLP-NS’ and thematic analysis. This consisted of a combination of both interview and survey questionnaire. In this sense, it could be a trail blazer research in the context of studying spiritual orders.

It is evident from the research and in relationship to the seekers that the central anchor point is the Sheikh as the exemplar or role-model, as well as the spiritual Order or tariqa, which lays down the path with its institutional underpinnings, its philosophy, rules and regulations, as well as its peer group support. The leadership style of the Sheikh fits into transformational, which empowers the seekers through providing them with the needed motivation and a value system directed at a spiritual goal rather than being authoritative or transactional in nature. Thus, involves the body, mind, soul and spirit characterizing the spiritual nature of the Naqshabandi Khalididiyah leadership. It goes beyond Fry’s causal model by the inclusion of the metaphysical and mystical dimensions, which are embedded within this Order, where it is through spiritual transmission and mercy of God that both the Sheikh and the seekers transcend their current reality. Through a holistic and integrated approach the seekers are provided the space to develop themselves spiritually, which has numerous benefits including neurologically as emerging evidence indicates.

The role of the Sheikh is seen to be paramount with the seekers trying to model him and, as pointed by Kynsh, it is more the Sheikh than the Order itself that is the key. In the case of the Order under study, even though the methods were flagged to be of utmost importance in helping them to be connected with God, the very essence is the Sheikh, his functionality and characteristics, which helps them to steer the course towards self-development. It has been found that while the Sheikh's role is key, there are both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to the growth and development of the seekers. Thus, it is a combination of factors that causes the transformation of the seekers.

The core-value system is the central feature of the Order and there is a conscious effort to emulate the Sheikh and his characteristics. The ten values set by the Sheikh serve as a good base for the seekers to work towards within the framework of the jamali (Beauty) – jalali (Majestic) attributes of God. This value system forms the enabler for the development of the self and therefore seems to mould the behaviour of the seekers.

The multiple methods of worship including ritual and optional prayers (salah), as well as remembrance of God (dhikr), repentance (istighfar), supplication (dua), night vigil (tahajjud), all formed channels through which the seekers de-toxoid themselves and try to resolve their sins and difficulties. Thus, it becomes a process of healing. This seems to lead them to a sense of calmness and happiness with reconciliation both with themselves and with others.

The emerging evidence from the data set is that there is an inextricable link between consistent worship and the developing of good manners including improving one's morality. This is best exemplified by the seekers often referencing the heart-brain connection, where they now seem to be using both of these faculties, whereas before it was only their brain functioning.

The concept of 'futuwwa' (chivalry), which includes 'ukhuwah' or brotherhood, was flagged as being an important way of serving others, as well as overcoming one's own ego, which otherwise is an obstacle for self-development.

The evidence indicates that apart from the Sheikh, who is seen as an exemplar, there are other factors that contribute to self-development including: the multiple methods of worship, the core value system practiced within the Order; and the immediate environment, that is, the surroundings, with the peer group support system, the general group dynamics, the decentralized nature of the operations, where the deputies or the Khalifas are empowered to play a key role in energizing the Order and keeping its momentum intact.

With particular regard to the residents of the center, who formed about 50 per cent of the research sample, it was found that joining the Order has benefitted them spiritually, psychologically, as well as physiologically. This is manifested in the way they felt about themselves and in their escape from their earlier dependency on drugs and leading a promiscuous life. However, the real test of their change can only be objectively ascertained once they return to main-stream society, where they will confront their earlier dependencies. For the general seekers, the changes that they have stated seem to

have benefited them and seem more permanent in nature since they are living within main-stream society.

All of the above key findings have been conceptualized into a model for Spiritual Leadership and Self-development (Figure 5.1), whereby the most important variables (control) are the 'calling' of the seeker, the 'leadership of the Sheikh', and the 'Membership' of the 'Spiritual Order'. These lay the foundation, and the 'effort' (independent variable) influences the 'performance' and the rewards (dependent variables), the latter two being closely reinforcing each other. All of these result in the 'well-being' and the acquisition of the knowledge of the seeker (outcome variable).

In conclusion it can be said that there are four profound findings generated by this research. Firstly, the spiritual modeling of the Sheikh as well as following of the path of the Order is seen to have multiple benefits for the seekers. This claim is supported both by neuro-scientific, as well as humanistic physiological evidence. This is especially notable in terms of the rehabilitation of the seekers who have dependencies, including drug addiction and promiscuity, which can lead to socially deviant behaviour.

Secondly, the heart-brain connection is seen to be a significant finding from both from the point of view of well-being and the worshipper, as evident in neuro-scientific research, as well as its importance from the state of mindfulness of the worshipper.

Thirdly, this thesis attempts to formulate a Causal Model of Spiritual Leadership and Self-Development. This needs to be tested to validate it further with further empirical research, which is beyond the scope of the current research. As outlined in the

discussion, leading psychologists also point in the direction of self-actualisation and on-becoming a person with full potential. These types of research within the Islamic framework, incorporating the emerging evidence in neuro-science as well as humanistic science, are required in the contemporary world, where there are maladies linked to external dependencies, anxiety and depression, where a spiritual solution is on hand for life to have meaning with a sense of direction.

Fourthly, building on Bandura's social learning theory, this thesis postulates working towards a spiritual learning theory, which includes factors beyond Bandura's theory and includes: observation-attention, reflection, self-accounting, supplication, mirroring, testing and retention, reproduction, internalization, and motivation.

Future research in this area can benefit from the following directions:

- i) One of the inherent weakness of this research from a robust scientific perspective is that there was no study of a control group, where the focus was only on the treatment group. Future studies can use both the treatment and the control group to track the changes.
- ii) Studies can be carried out utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) including the combination methodology of this research, to re-test the causal model and the claims made in this thesis in order to validate it or repudiate it.
- iii) This research can be conducted with groups or orders, which have a 'Salafi' orientation to explore the process and outcomes.
- iv) There is a need to conduct further neuroscientific studies on Islamic worship including prayers, dhikr, fasting and other practices, in order to ascertain the changes that occurs during this process and its impact on the seekers.

v) What would be most appropriate would be to carry out longitudinal studies in terms of Islamic worship, which will enable to track groups and individuals over time in order come to firmer conclusions.

Notwithstanding the limitation in the scope, the research offers a rich tapestry of primary data integrating different perspectives through methodological triangulation.

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