

CHAPTER FIVE

ON SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY

5.1 Man As A Spiritual Entity

According to the Qur’ān, man in reality has dual nature: physical and spiritual. The physical entity comes from the clay while the spiritual is the soul that God has breathed into man as in the verse below clearly mentions:¹

And indeed, we created man from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud, and the jinn, we created aforetime from the smokeless flame of Fire, and (remember) when Your Lord said to the angels: "I am going to create a man (Adam) from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud." So, when I have fashioned Him completely and breathed into him (Adam) the soul which I created for him, Then fall (you) down prostrating yourselves unto him.

(Surah al-Hijr 15:26-29)

As for all the Ṣūfī masters including al-Falimbānī, greater emphasis is given to the spiritual nature of man, his spiritual psychology in educational process rather than his physical. For him ‘the station of the spirit is much higher and closer than that of physical body to God Most High’.² This is in line with a rigorous authentic Prophetic tradition that says: “Allah does not look at your appearances or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your actions”³

Al-Falimbānī views the process of education more from Ṣūfī perspective. It is in fact a distinct feature of Sufī masters, not only exclusively for al-Falimbānī,

¹ See also Qur’an 23:12 “And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth)”

² *Siyar*, 3:137.

³ This rigorously authentic tradition is reported from Abū Hurayrah mentioned by many traditionist scholars like Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 2564 and 4651, Abū Nu‘aim in his *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā’* no. 7/139, Al-Bayhaqī in his *al-Asma’ wa al-Ṣiḡāt* no. 2/234, Ibn Majah, Imām Aḥmad in his *Musnad*, Al-Bayhaqī in his *Shu‘ab*, and others.

where they pay greater attention to the spiritual development as compared to the physical organs, for ultimately the latter will be subservient to the former. For that reason, Sufism is also known as the science dealing with the spiritual heart and about knowledge of the heart (*‘ilm al-qulūb*) which was said to be first introduced by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 118/737).⁴ It is concerned with the purification of the heart based on many Qur’ānic verses and Prophetic traditions such as: ‘He has succeeded who purifies it. And he has failed who instils it with corruption’,⁵ and also a Prophetic tradition that we have mentioned earlier: “Allah does not look upon your outward appearances but rather your hearts and your actions”.⁶

There are several terms used in the Qur’ān and Prophetic traditions with regard to the spiritual aspect of man. They are at least four terms explained at length by al-Falimbānī who must have taken it from al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’* from the ‘Chapter on Mysteries of the Heart’ (*Kitāb Sharh ‘Ajā’ib al-Qalb*) of Book II.⁷ These terms are: *rūh* (spirit), *qalb* (heart), *‘aql* (intellect) and *nafs* (lower self or soul).

Al-Falimbānī concedes that there is a difference of opinions among scholars whether these terms refer to the same entity or distinct ones.⁸ However, basing his contentions on the explanations of al-Ghazālī, he said each term actually connotes two different meanings. One is with regard to its real essence and entity, and the other is in respect to its functions or modes. Al-Falimbānī follows al-Ghazālī who ultimately views that in terms of the essence and entity, they all refer to the same ‘subtle spiritual entity associated with God’ (*latīfat al-rabbāniyah*

⁴ L. Gardet, “Kalb”, in *EI2*.

⁵ Qur’ān 91:9-10.

⁶ *Siyar*, 3:3; see note 3 above for the *takhrīj* of the tradition.

⁷ *Iḥyā’*, 2:530-592.

⁸ *Siyar*, 3:5; *Iḥyā’*, 2:531.

wa al-rūhānīyyah).⁹ This entity is a thing created, but it is immortal and is the ‘essence or reality of man’.¹⁰ The different names are only due to different modes or functions of the ‘subtle entity’ – the *rūh* – at a particular moment.¹¹

The *rūh* in essence existed long before everything else existed in God’s knowledge as *wujūd taqdirī* at the station of *Haqīqat al-Muhammadiyah* (Reality of Muhammad), later as fixed prototypes (*a’yān al-thābitah*). The existence of the *rūh* as an exterior essences (*a’yan al-khārijah*) only appears in two worlds ‘*ālam al-arwāh* (world of spirits) and ‘*ālam al-mithāl* (world of ideas).¹²

Al-Falimbānī realises that these terms were also used in their physical or mundane sense. ‘*Al-qalb*’ for example is also used to refer to the physical heart in the form of pine-shaped lump located at the left side in the breast. It circulates blood and gives life to the whole body.¹³ Deep inside the physical heart is a hollow where some kind of ‘black blood’ is located and the *rūh* that gives life to the body, including animals, is situated therein.¹⁴ The Qur’ān also addresses the heart with various other spiritual meanings such as ‘*al-ṣadr*’, ‘*al-qalb*’, ‘*al-fu’ād*’ or ‘*al-lubb*’ which the Ṣūfīs regard them as different spiritual locations.¹⁵

In the Sūfī teachings, heart, therefore, has two locations, external and internal. The external is called *al-sadr* while the internals are three namely *al-*

⁹ *Siyar*, 3:14; *Ihyā’*, 2: 531-534; See Also al-Ghazālī, *Ma’arij al-Quds*, 39-42.

¹⁰ *Siyār*, 3:6.

¹¹ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 147-148.

¹² *Siyar*, 4:105-106.

¹³ *Siyar*, 3:7; *Ihyā’*, 2:531.

¹⁴ *Siyar*, 3:5; *Ihyā’*, 2:531; Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 147.

¹⁵ The word ‘*al-ṣadr*’ or ‘*al-ṣudūr*’ is mentioned in al-Qur’an 114:5, 3:154, ‘*Al-Qalb*’ or ‘*Qulūb*’ in 3:154, 7:2, 11:12, 22:46; ‘*Fu’ad*’ in 17:36, 53:11, 28:10; ‘*Al-Lubb*’ or ‘*Albab*’ 5:100, 2:269.

qalb, *al-fu'ād* and *al-lubb*.¹⁶ At the initial stage, all knowledge is received by *al-sadr*, and is analysed objectively. Subject to the purity of one's heart, the knowledge then moves to a higher stage, *al-qalb* by God's Grace. At this stage, the type of knowledge is known as '*ilm al-ma'rifah*' or merely *al-ma'rifah* (or *irfān*) which means knowledge of God through direct experience surpassing the rational intellect. Hence, the Sufī scholars differentiate between '*arafa*' and '*alima*'. '*Arafa*' is achieved by those who already an '*alim*' or in possession of knowledge, and after having undergone rigorous spiritual exercise and purification of the heart, he was given the privilege to 'taste' (*al-dhawq*) of the experiential knowledge.¹⁷ Generally, the Ṣūfīs are more concerned with the second stage of the spiritual heart, "*al-qalb*",¹⁸ which is regarded as the core or essence of human beings based on the Prophetic tradition:

Verily in the body there is a morsel of flesh. If it is fine then the whole body is fine, if it spoils then the whole body spoils. Know! that it is the heart (*qalb*).¹⁹

Likewise for '*al-'aql*', it has its second meaning as well where it is generally understood as 'intellect'. Al-Falimbānī defines it as the capacity of knowing something emanates from the heart.²⁰ Finally, for a '*nafs*', al-Falimbānī simply translated it as '*nafsu*' (in Malay) to mean 'lust' or 'desire', a pejorative

¹⁶ For further discussion, see al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī's *Bayān al-Farq Bayn al-Sadr wa al-Qalb wa al-Fu'ād wa al-Lubb*. The translation was done by Nicholas Heer, 'A Sufī Psychological Treatise', *The Muslim World*, 1961, no.1:25-36, no.2:83-91, no.3:163-172, no.4:244-258. Al-Falimbānī, however, uses a different terms which is more of spiritual location of the *Qalb* such as *sirr*, *sirr al-sirr*, *khafā* and *akhfā* which will explained in the coming section.

¹⁷ For that reason, in Sufism, knowledge is divided into three: revelation (*al-wahy*), reason (*'aql*) and tasting (*al-dhawq*), see al-Kalābadhī, *al-Ta'arruf*, 81-82.

¹⁸ *Ihyā'*, 2:531. Briefly, according to al-Tirmidhī, *al-sadr* is the first stage where knowledge is received in the form of 'light of Islam'. *Al-Qalb* is the second stage where knowledge is the 'light of *īmān*', *al-fu'ād* is the third stage where knowledge is 'light of *ma'rifah*' and finally *lubb* is the final stage of spiritual heart and the innermost where the knowledge is light of *tawhīd*, Heer, *A Sufī Psychological Treatise*, 28-32.

¹⁹ *Siyar*, 3:1; Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-īmān*, 1:20.

²⁰ *Siyar*, 3:14.

term. This *nafs* according to him, possessing faculties or powers (*quwwāh*) of anger (*al-ghadabiyyah*), of desire (*al-shahwāniyyah*) and the locus of all evil characteristics and spiritual ailments.²¹ This is what God warns when He says, referring to the statement of Prophet Joseph:²²

“Nor do I absolve My own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless My Lord do bestow His mercy: but surely My Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Surah Yūsūf 12:53)

The aim of the Ṣūfī teachings as mentioned by al-Falimbānī and al-Ghazālī, is therefore to break (*kasr*) or crush this soul by way of purifying it until all spiritual ailments are remedied and it becomes sound and pacified soul, and the soul is raised to the level of ‘tranquil soul’ (*al-nafs al-muṭmainnah*) at least.²³ Purification is only possible by way of spiritual exercise or termed as ‘*mujāhadat al-nafs*’ or ‘*riyādat al-nafs*’ as mentioned before.²⁴

From this, we can conclude al-Falimbānī opines the same as that of al-Ghazālī that the four terms mentioned namely: *rūh*, *qalb*, ‘*aql* and *nafs* all refer to the same ‘subtle spiritual lordly entity’ (*latīfat al-rabbāniyyah wa al-rūhāniyyah*). As to the difference in names, it is because of the activities associated with the entity or accidental modes or states (*aḥwāl*). Al-Attas, in this connection has surmised the following:

Thus when it (*rūh*) is involved in intellection and apprehension, it is called ‘intellect’; when it governs the body it is called ‘soul’; when it is engaged in receiving intuitive illumination it is called ‘heart’; and when it reverts to its own world of abstract entities it is called

²¹ *Siyar* 3:7; *Ihyā’*, 2:531; Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 149.

²² Qur’ān. 12:53; *Siyar* 3:7; *Ihyā’*, 2:533.

²³ *Siyar*, 3:8.

²⁴ *Siyar*, 3:17-19; *Ihyā’*, 2:593.

‘spirit’.²⁵

We find in the Qur’ān, it uses these terms interchangeably, praising at one place those with the ‘tranquil soul’ (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah*)²⁶ and at others for those with the ‘sound heart’ (*qalb salīm*).²⁷

5.2 Spiritual Purification

As it has been demonstrated above, all the four terms related to the same spiritual entity. For al-Falimbānī, the heart is the one that governs the body and is the ‘king’ while all other organs are mere soldiers.²⁸ The heart is the source of all actions. If it is clean, pure and healthy then everything else is taken care of. It will incline towards obedience and consequently command all the organs of the body to willingly submit to God; otherwise it will fall into disobedience.²⁹ In Islam, man is born in a state of pure (*fitrah*),³⁰ but over time he made mistakes and committed sins. The sins committed would appear in his spiritual heart in a form of black spot as mentioned in the Prophetic tradition from Abū Hurayrah r.a. who reports it that the Prophet (PBUH) says:

Indeed, when the slave of God commits a sin, a black spot appears in his heart. If he repents from it, his heart cleansed, and if he increases (in sin), then the spot will increase.³¹

²⁵ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 148.

²⁶ Qur’ān, 89:27-30: (to the righteous soul (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah*) will be said:) "O (thou) soul, In (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back Thou to Thy Lord,- well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him!. Enter thou, then, among My devotees!" "Yea, enter Thou My Heaven!"

²⁷ Qur’ān 26:89: "But only He (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart (*qalb salīm*)"

²⁸ *Siyar*, 3:2; *Ihyā’*, 2:534.

²⁹ *Siyar*, 3:15; *Ihyā’* 3:5-8; Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-īmān*, 1:20.

³⁰ Qur’ān, 17:15: "Who receiveth guidance, receiveth it for His own benefit: who goeth astray doth so to His own loss: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: nor would we visit with Our wrath until we had sent an apostle (to give warning)"; The Prophet (PBUH) said: "No child is born but upon *fitrah* (as a Muslim). It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian." (Sahih Bukhari no. 1358, Muslim 6426)

³¹ Sunan ibn Majah, Book of Asceticism, Number 4244. Also by al-Tirmidhī and declared as *Hasan* (good). It is reported with similar wording by al-Nasā’ī, ibn Mājah, Imām Ahmad in his *musnad*, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahīh*, al-Tabarī and Imām Baghāwī in their respective *tafsīrs*.

Acts of disobedient that man committed clearly contrary to the covenant that he has made with God when he was in the world of spirit (*'alam al-arwāh*). Man said, as recorded in the Qur'ān:

When Thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (Saying): "Am I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)?"- They said: "Yea! we do testify!" (This), Lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of This we were never mindful"³²

He should therefore strive to return to the spiritual state he had been before in the world of spirits (*'alam al-arwāh*) where he was in the state of *fitrah*. This is the major theme in the teachings of Sufī masters who follow the school of al-Ghazālī in Sufism.³³ Al-Falimbānī believes that man is capable of reaching God if he purifies his soul. He believes that 'whoever knows his soul will know his lower self (*nafs*) and whoever knows his lower self knows his Lord'³⁴ and potentially capable of reaching him.³⁵ What he means by 'reaching' God here is not in the spatial-temporal sense, but rather in the sense of closeness of the spiritual heart.

He further views that the heart has its own soldiers. They are composed of two kinds.³⁶ The first one is visible to the naked eyes (*'ayn al-basar*) and the other is invisible. The former is the physical organs of the body while the latter is the

³² Qur'ān, 7:172; *Siyar*, 3:6.

³³ On the discussion on purification of soul by al-Ghazālī, one can refer to Che Zarrina Sa'ari (2002), *A Purification of Soul According to Sufis: A Study of al-Ghazālī's Theory*.

³⁴ This saying is famous in Šūfī works that goes something like this in Arabic '*man 'arafa nafsahu fa qad 'arafa rabbahu*'. The scholars generally agree that it is not a Prophetic tradition but rather it is the saying of some Sufī scholars such as Sahl al-Tustarī (see Abu Nu'aym in the *Hilya* (10:208)), or Yahya ibn Mu'adh al-Rāzī as reported from Ibn al-Sam'ani's *Qawā'id fī Usul al-Fiqh* by al-Zarkashī in *al-Tadhkirah*, 129, and al-Suyutī in the *Durar*, 258 and 420.

³⁵ *Siyar*, 3:5.

³⁶ *Siyar*, 3:21; *Ihyā'* 3:534.

spiritual characteristics of the person or his *rūh*. If the *rūh* is slack due to excessive sins that darken it, then the evil tendency will overpower it and the person will incline towards evil traits and actions. A spiritual traveller (*sālik*) would safeguard this from happening since his salvation in the Hereafter is ultimately subject to the state or quality of his spiritual heart as God says: “but only one who comes to God with a sound heart.”³⁷

5.3 Spiritual Journey

Having discussed the spiritual psychology and the need to purify one’s soul as part of the spiritual educational process, al-Falimbānī then talks about ‘spiritual journey’ (*safar*) of the soul to get closer to God.³⁸ Al-Falimbānī clearly Ghazālīan in this sense.³⁹ This spiritual journey is based on several Qur’ānic verses such as the following:

Soon will we show them Our Signs In the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and In their own souls, until it becomes Manifest to them that This is the Truth. is it not Enough that Thy Lord doth witness all things?

(Surah al-Fuṣṣilat 41:53)

Another verse is: ‘and I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship me’.⁴⁰ The spiritual journey (*safar*) is of two types: *ẓāhir* (external) and *bāṭin* (internal). The external is the movement of the physical body from one place to the other, while the internal is the journey of the heart to God in order to know His Attributes, Names and Divine Essence. Al-Ghazālī likewise does mention the *safar* in his *Lubāb*, nonetheless, he does not explain at length as done by al-

³⁷ Qur’ān 26:89

³⁸ *Sīyar*, 2:156.

³⁹ A more detailed discussion on al-Ghazālī’s conception of spiritual journey, see Che Zarrina Sa’ari (2004), *Analysis of the Doctrine of Sufism in Jāmi’ al-Haqā’iq bi Tajrīd al-‘Alā’iq*.

⁴⁰ Qur’ān, 51:56; *Ihyā’*, 2:534.

Falimbānī.⁴¹ In the spiritual journey, the soul passes through various stations (*maqāmāt*) beginning from the *maqām* of repentance (*tawbah*) which is the lowest level, to the highest station, *mahabbah*. In general every spiritual traveller passes through three stages of station: stage of repentance (*ṣabr*), stage of acceptance the decree of God (*rīdā*) and the highest is the stage of *fanā' al-af'āl* or known also as *tawhīd al-af'al* where one's vision (*shuhūd*) of all actions as originating from the *qudrah* and *iradah* of God alone.⁴² This highest form can only be attained spiritually by a Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*).⁴³

The concept of the journey of the soul is first introduced in Ṣūfī literature by the famous Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī (d. 261/875).⁴⁴ Al-Falimbānī might have taken this from al-Bistāmī. al-Bistāmī equates it with the event of ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the Prophet beginning from the night journey (*Isrā*).⁴⁵ The Prophet's travelling to the Seven Heaven demonstrates the greatest signs of the superiority of the human *rūh* that is capable of passing through various layers of heaven until it reaches Him. *Mi'rāj* clearly symbolises that man spiritually is free and its potential is unlimited if properly tapped and channelled. It begins with moral education until it reaches the perfection. It then transforms from animal and bestial spirit into human spirit with angelic capability that can reach his Creator at the highest station ever.⁴⁶ Al-Bistāmī in this connection relates his own spiritual

⁴¹ *Siyar*, 2:156; cf. Al-Ghazālī, *Lubāb*, 112-113.

⁴² *Siyar*, 2:158; *Siyar*, 4:102-103; The similar idea is found in *al-Durr al-Nafīs* of al-Banjārī.

⁴³ This concept as we have mentioned earlier is borrowed from 'Abd al-Karīm Jīlī. Al-Falimbānī views that the most Perfect Man is the Prophet Muhammad, then follows by other prophets and saints and so on so forth depending on the spiritual state of one's soul, *Siyar*, 4:106.

⁴⁴ Further details, see R.A. Nicholson, "An Early Arabic Version of the *Mi'rāj* of Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī", *Islamica*, v.2., 1926. 403-423. Other discussions on spiritual ascension, see James Winston Morris, *The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn 'Arabī and Mi'rāj Part II*; Frederick S. Colby, *The Subtleties of the Ascension: al-Sulamī on Mi'rāj of the Prophet Muhammad*.

⁴⁵ *Siyar*, 4:106.

⁴⁶ B.Schrieke, *EI2* 7:100.

journey or *mi‘rāj* as he terms it where he was brought from one station to the other. His spiritual experience is in the form of a dream.⁴⁷ His idea on *mi‘rāj* was later adopted by many Ṣūfī scholars after him in explaining the spiritual journey of one’s soul.⁴⁸ The ability of the soul to travel to the presence of God is a *karamah*⁴⁹ given to certain people by the grace of God, and a testimonial of the purity of their souls.

The spiritual journey is further divided into three types that any spiritual traveller needs to undergo in order to ‘reach’ God or be in His Divine Presence. It is unclear, however, from where al-Falimbānī took this idea since al-Ghazālī has not said much on this. Perhaps, he took it either directly from al-Bistāmī or his spiritual master, al-Sammān. Al-Falimbānī divides this into three as follows:

- a) Journey from external (*ẓāhir*) to *nafs*: this is the starting point where one begins to implement the commandment of God and abstain from all his prohibitions in one’s life. This is at the level of *Shari‘ah* where all external religious aspects of Islam are implemented.⁵⁰
- b) Journey from *nafs* to the heart (*qalb*): this is where one is not only concerned with performing the acts of worship and abstaining from disobedience but to also seriously observe one’s state of heart in order to achieve sincerity in all actions. One tries to emulate all good

⁴⁷ Nicholson, “al-Bistāmī”, 403, 423.

⁴⁸ A.E. Affifi, “The Story of the Prophet’s Ascent (*mi‘rāj*) in Sūfī Thought and Literature”, *The Islamic Quarterly*.

⁴⁹ *Karāmah* is supernatural event (*khāriq li al-‘adah*) that occurs as manifestation of God’s pleasure to his obedient servants among the saints and the truthfals, see L.Gardet, “karāma”, in *EI2*, 4:615-616. While the supernatural things that occurs to the Messengers and Prophets are called *mu‘jizah*, see A.J. Wensinck, “mu‘djiza”, in *EI2*, 7:295; al-Jurjānī, *Ta‘rīfāt*, 219.

⁵⁰ *Siyar*, 2:157.

characteristics and get rid off all bad traits. This is known as at the level of *taṣawwūf* and *ṭariqah*.⁵¹

- c) Journey from *qalb* to God: This is the spiritual journey towards *maʿrifah* (gnosis) in the aspect of God's Essence (*dhāt*), Divine Attributes (*sifāt*) and Actions (*aʿfāl*). Only purified one is capable of getting closer to God. It normally occurs after purifying one's spiritual heart during the last two levels. At this stage one is said to have 'realised' or achieved the *haqīqah* (Reality) with one's heart is continuously in the state of *dhikr*.⁵² This is where the *sālik* is now known as an '*arif bi-llāh* or gnostic.

In this spiritual travelling, it is clear that al-Falimbānī emphasises on the implementation of the Shari'ah as a pre-requisite for the spiritual traveller from the very beginning.⁵³ Without complying with the Shari'ah, it is most unlikely one is capable of moving to the higher spiritual stages. The stress on the importance of abiding by the Islamic legal precepts is not something usual for the Malay Sufīs prior to al-Falimbānī. As mentioned earlier, from the fifteenth until seventeenth century, the situation in the Archipelago was generally described as philosophical or *wujūdiyyah* Sufism originated from Ibn 'Arabī, where compliance with the *Shari'ah* is not given much emphasis. This is evident from the works of al-Falimbānī's predecessors and the adherents of Ibn 'Arabī such as al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī as previously demonstrated.

⁵¹ *Siyar*, 2:157.

⁵² *Siyar*, 2:157.

⁵³ *Siyar*, 2:157.

Generally, Ibn al-‘Arabi uses philosophical terminology in an attempt to explain his inner experience. He held that whereas the divine Essence is absolutely unknowable, the cosmos as a whole is the locus of manifestation of all God's attributes. This is evident in the following example of his saying:

“How did you find the situation in unveiling and divine effusion? Is it what rational consideration gives us?’ I replied, ‘Yes and no. Between the yes and the no spirits fly from their matter and heads from their bodies.’⁵⁴

Unlike al-Ghazālī who is regarded as more of practical Ṣūfī, as it were, al-Ghazālī’s *Ihyā’* for example - which swept across the Archipelago through al-Falimbānī’s works in the early nineteenth century onwards - focuses on purification of the soul as an attempt to attain the *ma’rifah*. Its approach is spiritual and ethical-religious or the ‘*tasawwuf Sunni*’ as often termed, that synthesises between Sufism and *Shari‘ah*. It is not to say that al-Falimbānī does not subscribe to Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought at all. On the contrary, there are also *wujūdiyyah* elements found in al-Falimbānī’s teachings as we shall demonstrate in the succeeding Chapter Six on the ‘Seven Stages of Being’. However, for al-Falimbānī, any discussion on the cosmology and ontology should only be dealt with at the end of one’s spiritual journey, not at the beginning or in the middle stage. At the two early stages, for al-Falimbānī, one should rather concentrate on purifying one’s spiritual soul from all spiritual ailments and perfecting one’s character.⁵⁵

In the spiritual travelling from one stage of the journey to the other, one’s degree of the soul will be transformed from the old station (*maqām*) to a

⁵⁴ Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, xiii.

⁵⁵ *Siyar*, 3:8.

new one higher than the previous.⁵⁶ Al-Falimbānī initially uses the explanations on the ‘journey of the soul’ as found in al-Ghazālī’s *Ihyā’*⁵⁷ where in *Ihyā’*, al-Ghazālī discusses only three degrees of the soul based on the three Qur’ānic verses.⁵⁸ Al-Falimbānī, however, is not ‘contented’, according to Quzwain,⁵⁹ with the elucidations of al-Ghazālī alone. He turned to the work of Shaykh Qasim Ibn Salāh al-Dīn al-Khāni al-Halabī (d.1109/1697), mentioned earlier entitled *Siyar al-Sulūk ilā Mālik al-Mulūk* for more comprehensive and detailed explanation.⁶⁰ Here, al-Falimbānī follows al-Halabī’s elucidations on the seven degrees of the soul that one travels spiritually.⁶¹ Quzwain speculates that al-Falimbānī uses Halabī’s elucidation on the ‘Seven Degrees of the Soul’ in order to correspond with his own preconceived idea on the doctrine of ‘Seven Degrees of Being’ that the former strongly adheres to.⁶² Al-Falimbānī at the beginning mentions that the idea of Seven Stages was found in Halabī’s *Siyar*, nonetheless, towards the end he claims that the same teaching was also found in the work of his master, al-Sammān, namely *al-Nafahāt al-Uluhiyyah fī al-Sulūk al-Tarīqat al-*

⁵⁶ Al-Qushayrī, *Risālah*, 130.

⁵⁷ *Siyar*, 3:8.

⁵⁸ *Ihyā’*, 2:532-533; Qur. 12:53; It is not al-Ghazālī alone who adopts three degrees of the soul. Al-Shabrawī mentions that, apart from the Khalwatīyyah, other Sufī orders may only limit it to three degrees since either they exclude *al-naḥs al-ammarāt* and all three degrees above *al-naḥs al-mutmainnah*, or like al-Ghazālī, who does not count *al-naḥs al-mulhamah* and three degrees above *al-naḥs al-mutmainnah*. Once a *sālik* attains *al-naḥs al-mutmainnah*, these Sufī Orders feel that he has already attained the Perfect Soul, naturally ‘pure souls’, and no need to have other degrees of the soul above it (al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 51).

⁵⁹ Quzwain, *Mengenal*, 65-66.

⁶⁰ *Siyar*, 3:8. According to el-Muhammady, a similar elucidation on the seven stages of the soul is also found in a work of the Qādirīyyah Order, al-Hājjī Ismā‘il ibn al-Sayyid Muhammad Sa‘id al-Qādirī’s *al-Fuyūdāt al-Rabbāniyyah*, Singapore, Penang, Kota Bharu, Sulayman Mar‘ī, n.d., 14- 28; 34-38 (El-Muhammady, *Akademika*, 67, n.23). The secrets of the seven stages are also explained by the master of Khalwati Sufī Order, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Khalid al-Shabrāwī (d.1947). His work was translated by Mostafa al-Badawi entitled, ‘*The Degrees of the Soul: Spiritual Stations on the Sufī Path*’.

⁶¹ *Siyar*, 3:9.

⁶² Quzwain, *Mengenal*, 65-66. On the details of the doctrine of Seven Degrees, it will be discussed in Chapter Six

Muhammadiyah.⁶³ Since al-Halabī (d.1109/1697) emerged much earlier than al-Sammān (d.1189/1775), it is quite probable to believe that al-Sammān took the idea of Seven Degrees of the Soul from al-Halabī.

It is interesting to note that Al-Falimbānī suddenly describes the differences in the ‘number of stages’ between the Khalwatis and non-Khalwatis where the former counts up to seven degrees while the latter only three, as does al-Ghazālī. This is one of the many proofs indirectly shows that al-Falimbānī himself is a Khalwatī as his biography indicates. Al-Falimbānī was initiated into Khalwatiyyah Sufī Order by his spiritual master, ‘Abd al-Karim al-Sammān, who was the founder of the Sammāniyyah order.⁶⁴ Prior to establishing Sammāniyyah, al-Sammān belonged to the *Tarīqah Muhammadiyyah*⁶⁵ and wrote a book entitled *Nafahāt al-Ulūhiyya fī Sulūk Tarīqat al-Muhammadiyyah*.⁶⁶ But later, the name *Tarīqah Muhammadiyyah* is not so much as popular as *al-Sammāniyyah*. According to Bruinessen, al-Sammān combined the Khalwatiyyah, the Qādiriyyah and the Naqshbandiyyah with the North African Shādhiliyyah, ‘developed a new ecstatic way of *dhikr* and composed a *rātib*. The combination became known as the Sammāniyyah’.⁶⁷ In terms of al-Sammān’s *silsilah*, he was affiliated with the Khalwatiyyah through his Syrian Khalwatī teacher Shaykh Mustafā Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakri (d.1162/1749) who later established his own Bakriyyah order. After the death of his master, al-Sammān set up his own orders known as al-

⁶³ *Siyar*, 3:12.

⁶⁴ John Voll, ‘Muhammad Hayya al-Sindi and Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb: An Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth-Century Madina’, in *Bulletin of the School of the Oriental and African Studies*, vo.38, no.1, (1975), 38.

⁶⁵ For more on this *Tarīqah Muhammadiyyah*, see Zachary Wright, *On the Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī and the Tarīqa Muhammadiyya*, 39-44.

⁶⁶ Brockelman has not listed the work, however. Drewes, on the other hand, mentions, by way of F.de Jong, see *EI2*, 4:992. A similar title starting with *Nafahāt*, is *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhiyyah fī Kayfiyyat al-Sulūk al-Tarīqat al-Sammāniyyah*, Drewes, *A Note*, 77.

⁶⁷ Bruinessen, *The Origin*, 11.

Sammāniyyah.⁶⁸ Al-Falimbānī is the person responsible for spreading the Sammāniyyah throughout the Archipelago.⁶⁹

Until these present days, there are still many followers of this Sufi order. Al-Bārūhī for example, mentions that in the northern part of Malay Peninsula, Taiping Perak, there was a certain scholar by the name of Shaykh Dato' Muhammad al-Sammān who had set up a traditional Islamic religious school (*madrasah*). He belongs to the *Tariqah Sammāniyah* as a Ṣūfī Shaykh that has many followers.⁷⁰ In this *Nafahāt*, al-Sammān discusses Seven Stages of the Soul similar to those found in the Khalwatiyyah. It can be deduced from here that al-Sammān has taken this concept from the Khalwatiyyah Sufī order.

Al-Falimbānī further elucidates that each stage of the soul is associated with seven spiritual dimensions namely, (i) the name of the journey or the soul stage (ii) its direction (iii) its spiritual cosmology (iv) its spiritual location (v) its spiritual state (*hāl*) (vi) its *wārid*⁷¹ and (vii) its characteristics (*sīfah*). The aim of journey is ultimately to reach the *ma'rifah*.⁷² Since al-Falimbānī has not given adequate explanation or definitions on what these dimensions or terms are meant, we presumed these terms have the same meanings as previously used by other Sufī

⁶⁸ Trimmingham, *Sufī Orders*, 77; Al-Bakrī was a student of 'Abd al-Ghānī al-Nabulsī, for more about him see Murādī, *Silk al-Durar*, 4:190-200.

⁶⁹ Bruinessen, *The Origin*, 12; Trimmingham, *Sufī Orders*, 130; al-Bārūhī, *al-Turuq*, 423.

⁷⁰ Al-Bārūhī, *al-Turuq*, 424-5.

⁷¹ The copy of *Siyar* that I have, writes "ورد" (*wird*) instead of 'وارد' (*wārid*). But, according to Quzwain, in MSS Jakarta and of MSS Van Ronkel, they are written with the 'alif' (Quzwain, *Mengenal*, 66 note 25). *Wird* and *wārid* are two different things in Sufī terminology as outlined by al-Qushayrī in his *Risālat*. *Wird* is your works such as invoking the God's Divine Names, *dhikr*, prayers, fastings and others. *Wārid* is the resultant spiritual state bequeathed by performing the said works sincerely and with full presence of heart which comes in the form of spiritual flashes (Qushayrī, *Risālat*, 47). It is more appropriate that the word *wārid* is used in this context.

⁷² Occasionally, the aim is also said to achieve the realization of *tawhīd* as in al-Ghazālī's section on *tawhīd* and *tawakkūl*. It is also termed by al-Falimbānī as *tawhīd al-af'āl* or *fanā' al-af'āl* which a gnostic will experience at the highest form of *ma'rifah*, see *Siyar* 3:10; see also al-Banjārī's *Durr al-Nafīs*.

masters such as al-Qushayrī, al-Kalabadhī, and others, including a modern scholar, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Khalīq al-Shabrawī.⁷³ Returning to these works is necessary in order to further elucidate their respective meanings.

5.4 Degrees of Spiritual Purification

The first stage of spiritual journey begins from the lowest degree of the soul namely, *al-nafs al-ammārat bi al-sū’* (the Inciting Soul to Evil) as mentioned in the Qur’ān.⁷⁴ The journey is ‘toward’ God (*ilā Allāh*). In terms of the ‘cosmic dimension of its being’, he is in the ‘*ālam al-shahādah* (Visible World) or ‘*ālam al-ajsām* (World of Sensible). The location lies ‘inside the breast’.⁷⁵ Its spiritual state (*hāl*) inclines towards evil. The *wārid* is *Shari‘ah* which means that he is to follow the injunctions of the Sacred Law. The attributes or qualities (*sifah*) of the *nafs* at this lowest degree include ignorance, greed, arrogance, enjoys engaging in talks about things that do not concern one, gluttony, envy, heedlessness, evil behaviour and injurious to others. This *nafs* seems to possess all the blameworthy characteristics (*akhlāq al-madhmumah*) mentioned by al-Falimbānī later in the chapter on ‘Disciplining the soul and breaking the two desires’.⁷⁶

⁷³ Al-Shabrawī (1887-1947) was a professor at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He was also a realised master of Khalwatī Sufī Order. His *‘The Degrees of the Soul’* is the first English translation of his best works on the summary of spiritual wisdom.

⁷⁴ Qur’ān. 12:53 “Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”; *Siyar* 3:8; Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’* 2:533.

⁷⁵ The location ‘in the breast’ is not found in *Siyar* that I am referring to. However, Quzwain mentions it is indicated in a manuscript he is using. (Quzwain, *Mengenal*, 617, note 26); cf. al-Shabrawī however mentions its location as ‘the chest’, instead, and only at the next stage that it goes to ‘the heart’ (al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 20). Nonetheless, they all refer to the most outer location of the spiritual heart, ‘*qalb*’.

⁷⁶ *Siyar*, 3: 57.

The *nafs* not only inclines towards evil but also enjoys doing evils outwardly or inwardly.⁷⁷ The *sālik* with this *nafs* should adopt to invoke the formula of remembrance of God (*dhikr*): *Lā ilāha illa Llāh* (there is no deity but Allāh) at all occasions. Al-Ghazālī in this context recommends one to spend time repeating litanies (*awrād*), reading Ṣūfī literatures which will be of benefit to him.⁷⁸ He is to persevere in his *sulūk* until he is freed from the ‘shackles’ of the Inciting Soul, by Divine Grace, and is brought to next higher spiritual stage, *al-nafs al-lawwamah*.⁷⁹

From this explanation, we can say that the *nafs* at this stage is at its worst state, and completely impure, and enjoys what would normally be the characteristics of animals and finds rest in its appetites. Man and animal at this point only differ in its outer form whereas spiritually the man belongs to the same rank as that of the animals. He is still unable to distinguish between what is morally right and wrong, good and evil.

Some Ṣūfīs encourage at this stage for one to reduce his food consumption, drinking and sleeping in order to weaken his animal Appetitive Soul. When the *nafs* weakens, it becomes easier to move to higher spiritual degree.⁸⁰ Though this step is not mentioned by al-Falimbānī nor al-Ghazālī specifically for this particular stage, they nonetheless, laid great stress on the ‘merits of hunger

⁷⁷ *Siyar*, 3:8.

⁷⁸ *Siyar*, 3:8.

⁷⁹ Qur’ān, 75:1-2 which says “I do call to witness the Resurrection Day; And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit (*al-nafs al-lawwamah*).

⁸⁰ Al-Shabrāwī, *The Degrees*, 21.

and the evil of full stomach' to be adopted by a spiritual traveller throughout the spiritual journey.⁸¹

The second stage is *al-nafs al-lawwamah* (The Reproachful Soul)⁸² where some positive attributes begin to emerge. The journey is 'for God' (*li Allah*), every action of the spiritual traveller is for Him alone, the dominions is '*alam al-barzakh*' (Intermediary World) or '*alam al-mithāl*' (World of Similitudes).⁸³ The soul begins to function with its state now is love of Allah (*mahabbat Allah*), that is fond in worshipping God, active in doing the obligatory acts of worship. The *wārid* is *ṭarīqah* and the attributes is blaming (*lawm*) of his self for the sins he had committed and his lack of obedience to God.

According to a-Falimbānī, many of blameworthy attributes have been successfully eliminated but some still persist at this stage. They are such as vanity (*'ujb*), ostentation (*riyā'*) love of fame and leadership (*ḥub al-jāh wa al-riāsah*) and the desire to hear praises from others (*sum'ah*) still exist in him. He is unable to rid off all those traits from himself yet, though he is aware by now of their blameworthiness.⁸⁴ Hence, he condemns himself when committing the blameworthy actions and regrets for doing so. He hopes to eliminate these traces of the defects in the previous stage. Because of that, he enjoys spiritual struggle (*mujāhadah*) against his evil soul, follows the Shari'ah and performs supererogatory actions such as night vigils, fasting, charity and others. To purify

⁸¹ *Siyar*, 3:59-62; *Ihyā'*, 2:636-656.

⁸² Surah al-Qiyamah 75:2 "And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil)".

⁸³ The five senses cannot grasp this world. It is the first station of the *muqarrabūn*.

⁸⁴ *Siyar*, 3:9.

the soul at this stage, he is to invoke the *dhikr* “*Allāh*”, “*Allāh*”, “*Allāh*” at all times until he reaches the next higher stage.⁸⁵

The third stage of spiritual journey of the heart is where the *nafs* is *al-nafs al-mulhamah* (the Inspired Soul).⁸⁶ At this stage the *nafs* acts as a source of good characteristic on the basis of passionate love of God. The preliminary aspect of gnosis starts at this stage and his *wārid* as well on this journey ‘*ala Allāh* (upon God) where the person’s spiritual sight ‘falls only upon God the Exalted as the reality of faith has permeated him inwardly’.⁸⁷ He was annihilated (*fanā*) in the actions of God and witnessing (*shuhūd*) of all things originating from the God’s actions alone. His *hāl* is passionate love (‘*āshiq*) of God. The dominion is in ‘*ālam al-arwāh* (World of Spirits) which is part of ‘*ālam al-malakūt* just as the Intermediate World (‘*ālam al-barzakh*) is.⁸⁸ The location of his personality is in the spirit (*rūh*).⁸⁹ The praiseworthy traits that he had is *al-sakhā* (generosity),⁹⁰ *al-qanā’ah* (contentment), *al-tawādu* (humility), *al-halīm* (gentleness), *i’ttirād* (accepting God’s decree without complaining) and others, serves as a model of excellence in *akhlāq* and acts of obedience.⁹¹ At this third stage, the utterance of *dhikr* no longer to rid of any defects, but rather to bring to the spiritual eye that he is ‘in front’ of God, the Absolute Being with no corporeality, no colour, no place and no similitude.⁹² The appropriate *dhikr* is then to utter ‘*Huwa, Huwa, Huwa*’,

⁸⁵ *Siyar*, 3:9.

⁸⁶ Unlike al-Ghazālī, the third stage according to him is *al-nafs al-mutmainnah* (The Tranquil Soul), see *Ihyā*, 2: 533.

⁸⁷ Al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 36.

⁸⁸ Al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 46.

⁸⁹ *Siyar*, 3:10; el-Muhammady, *Akademika*, 69; al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 36.

⁹⁰ *Al-sakhā* is a characteristic of willingness sacrifice half of what one’s has in possession (al-Qushayrī, *Risālat*, 112).

⁹¹ *Siyar*, 3, 9-10.

⁹² *Siyar*, 3:10; El-Muhammady, *Akademika*, 69.

simultaneously inwardly negating other existence and affirming only existence of God alone.

The fourth stage is *al-naḥs al-mutmainnah* (the Tranquil Soul).⁹³ This soul travels 'with God' (*ma'ā Allāh*) and the possessor of this soul is in the state of tranquillity and serene for he witnesses God's Divine Attributes. Cosmologically, it is at the level of *al-haqiqāt al-Muhammadiyah* or the Muhammadan Reality. In this manifestation of the Absolute, it is at the level of *wahdah* (Divine Solitude) of the First Determination (*ta'āyyun awwāl*). Its location is in the *sirr* (secret).⁹⁴ The *wārid* is knowing the secrets of the *Shari'a* and the secrets of Sufism or known as Knowledge of Reality (*'ilm al-haqiqah*). The attributes of the gnostic are among other things: *al-jūd*,⁹⁵ *al-tawakkūl* (reliance upon God), *al-halīm* (gentleness), *al-shukr* (grateful), *al-ridā'* (contentment) and always trying to emulate the Prophet.

According to al-Falimbānī, the state of the person at this level is at the permanent station (*maqām al-tamkīn*), or 'station of mastery'⁹⁶. This is in opposed to his previous lower stages, at the *maqām al-talwīn*, where his spiritual state still 'fluctuates', 'unstable' and changeful.⁹⁷ This permanent station is also called '*maqām 'ayn al-yaqīn* where the Truth is realised with the certainty of the sight;⁹⁸ and also known as *maqām īmān al-kāmil* (station of perfect faith).⁹⁹ His

⁹³ Qur'an, 89:27-30, "(To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!"Come back thou to thy Lord,- well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him!"Enter thou, then, among My devotees! "Yea, enter thou My Heaven!"

⁹⁴ *Siyar*, 3:10; Al-Shabrawī explains that *sirr* is the 'inner aspect of the spirit. When it descends one degree it becomes 'spirit' (*rūh*), and when it descends another, it is called the 'heart' (*qalb*)' (Al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 48). It seems from here that al-Falimbānī does not follow al-Tirmidhi's Sufi Psychological classification of the heart, as previously discussed.

⁹⁵ *Al-jūd* is a characteristic where one is willing to contribute the whole lot of one's possession saved a small portion for the needs, al-Qushayrī, *Risālat*, 112.

⁹⁶ Al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 48.

⁹⁷ Once it is firm and stable it moves to higher station known as *maqām al-tamkīn* (al-Jurjānī, *al-Ta'rīfāt*, 65-67).

⁹⁸ Al-Qushayrī, *Risālat*, 47.

attribute at this point is following all the legal injunctions and takes pleasure in emulating the attributes of the Prophet in speaking and actions. The *sālik* is to occupy himself with the invocation of *Haqq, Haqq, Haqq* until Divine Grace arrives to bring him to higher station.¹⁰⁰

The fifth stage is *al-naḥs al-rāḍiyah* (the Contented Soul) with the journey is 'in God' (*fī Allah*). At this station, the soul reaches the highest spiritual world known as '*ālam al-lāhūt* (World of Divinity) or '*ālām al-dhāt* (World of Essence) at the station of *ahadiyah* in relation to its spiritual existence. The state (*hāl*) is Annihilation or Extinction (*fanā'*) from oneself and from all his human faculties (*bashariyyah*) while witnessing (*shuhūd*) God's Essence which has no resemblance of any created beings.

This stage known also as a stage of 'no Existence except God alone' is perhaps what al-Falimbānī means by *fanā' fī al-tawhīd* where the gnostic 'witnesses' God as the Absolute Existence without attributes, names and actions.¹⁰¹ This 'witnessing' occurs at the layer of *sirr al-sirr* (Secret of the Secret) of the gnostic's spiritual heart. Witnessing God as the Absolute Being and Existence, according to al-Ghazālī, is the highest form of gnosis. Nonetheless, for al-Falimbānī, there are two higher degrees of the soul than this.

The Extinction at this stage is unlike the previous one, since at this stage the *sālik* is nearing the end of the journey. At the previous stage, the Extinction was in the form of unawareness of the senses of the objects of

⁹⁹ *Siyar*, 3:10-11.

¹⁰⁰ *Siyar*, 3:11.

¹⁰¹ Quzwain, *Mengenal*, 72; *Siyar*, vol.4, 102-103.

perception, while this Extinction is ‘the elimination of human attributes until Subsistence (*baqā*’) is reached’, at the next degree of the soul.¹⁰²

His characteristics is *al-warā*’ and always in remembrance of God, pleased with what He has bestowed one with either bounties or calamities, good or bad without any objection (*i’ttirād*) for he is drowned in the beauty (*jamāl*) of God. He hates the world and everything else apart from God. This soul has no *wārid* since *wārid* only comes when attributes exist. At this station the attributes have disappeared due to the Extinction. The invocation is, ‘*Hayy, Hayy, Hayy*’ (the All- Living) until Extinction disappears and Subsistence by God is reached.¹⁰³

The sixth stage is called *al-nafs al-mardiyyah* (the Soul Found Pleasing) where the journey is ‘from God’ (*‘an Allāh*). It implies that one is receiving knowledge directly from Him and then guide (*irshād*) the general people in their journey to God.

At this level, the aspect of annihilation (*fanā*’)¹⁰⁴ has gone, for the gnostic now has moved higher up which is Subsistence with God (*baqā bi Allāh*). The world is ‘*ālam al-ajsām*. He returns to his initial physical world where he had initially started his spiritual journey. Though he has ‘returned’ to the physical temporal world, his soul is no longer the same person who had not undergone the spiritual journey. Spiritually, he has been completely transformed for the world now has no effect on him and he sees everything in this world originates from

¹⁰² Al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 53.

¹⁰³ *Siyar*, 3:11. Al-Falimbānī also recommends the spiritual traveller to invoke other Supreme Names such as *al-Wahhāb* (the Bestower), *al-Fattāh* (the Opener), *al-Wāhid* (the One) and *al-Samad* (the Self-Sustaining).

¹⁰⁴ What is meant by *fanā*’ here is not the extinction of human physical form and be transformed to other beings, but rather it means one ‘ceases’ to remember oneself and all other beings for being drowned with obsession towards vision of God, see al-Sarrāj, 543; al-Qushayrī, 37; al-Kalābādhī, 156.

God alone. Now his spiritual location is in *khafī* (hidden) and in the state of perplexity (*al-hayrah*) towards God. What al-Falimbānī means by perplexity is not in the sense of doubt (*shakk*) which is blameworthy, but in the sense of a Prophetic saying: “O Lord, increase in me perplexity concerning Thee”.¹⁰⁵ This wonderment is accepted by God (*hayrat maqbulah*) since his bewilderment is as a result of gnosis, not out of ignorance.¹⁰⁶ It is due to the ‘reverential fear’ (*haybah*).¹⁰⁷ At this station of Subsistence, he is witnessing the Divine Beauty (*jamāl*) through all things with *al-hayrah*.¹⁰⁸

His *wārid* is the *Shari‘ah* and his attributes is perfection (*kamālāt*) where he tries to perfect his already good character (*akhlāq*), heedless of other than God, forgiving and gentle with people. He guides them, cleanses their spiritual hearts from the darkness of their earthly nature to the light of spirit (*rūh*). The formula of invocation is “*Ya Qayyūm, Yā Qayyūm, Yā Qayyūm...*” (O! Self-Existing O Self-Existing, O! Self-Existing) until Divine Grace brings him to the final stage of his journey. The saints at this spiritual station are of the class of elite of the elite (*khawwās al- khawwās*).¹⁰⁹

The final stage is *al-naḥs al-kāmilah* (the Perfect Soul) where the journey is ‘with God’ (*bī Allāh*) through his Divine Power (*qudrah*) and Will (*irādah*) and Strength (*quwwah wa hawl*). The world is *shuhūd kathrāt fī al-waḥdah* which is

¹⁰⁵ *Siyar*, 3:11. Interestingly, the saying “*rabbi zidni fīka tahayyuran*” O Lord, increase my perplexity concerning Thee! is untraceable saying in Prophetic tradition works by all accounts. Hence, whether it is the Prophetic tradition as claimed by the Sūfīs thus far has no recorded proof. One almost suspects it came from Ibn ‘Arabi himself as mentioned repeatedly in *Fusūs al-Ḥikām* and *Futuḥāt al-Makkīyah*, see Afifi 1946: 73; Austin 1980: 79.

¹⁰⁶ *Siyar*, 3:11; see also Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fusūs al-Ḥikām*, 1:73, 2:41; El-Muhammady, *Akademika*, 71; Al-Shabrawī, *The Degrees*, 56-57.

¹⁰⁷ *EI2* s.v. “ma‘rifā”.

¹⁰⁸ *Siyar*, 3:11-12.

¹⁰⁹ *Siyar*, 3:12.

witnessing everything subservient to the oneness (*wahdānīyyah*) of God and *shuhūd wahdat fi al-kathrah* which is witnessing God as overpowering everything else. The place is *akhfā* (hiddenmost), the state is *baqā' bi llah*, the *wārid* is everything mentioned in the *nafs* before and his character is with all excellent qualities and spiritual virtues as mentioned in all previous stages.¹¹⁰ The *dhikr* is ‘*Ya Qahhār, Yā Qahhār, Yā Qahhār...*’ (Oh Compeller, Oh Compeller, Oh Compeller) which he is to utter in all situations in his life. This seventh stage, according to al-Falimbānī, is possessed by the perfect saints of God (*awliyā' Allāh al-kāmil*). These saints are in a special group known as the ‘perfect and the perfecter’ of saints (*kāmil al-mukammil*). This is the stage of the Perfect Man or *al-insān al-kāmil* and the most perfect of all the Perfect Men is the Prophet Muhammad.¹¹¹ Below him are all the prophets and messengers and the least in perfection of all is the saints with each at differing stations depending of the degree of their soul.

Though al-Falimbānī has not explained in details on doctrine of the Perfect Man, it could be inferred from his writings that what he meant was the same as the concept founded by al-Jāmī and later elaborated by al-Jīlī where the Perfect Man is a manifestation of God’s Divine Attributes and Beauty in the world. It is ‘a copy of God’s attributes and beauty’ manifested in the World.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ *Siyar*, 3:12.

¹¹¹ *Siyar*, 2:106.

¹¹² Nicholson, *Sufism*, 129.

We have simplified the degrees of the *nafs* explained above in the following table below:

<i>Nafs</i>	Journey	World	Ritual	State (<i>hāl</i>)	<i>Wārid</i>	Attributes (<i>sifah</i>)
<i>Ammārah</i>	<i>illā Allāh</i>	<i>‘alam al-shahādah</i>	in the breast	incline towards evil	<i>shari‘ah</i>	all evil traits
<i>Lawwāmmah</i>	<i>li Allāh</i>	<i>barzakh</i>	in the heart (<i>qalb</i>)	love for God	<i>shari‘ah</i>	reproach evil deeds done
<i>Mulhamah</i>	<i>‘alā Allāh</i>	<i>arwāh</i>	<i>spirit (ruh)</i>	yearning for God	<i>ma‘rifah</i>	generosity, (<i>zuhd</i>)
<i>Mutmainnah</i>	<i>ma‘a Allāh</i>	<i>haqīqāt Muhammadiyyah</i>	<i>sirr</i>	steadfastness (<i>tamkīn</i>)	<i>secrets of the shari‘ah</i>	<i>tawakkul</i>
<i>Rādiyyah</i>	<i>fī Allāh</i>	<i>haqīqāt Muhammadiyyah</i>	<i>sirr al-sirr</i>	<i>fanā’ wa ridā</i>	-	<i>ikhlas</i>
<i>Mardiyyah</i>	<i>‘an Allāh</i>	<i>ajsām</i>	<i>Khafī</i>	<i>hayrah</i>	<i>shāri‘ah</i>	<i>gentle (hilm)</i>
<i>Kāmilah</i>	<i>bi Allāh</i>	<i>wahdah fī kathrah, wa kathrah fī wahdah</i>	<i>akhfā</i>	<i>baqā bi Allāh</i>	<i>all the wārid above</i>	Perfect Man

Table 5.1. Degree of *Nafs* and Its Corresponding Features

Source: Quzwain, *Mengenal* (2003) (with some modifications)

5.5. Spiritual Virtues and Vices

Finally, another component of al-Falimbānī’s spiritual education is spiritual virtues and vices. These teachings appear in the last volume of *Siyar* where al-Falimbānī explains in greater detail the spiritual virtues, based on al-Ghazālī’s *Ihyā’* and *al-Arba‘īn*¹¹³ with some omissions and comments based on al-Falimbānī’s own research.

¹¹³ *Al-arba‘īn fī usūl al-Dīn*, 109-187 where it mentions all the ten diseases under the chapter “In purification of the heart from the bad traits”. As one is aware that al-Ghazālī’s *al-Arba‘īn* is a kind of condensed version of his *Ihyā’* and as such the arguments found in *al-Arba‘īn* most probably be found in *Ihyā’* as well. In this context, the destructive traits and virtues are found in his third quarter of the *Ihyā*, Book Three.

Without going into detail on each of the virtues and vices discussed, suffice it for us to briefly mention here that for al-Falimbānī virtues or vices, they have dual dimensions. There are ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ dimensions. Outward vices are vices committed by external organs or limbs while inwards are those performed by the heart. For al-Falimbānī, the outward behaviour in reality is the manifestation of the inward spiritual state. Love of fame, for example, is an inward spiritual disease manifested in the form of ‘showing off’ or looking for publicity outwardly.¹¹⁴ In other words, we can say that good character (*husn al-khulq*) is a result of pure heart.

Al-Falimbānī mentions that there are numerous evil characteristics (*akhlāq al-madhmūmah*) and good traits (*akhlāq al-mahmūdah*). However, he only lists ten main diseases of the heart that a Ṣūfī needs to rid of (*munjiyāt*), and ten good traits that need to be instilled.¹¹⁵

The ten destructive traits are harms of eating (*sharah al-ta‘ām*), harms of tongue (*sharah al-kalām*), anger (*al-ghadab*), envy (*al-hasad*), avarice and love of wealth (*al-bukhl wa Hub al-māl*), love of fame (*al-ru‘ūna wa hub al-jāh*), love of the world (*hubb al-dunyā*), arrogance (*al-kibr*), self-pride (*‘ujb*) and ostentation (*riyā’*).

While the ten virtuous characteristics are repentance (*tawbah*), fear (*khawf*), abstention (*zuhd*), patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), sincere (*ikhlas*), reliance on God (*tawakkul*), and love (*mahabbah*). According to al-Falimbānī, the process of purification of one’s soul involves two stages. One is called ‘eliminating’

¹¹⁴ *Siyar*, 3:131.

¹¹⁵ *Siyar*, 3:24-25; *Hidāyat*, 2:37-81.

(*takhallī*) of all the blameworthy traits and the other is adorning (*tahallī*) oneself with praiseworthy traits.¹¹⁶ Al-Falimbānī mentions that in the process, one must firmly remain steadfast (*murābatah*) on worshipping God¹¹⁷ in following God's commandment:

O ye who believe! Persevere In patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen Each other; and fear Allah. that ye may prosper.

(Surah al-Imrān: 200)

In the stage of *murābatah*, there are six key rules, according to al-Falimbānī, one should enforce upon oneself in order for him to successful in his journey. They are:

[1] *mushāratah*: making rule upon oneself to continuously be in the state of purification of oneself through remaining in the worship of God at all times and abstaining from any form of disobedience, be it external (*zāhir*) or internal (*bātin*).¹¹⁸

[2] *murāqabah*: checking upon oneself to continuously be in the state of obedience and abstain from any form of disobedience whether in all places and at all times.¹¹⁹ This stage is also known as station of *ihsān* for the spirit *ihsān* i.e. sincerity (*ikhhlās*) is manifested at all times;¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ See al-Qur'ān, 22:78 "And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline)"; al-Qur'ān, 29: 69 "And those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right".

¹¹⁷ *Siyar*, 4:161

¹¹⁸ *Siyar*, 4:161.

¹¹⁹ *Siyar*, 4: 160.

¹²⁰ *Siyar*, 4:163.

[3] *muhāsabah*: conducting retrospection of one's actions every day where one should devote a specific time everyday reflecting what one had done on the day, especially the sinful acts if any, and gradually performing the repentance (*tawbah*) of the sins committed that day.¹²¹

[4] *mu'aqabah*: After making the *muhāsabah*, one found that there were actions which were of no benefits, heedlessness and one had committed sins, then one should punish oneself through performance of acts of worships (*'ibādah*) and obedience.¹²²

[5] *mujāhadah*: Struggling and striving in performance of acts of obedience after successfully completing the four stages above. If one feels that he is capable of extra works of acts of worship, then he should seek permission from his master to increase his daily *awrād*. At times when he feels slow, then he needs to read more books on the merits of worship and the acts of worship of the people of the past among the saints and the truthful.¹²³

[6] *mu'ātabah*: Regretting over one sinful actions in the past, or actions of no benefit that one used to commit in following one's *al-nafs al-ammārah*. To feel remorseful and fear of the punishment that might befall one for those actions.¹²⁴

¹²¹ *Siyar*, 4:160; 167-168.

¹²² *Siyar*, 4:169-170

¹²³ *Siyar*, 4: 170-171.

¹²⁴ *Siyar*, 4: 171-172.

5.6 Conclusion

To recapitulate, with regard to the conception of knowledge, al-Falimbānī clearly follows al-Ghazālī's definitions and classifications. In education, al-Falimbānī, like all other Sufi masters in the past emphasises on the spiritual development by being a truly practicing Muslim who follows all the commandments of God and abstains from all His prohibitions inwardly and outwardly; secondly, at the same time, he also advocates not just the physical external obedience but also emphasises on the internal aspect of oneself where one is required to eliminate the diseases of the heart, purifies it and embellishes it with all the praiseworthy traits.

A *sālik* needs to strive to replace his lowly bestial attributes with lofty qualities; heedlessness of the Shari'ah is replaced with abiding by His laws and constant remembrance of God (*dhikr*). Finally, having done all the above, the fruits of one's internal and external obedience are manifested in one's beautiful and pleasing characteristics (*husn al-khulūq*), characterised as a 'perfect man' (*al-insān al-kāmil*) who is successful in this world and attains bliss in the Hereafter. The model *par excellence* of the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is the Prophet himself who is the best of all Perfect Men. This idea of attaining Perfect Man is new in the teachings of Sufism in the Malay World until al-Falimbānī brought it, the idea he borrowed from al-Jīlī, directly or indirectly.

For al-Falimbānī, this perfection is only possible if one follows what he has outlined in his books based on the writings of the previous Sufi masters: starting from seeking knowledge and its *adab*, putting them into practice by embellishing oneself with all the praiseworthy traits until after quite a long period of time through continuous struggle (*mujāhadah*), embodied in one's own character

and natural disposition. This is a proof too that al-Falimbānī is not so much of *tasawwuf falsafī* but rather *tasawwuf Sunnī* since the former usually does not concentrate much on the importance of *akhlāq* and praiseworthy traits.