

**Islamic Psychology and the Call for Islamization of Modern Psychology**  
**Psikologi Islam dan Panggilan Bagi Pengislaman Psikologi Modern**

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**Abstract**

The shifting of paradigms in modern psychology has left modern men in a state of confusion on the issues pertaining to what should be the paramount concern of psychology and in the proper understanding on the topic of human nature. In a contrastive manner Islamic psychology which has been promoted by Muslim scholars alongside with the process of Islamization of knowledge and education, has its roots in the philosophical ideas of early Muslim scholars. Its resurgence, which started some two decades ago, is seen as an initiative to introduce Islamic understanding on man to the conflicting ideas prevalent in modern psychology. Its approach, which is mainly philosophical in nature, goes back to the ideas on man mentioned in the two primary sources of Islam, the Qur'an and Ḥadīth. Islamic psychology with its comprehensive ideas on human nature has been seen by Muslim scholars as a new perspective in psychology that can fill in the lacunae present in the modern psychological thoughts on man, and clears the mist that surrounds most Western theories on man. This paper represents an attempt to analyze and also synthesize Western psychology and Islamic psychology in terms of their nature, development, contributions, and problems.

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### **Abstrak**

Peralihan paradigma psikologi moden meninggalkan manusia moden dalam keadaan kebingungan dalam isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan apa yang sepatutnya menjadi kebingungan utama psikologi dan pemahaman yang betul mengenai topik sifat manusia. Sebaliknya, psikologi Islam yang digalakkan oleh para sarjana Islam bersama-sama dengan proses pengislaman ilmu dan pendidikan, mempunyai akarnya dalam idea falsafah para sarjana Islam terdahulu. Kemunculannya semula, yang bermula kira-kira dua dekad yang lalu dilihat sebagai satu inisiatif untuk memperkenalkan kefahaman Islam ke atas manusia kepada idea-idea yang bercanggah secara berleluasan dalam bidang psikologi moden. Pendekatannya, yang kebanyakannya berunsur falsafah, kembali kepada idea-idea tentang manusia yang disebut dalam dua sumber utama Islam iaitu Qur'an dan Hadith. Psikologi Islam dengan idea-idea yang komprehensif tentang sifat manusia dilihat oleh para sarjana Islam sebagai perspektif yang baru dalam psikologi yang boleh mengisi kekurangan yang wujud dalam psikologi minda moden manusia dan menjelaskan kekaburan yang mengelilingi teori-teori Barat tentang manusia. Karya ini merupakan satu percubaan untuk menganalisis dan menyatukan psikologi barat dan psikologi Islam dari segi semulajadi, pembangunan, sumbangan dan masalah.

**Kata Kunci:** Psikologi Islam, Pengislaman, Psikologi Moden, Paradigma, Sifat Manusia.

### **Introduction**

Modern psychology as discipline of study originated and developed in the Western world. It is quite natural for Psychology to represent on all the psychological issues the Western thought and life. Like many other disciplines of study and philosophical ideas, the world, almost in its entirety, welcomed modern psychology as the most viably research-oriented discipline of study. It still remains unchallenged in the educational institutions the world over. Its simple reason is that the world follows blindly all that come from the West. In the presence of Western Modern Psychology there seems hardly any need for the alternative Psy-

chology. Muslim scholars have always been conscious of this dominance of modern psychology, and have contributed to the development of Islamic psychology with a view to minimize the harms caused and also expected to be caused by modern psychology to the Muslim thought and behavior. But little is known about Islamic psychology. This paper is an attempt to highlight the existence of Islamic psychology and some of its salient features. In a contrastive manner, the paper will explore some of the differences that exist between the modern and Islamic psychology.

### **Metamorphosis of Western Psychology**

According to Webster (2003), long before the emergence of the controversial theory on the origin of man by Charles Darwin (1809-1882), psychology like all other natural sciences had its roots in religion. More precisely, he states that Western psychology had initially been a branch of the Christian theology. Webster further asserts that the very word psychology was coined by the theologians of the fifteenth century who were then engaged in the study of the human soul. Although the secular version of psychology emerged in the nineteenth century, it somehow retained many of the earlier notions on man and the human mind. Ideas on man, presented by Western psychology during that time were an amalgamated one taken from Plato (428-348BC), Jesus and Paul (5-67AD). In spite of this, the one commonality found in the Platonic and Christian traditions on the concept of human nature was the idea that man is made up of a dual entity; one of which is the physical body that is similar to the animals in nature; and the other is the presence of a mind, spirit or soul which is uniquely present in man only, and its origin goes back to God.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, at the very outset, psychology in the West was not interested in the investigation and discussion on the impure animal body of man but rather focused on the entity of the soul which is entrapped within the human body. In addition to that, psychologists paid much attention to the cognitive phenomena like memory, intelligence and perception which are all related to the human soul. By the end of the nine-

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Webster, *Freud* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), pp. 3-4.

teenth century, this trend in the Western psychology changed when Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) introduced his psychoanalysis paradigm into the mainstream of Western psychology. With its emergence, psychoanalysis started to wreck, and challenge the traditional outlook of Western psychology. Freud took psychology away from its mere focus and discussion on certain selected topics, to deal with the whole issue of human existence. Controversial enough to state, he gave the topics on sexuality and sexual impulses great importance in the psychological growth of man. Previously such topics were deemed as an intellectual pollution by Plato and other ancient philosophers. Contrary to the earlier notions on sex and sexuality, Freud treated such topics as essentially important ideas that formed the cornerstone on which the new science of psychoanalysis was erected. Generally, though many felt that Freud's ideas were not in line with the traditional thoughts on man, a small segment of scholars approved his new and controversial line of thoughts. They further claimed that it was Freud who revolutionized psychology, particularly the Western thoughts on sex and sexuality. For these innovative ideas Freud has been called by his proponents as the true intellectual revolutionary. Some even went to the extent to accolade him with praises as the 'Darwin of the mind'.<sup>2</sup>

Psychoanalysis which started as a small movement later became a world-wide phenomenon. Despite heavy criticisms hurled against it, the movement was able to make inroads into the Western society in propagating its concept on human nature and sexuality. Slowly but surely, it started to show its influence through the works of writers, play-writers, novelists, movie-makers, artists and others. By coming up with new perspective in the area of psychology, Freud suggested to the West his new and unprecedented ways of understanding love, hate, childhood, family relations, civilization, religion, sexuality, fantasy and dreams. The growing number of psychoanalytic societies being established in many capitals of Europe and other parts of the world made Freud's movement an

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<sup>2</sup> Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, *Contribution of Iqbal's Dynamic Personality Theory to Islamic Psychology: A Contrastive Analysis with Freud and Selected Mainstream Western Psychology* (Selangor: IIUM, 2011), pp. 134-135.

international one to these days. With its huge success in changing the perception of the people, it is not an exaggeration to say that the twentieth century in the West is known as the Freudian century.<sup>3</sup>

The behaviorist school of psychology came to exist in the West at the same time as the emergence of psychoanalysis. Among the great figures in this school of psychology were Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), J.B. Watson (1878-1958) and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990). Unlike the psychoanalysts, the behaviorists have a different concept of human nature altogether. In their concept of human nature, much emphasis has been laid on explaining that man is nothing more than an outcome of his own environment.<sup>4</sup> In the behaviorist concept, the environment refers to the physical as well as the social condition of family, society and the country at large. Behaviourism as a school of thought in psychology has its roots in John Locke's (1632-1704) theory of *associationism*. J.B. Watson (1878-1958) the founding father of Behaviourism shared the same idea with Locke, which says that a child's mind is a 'tabula rasa' at birth- so pure and clean like the tablecloth, waiting to be written on by its experiences.<sup>5</sup> With the assumption that a child is a 'tabula rasa' at birth, this school of psychology does not entertain the notion that a child is born with some form of innate knowledge. According to them, man is nothing more than a mechanical object that can be conditioned and programmed to do any task. J.B. Watson strongly believes that a child comes to this world in a state of neutrality without any inborn potentials. He further believes that under the most conducive environment the child can be moulded into any desired type of personality, good or bad, through the system of education and by the nurturing of the parents and teachers.<sup>6</sup>

Humanistic psychology, which appeared as an alternative force to the previous schools of psychology in the West, started in the 1950's and has gained much influence through its concept of human nature. The

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<sup>3</sup> See Pamela Thurschwell, *Sigmund Freud* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, *Human Nature: A Comparative Study between Western and Islamic Psychology* (Selangor: IIUM, 1997), p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> Hayes, N., *Foundations of psychology* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 249.

<sup>6</sup> John Broadus Watson, *The ways of behaviorism* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1928), p. 104.

main icons of humanistic psychology were Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987). In tracing the reason for its establishment, one would discover that the main underlying factor was no more than a reaction to the unsatisfactory concepts of human nature given by the earlier philosophical and psychological schools of thoughts in the West. A further elaboration on its dissatisfaction towards the earlier schools of psychology can be detected from the quotation below:

The movement can be viewed as both a protest and a new programme, even as a new school and a system. Its protest is directed against the entire orientation of psychology since Hobbes and Locke, against its Newtonian and Darwinian models of man, against its mechanistic, deterministic and reductionist character. While both Freudian and Behaviourism emphasize Man's continuity with the animal world, Humanistic psychology pays special attention to characteristics and capacities which make man uniquely different from animals.<sup>7</sup>

Very particularly, humanistic psychology was not happy with Freud's concept of human nature that depicted man as an animal full of sexual and aggressive energy that drives him wild and reckless in the pursuit of his selfish motives. As a response to psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology emphasized strongly on the parts of human nature that are uniquely of human potentials such as reflection, reasoning, judgment, self-awareness, rationality and creative imaginations. Moreover, humanistic psychologists, believe that every individual has a freedom of choice, a tendency to enjoy interpersonal relationship, can have his or her own intention and purpose in life and also able to undergo spiritual experience otherwise called as 'peak experience' in one's life.<sup>8</sup>

### **Islamic Psychology in the Past**

By going back to the Islamic history and civilization, one will come to realize that there are no documents available on when Islamic psychology really came to exist as a discipline of its own. Besides that, it has no chronological events during the period of its development like

<sup>7</sup> Misiak, H. & Sexton, V.S. *Phenomenological, Existential and Humanistic Psychologies* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1973), p. 115.

<sup>8</sup> Abraham Maslow, *Toward a psychology of being* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 1968), p. 5.

what was experienced by Western psychology. The reason for this is that Islamic psychology did not experience any shifting of paradigms like what happened in the field of psychology in the West. Contrary to the Islamic approach, Western psychologists at one time used the philosophical approach and at another time they used the scientific approach aided by laboratory, scientific tools, and even computers. The latest developments in Western Psychology show that psychologists are reverting back to some philosophical ideas due to their inability to find satisfactory answers in some areas of psychology by merely using scientific approach.<sup>9</sup>

Although both Western and Islamic psychologies are different in many ways, they have one thing in common: they have a similar sort of beginning. Before both psychologies came to exist as a discipline of their own, they were within the realm of philosophy. Islamic psychology was within the realm of Islamic philosophy and likewise Western psychology under Western philosophy, which was once considered as the ‘mother of all knowledge’ in the West. Very particularly in the West, before the advent of psychology as a discipline of its own, topics related to man and his disposition which were though psychological in nature, were discussed under a branch of philosophy known as ‘mental philosophy’.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, during the medieval period of Islam when Islamic civilization was at its peak, thriving with many scholastic works, topics on human nature, man’s relation with God, the material world, and other vital topics related to the existence of man were discussed in a polemical manner within the realm of Islamic philosophy by early Muslim philosophers and theologians. Haque (2004) highlighted the fact that Islamic psychology had its roots in the domain of Islamic philosophy:

Early Muslim scholars wrote extensively in the area of human psychology, although, the term “psychology” did not exist at that time and such endeavors were mostly a part of philosophical writings. In the writings of Muslim scholars, the term *Nafs* (self or soul) was used to denote individual personality and term *fitrah* for human nature. *Nafs* encompasses a broad range of topics including the *qalb* (intellect) and *irada* (will). If we examine the historical background under

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<sup>9</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit., 2011, pp. 4-6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

which Muslim scholarship developed, we will find that it arose under the umbrella of philosophy, which encompassed almost all areas of human enquiry. Philosophy, in most simplistic terms, refers to the knowledge of all things, both divine and human.<sup>11</sup>

Islamic history reveals that early Muslim philosophers during the Islamic renaissance period were eminent religious scholars of Islam. It is interesting to note at this juncture that the Muslim scholars during medieval period of Islamic civilization were versatile as scholars who had mastered many different disciplines of knowledge. Another special quality of these scholars was that as scholars they were dedicated to learning and teaching; and they were prepared to borrow ideas from scholars of earlier civilizations. Besides being deep in their religious thoughts and in teaching others, many of these scholars were also known to be scientists, Sufis, astronomers, mathematicians, etc. In the area of psychology, Muslim scholars of the past carried out quite substantial amount of research. It has been said that, during the time of the Greek philosophers, research in the area of psychology was only on the nature of the human mind. In contrast, during the time of the early Muslim scholars, research on man went beyond the mind to study other areas of psychology like human nature, behavior, cognition, contemplation, memory, understanding, emotions, feelings, intellect, perception, etc. as present in the Qur'an and Ḥadīth, the two primary sources of Islam. As supplementary to this, early Muslim scholars had also taken ideas from early Greek philosophers which were pertinent to what they were researching in the study of man.<sup>12</sup>

According to Amin (1996), the borrowing of ideas from the Greek philosophers can be explained in two eras of the development. The first era starting from Al-Kindī (801-873) to Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) can be seen as the era of uncritical borrowing of ideas without much disagreement. The second era that starts from the time of al-Fārābī (870-950) to

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<sup>11</sup> Amber Haque (2004). 'Psychology from Islamic perspective: contributions of early Muslim scholars and challenges to contemporary Muslim psychologists' in *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 43, no. 4: 357-377, p.358.

<sup>12</sup> Mohd Abbas, Op.cit., 2012, pp. 332-337.



al-Ghazālī (1043-1111) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) saw a different approach. Ideas taken from Greek philosophers during this era by the Muslim philosophers and theologians were put to the acid test by using the Qur'anic and Sharī'ah teachings of Islam. By doing that, only those ideas and concepts which were not contradictory to the Islamic teachings were integrated into the realm of Islamic philosophy, which came to be known as Islamic psychology.<sup>13</sup>

A.A. Vahab (1996), who shares a similar view with Amin (1996), acknowledges the fact that what was taken from the Greeks by Muslim scholars during the second part of knowledge expansion during the Islamic Golden Age was not a blind imitation:

It is true that Muslim scholars inherited ideas from Greek philosophers but they criticized, corrected and elaborated it within the framework of Islamic perspective. Then only they passed it on to the West. When Muslims lost their supremacy in the world politics their dominance in the field of knowledge was also lost. They became unable to continue their supremacy in knowledge from where their predecessors left.<sup>14</sup>

The act of criticizing, correcting and elaborating knowledge taken from the Greeks within the framework of Islamic thought was the approach used by Al-Ghazālī. This act of being selective and meticulous in choosing and later integrating what is useful into the Islamic perspective when viewed in the context of modern day Islamic scholastic approach by eminent scholars like Badri<sup>15</sup>, Langgulong<sup>16</sup> and al-Attas<sup>17</sup> and others

<sup>13</sup> Mohd. Amin, 'Islamic psychology' in Husain, M.G. (ed). *Psychology and society in Islamic perspective* (pp.21-30). (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 1996), p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> A. A. Vahab, 'Islamic Psychology: A brief history'. In Husain, M. G. (ed.). *Psychology and society* (pp.10-20). (New Delhi: Genuine Publications & Media Pvt. Ltd., 1996), p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> See Malik Babikar Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic psychospiritual study* (Kuala Lumpur: Medeena Books, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> See Langgulong, Hasan. (1989). *The Ummatic paradigm of Psychology*. Paper presented at the International Seminar on Islamic Philosophy and Science, University Sains Malaysia, Penang, 30<sup>th</sup> May-2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1989.

<sup>17</sup> See Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1978).

should be rightly called as the Islamization of knowledge and psychology.

All extensive research done in the areas of philosophy and other social and natural sciences during the Islamic Golden Age by Muslim scholars either came to a halt or a slowdown with the decline of the Islamic empires, precisely after the fall of Baghdad in 1258. During the expansion of Muslim scholastic works, European scholars who came to study in the Islamic centers of learning in the Muslim capitals during the peak of the Islamic civilization benefited immensely. Europeans learnt the language of the Muslims and educated themselves in many disciplines of knowledge and sciences such as medicine, astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, logarithm, algebra, etc. It is said that psychology was even one of the areas that the Europeans benefited from researches done by early Muslims scholars. As such, there exists documented evidence to state that many of the ideas that are within the Western framework of what is considered to be modern psychology reflect some ideas that have been taken from early Muslim scholars. The only obvious shortcoming that can be seen on the part of Western scholars is that they have not duly acknowledged of what they have borrowed from the past Muslim scholars.<sup>18</sup>

Karim (1984) in explaining the status of Islamic psychology in the past and also in lamenting on what happened to the Muslims during the era of European colonization of Muslim lands said:

Islamic psychology is a prime example of Muslim superiority in knowledge, which they have lost due to the political and economic exploitation by the colonialist powers with a consequent deterioration in education. For this reason, Muslims have not produced any leading scientists for the past two centuries. Yet the Muslim masters of the past have done much research into psychology, some of their findings

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<sup>18</sup> Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, 'Globalization and Its Impact of Education and Culture' in World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization, 1(1): 59-69, 2011, pp. 60-61.

having been plagiarized by the West, and many of their concepts antecede those of the West by centuries.<sup>19</sup>

It is believed that the gap between the Muslims and West in terms of knowledge and scholastic works began to widen during the Western colonization of the Muslim territories. Due to colonization, Muslims who were deprived of the freedom to rule their own countries became weak and dependent on the West. As such, they lagged behind the Europeans in terms of technology, knowledge expansion, and economic growth. On the contrary, the West made great progress in gaining economic prosperity. Being affluent, the West was able to master new domain of knowledge and sciences by conducting research and exploration.<sup>20</sup>

Though Europeans advanced themselves in science and technology, the downside of this progress was that it took the scholars and the masses more into scientific research and experiment at the cost of their ethical and religious values. Due to this reason, though they were scientifically thriving, spiritually they were declining. Compared to this situation in the West, though the Muslim countries were lagging behind the West in terms of science and technology, spiritually the scholars and the masses kept their religiosity the top most priority in conducting their daily lives. Upon receiving their independence, Muslim countries while struggling to improve their economic prosperity also tried to narrow the educational and technological gaps that had been created since the colonial period. No doubt the Muslim scholars are lagging behind their Western counterparts in science and technology, they, however, feel that they can offer to the people in the West some of the profound knowledge they have in the areas of human nature and on the spiritual dimension of man. Very precisely in Western psychology such information are still vague that have caused great confusion in the minds of people as to what is the true nature of man. This prevalent scenario in the West has drawn the interest of Muslim scholars and psychologists to share their knowledge

<sup>19</sup> Karim, G. M. 'The Islamisation of Psychology' paper presented at the Third International Seminar on Islamic Thought, International Institute of Islamic Thought, Kuala Lumpur, 26-31 July, 1984. p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, 'Iqbal's Ideas on Science and the Muslims' in Revelation and Science, Vol. 01. No.03 (1433H/2011), 85-96, p. 86.

on man, human nature and personality development found in their Islamic heritage with the masses in the West as an initiative and their religious obligation to help them to find solution to many of their social problems.<sup>21</sup>

### **Islamic Psychology by Contemporary Muslim Scholars**

During the last hundred years, the masses in the West have seen much excitement with the emerging and shifting paradigms explaining divergent theories on human nature and personality development. First Freud came with his ideas on the conscious and unconscious that explained the psychological forces (Id, Ego, and Superego) at work within the human psyche. He conceptualized a theory of personality by explaining personality as an outcome of the rivalry to these three forces of the human psyche. After that, behaviorism appeared with its classical and operant conditionings, which explained that personality has got nothing to do with temperaments and innate knowledge. By ignoring that man has a nature, they explained to the world that personality is a mere outcome of an individual's response to the stimuli that come from the environment. The third most influential school of the Western psychology was the humanistic psychology. As the third force of the Western psychology, the humanists explained to the world that man is much greater and higher in his nature than what has been described by the psychoanalysts and behaviorists. They believe that man is good by his nature and his struggle in life should be focused in actualizing the good part that is within him. They further explained that man will attain a state of happiness only by actualizing the goodness which is part of him.<sup>22</sup>

Despite all the different perspectives on human nature and personality development described by the three schools of Western mainstream psychology, the modern man of the West has plunged deep into a state of tension, anxiety, stress, hopelessness and other related psychological problems. M.G. Husain in his preface to *Islamic Psychology*

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<sup>21</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit., 2011, p. 337.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 338

(1996) has described the inability of the Western psychology in helping the masses in the West to get rid of their psychological problems:

Modern psychology as we see has its limitations of being concerned more with the social and cultural aspects of human beings and has shown least concern with the spiritual power of human beings. It took quite a good period of time to realize that modern psychology does not address itself to the various existing problems of mankind which are becoming complex every day.<sup>23</sup>

Badri (2000) shares the same line of thought like Husain. He is of the view that the Western psychology with much of its scientific and sophisticated explanation on man in most instances has given an oversimplified answer to many complex issues related to human nature and to his complex cognitive activities and feelings. Moreover, he feels that with the increase in the statistics related to social and psychological problems, the West with its constant shifting of paradigms has failed to provide a satisfactory solution to many human crises experienced by the masses. In giving his comments on how the divergent paradigms failed to produce positive results, he said:

The optimism of fifty years ago has now dissipated and the social and psychological problems of Western societies are probably the only variables that have surpassed economic inflation in their sharp increase. Their failure is not surprising since the psychology of humankind, with all its complex variables and spiritual aspects, could never be reduced to the chemical and physical data of laboratory experiments.<sup>24</sup>

The real problem with the Western psychology is that it has shifted from what is supposed to be the real focus and concern in the field of psychology, and started to limit itself to the biological, physical and socio-cultural needs of man. The real meaning of the word 'psyche' from which the word 'psychology' derives from Greek and Latin means 'soul'. This omission on the discussion of the human soul from Western psychology is a thing felt not only by Muslim scholars but also by contem-

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<sup>23</sup> M.G. Husain(ed.) in the preface to '*Psychology and society in Islamic perspective*' (New Delhi: Genuine Publications & Media Pvt. Ltd.,1996), p. xi.

<sup>24</sup> Badri, op. cit., 2000, p. 5

porary Western scholars. It has been highlighted by Badri (2000) that the renowned British psychologist, like Cyril Lodowic Burt (1883-1971) has once stated that Western psychology in its investigation on man first eliminated the inquiry on the entity of the human soul, then on his mind and lastly on his consciousness. Muslim psychologists who realized this problem that exists in the modern psychology of the West have termed it as a 'soulless psychology'.<sup>25</sup>

Besides Cyril Burt, others too in the West are slowly but critically moving towards thinking what ought to be psychology's real concern. They have already started to think seriously about what happens to the soul upon the death of a person. The following quote from John Carew Eccles (1903-1997) and Karl Raimund Popper (1902-1994) is a classic example:

Finally, of course we come to the ultimate picture, what happens in death? Then all cerebral activity cease permanently. The self-conscious mind that has had an autonomous existence in a sense ... now finds that the brain it had scanned and probed and controlled so efficiently and effectively through a long life is no longer giving any message at all. What happens then is the ultimate question.<sup>26</sup>

In realizing the prevalent situation in the Western psychology, Muslim scholars, psychologists as well as Islamic research institutions have initiated efforts to promote Islamic ideas on human nature and personality development as an alternative to the available modern Western theories. Muslim scholars and psychologists are putting forward many of the ideas on man from Islamic, psychological, philosophical and sociological perspectives.

Muslim scholars who promote Islamic psychology are not on a confrontational mode with the ideas of Western scholars of psychology. In reality, what they intend to achieve through the introduction of Islamic psychology, is to neutralize or harmonize the chaotic situation prevalent in the mainstream Western psychology. In other words, Islamic ideas promoted through Islamic psychology should be seen more as a 'peace

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 7

<sup>26</sup> Eccles & Popper in Badri, 2000, p. 12

maker’/ ‘arbitrator’ that can provide solutions to many of the problems faced by the people in the world.<sup>27</sup> For Badri (1979), the introduction of Islamic ideas in psychology also serves the purpose of informing Muslims psychologists who have been trained in the modern psychology, of the existence of a more holistic idea on man within Islamic psychology.<sup>28</sup>

Langgulung (1983) in giving his comments on the resurgence of Islamic psychology in the modern era, particularly in the West, is of the opinion that even though Islamic psychology was in existence in the past, during the Golden Age of Islam, its contemporary promotion in the West has been initiated by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) in the United States. He further asserted that what warrants the promotion of Islamic ideas on human nature was mainly due to the many conflicting and distorted ideas on the concept of man that was given by many Western theories. Efforts made by AMSS are a move to give an alternative to the confused ideas conceptualized by the West pertaining to the subject on man and psychology. At the initial stage, literary works done by the members of AMSS came as a response towards the latest development brought by the various schools of Western psychology in the fields of mental health, counseling, psychotherapy, psycholinguistics, etc.<sup>29</sup>

### **True Face of Islamic Psychology**

Before pursuing any further into the efforts and contributions of contemporary Muslim scholars in the area of psychology, the study demands some clear-cut principles on which Islamic psychology differs from the Western schools of psychology. For this, Rashid Hamid an important key figure of AMSS has highlighted the principle that draws a demarcation line, defining what is meant by Islamic psychology in comparison to Western psychology. In the ‘Proceedings of the First Sympo-

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<sup>27</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit., 2011, p. 8

<sup>28</sup> See Malik Babikar Badri, *The dilemma of Muslim psychologists* (London: MWH London Publishers, 1979), pp. 2-3.

<sup>29</sup> Hassan Langgulung, *Teori-teori kesihatan mental: Perbandingan Psikologi Moden dan Pakar-pakar Pendidikan Islam* (Selangor: Pustaka Huda, 1983), pp. 237-238.

sium on Islam and Psychology' (1977), Rashid Hamid highlighted the following six principles that explain what Islamic psychology is:

- a) Islamic Psychology is not a reductionistic-oriented science of human behavior. It would also be inappropriate to define it as an "altered state of consciousness," or "humanistic psychology." Islamic Psychology is not a part of any branch of psychology. It constitutes the totality of human psychological experience. In regard to the last two designations, Islamic Psychology is, by definition, philosophical and humanistic in the broadest and most inclusive sense.
- b) Islamic Psychology does not incorporate Western concepts of absolute duality and Hegelian dichotomies (i.e. mind-body, matter-spirit, sacred-secular). It does not encourage excessive analysis at the expense of synthesis. For example, some psychologists attempt to explain spontaneous free-flowing human communication in terms of "transactional analysis," an economic exchange.
- c) Islamic Psychology is not a mere substitution of one set of terms for others to peripherally explain human psychology from a so-called "religious point of view." Such an effort would be analogous to taking apples from an apple orchard, replacing them with oranges and hoping that from henceforth oranges will come forth instead of apples.
- d) Islamic Psychology is not predicated on the belief that man is constantly at odds with nature. How can he be at odds with forces and elements which are created for his overall sustenance and from which he is physically constituted?
- e) Islamic Psychology is not mainly dependent on empirically derived data about human personality and behavior at the expense of intuitive experiential knowledge that cannot be operationalized in the context of experiments. Both approaches are essential for an effective Islamic Psychology.
- f) Islamic Psychology is not atheistic (i.e. "God-less"). It is theistic in the purest sense of the word. God-consciousness and obedience to *Sharia* are the roots of Islamic Psychology.<sup>30</sup>

In defining what Islamic psychology is, Sharafat Hussain Khan, a Muslim scholar, in his seminar paper, 'Islamization of Knowledge: A Case for Islamic Psychology' gave the following description of what Islamic psychology refers to in essence:

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<sup>30</sup> Fakulti Pendidikan Islam, *Seminar Islam di pusat-pusat pengajian tinggi Asean*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> December, 1978), pp. 128-129.



- (i) Science of regulating human behavior in accordance with the Divine Will.
- (ii) It is a science of behavior modification towards realization of Divine Will or
- (iii) Study of human behavior within Islamic tenets or
- (iv) Islamic psychology is a science which deals with behavior from an Islamic perspective.<sup>31</sup>

### Islamization of Psychology: Contribution

The above description of Islamic psychology also demands an explanation on what is meant by 'Islamization of psychology'. The term, 'Islamization of psychology' refers to the process and efforts of contemporary Muslim scholars and institutions that call for a comprehensive understanding of human nature and man's position as the vicegerent (*khalīfah*) of God on earth. In the process of Islamization of psychology, Muslim scholars use ideas, concepts and understanding that can be deduced from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Ḥadīth. It is a process of reviving ideas of medieval Muslim philosophers and scholars pertaining to the subject of human nature. As a paramount duty in the process of Islamization of psychology, Muslim scholars vehemently call for the restoration of the discussion on the existence of the human soul to the present day mainstream psychology. Their holistic approach in psychology is one that studies man as an integrated being comprising mind, soul and body.<sup>32</sup>

In 1978, Riyadh University, Saudi Arabia organized an international seminar with the sole motive of exploring and expounding many psychological aspects of man from the Islamic perspective. As a result of that seminar, it gave the impetus and vitality for contemporary Muslim scholars to produce literature stating the contribution of early Muslim scholars in the field of psychology. These Muslim scholars also identified the shortcomings of the Western psychological theories of psychoa-

<sup>31</sup> Sharafat Hussain Khan, (1996). 'Islamization of knowledge: a case for Islamic psychology' in Husain M. G. (ed.). *Psychology and society in Islamic Perspective* (pp.41-52), (New Delhi: Genuine Publications & Media Pvt. Ltd, 1996), p. 49.

<sup>32</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit. 2011, p. 343.

analysis, behaviorism and humanism. Among the Muslim psychologists and scholars who have been in the forefront to promote and explain Islamic ideas on psychology were Malik Badri, Al-Syarqawi, Hasan Langgulung, Rashid Hamid, Amber Haque and Othman Najati. Besides these scholars, the works of philosopher al-Attas calling the West to pay attention to the spiritual dimension on man should be duly recognized although his call was done more on a philosophical level.<sup>33</sup>

Supplementary to the works of AMSS and other Muslim institutions, to some extent the four “World Conference on Muslim Education” the first of which was held in Mecca (1977), the second in Islamabad (1980), the third in Dhaka (1981) and the fourth in Jakarta (1982) also gave the overwhelming interest to contemporary Muslim scholars to explore and expound many ideas on human nature as understood from Islamic psychological viewpoints which are essentially important to the true concept of knowledge and education in human lives.<sup>34</sup>

The unique Islamic concept on man and his total and balanced development became the core of the Muslim education. The Islamic concept on human development in terms of body, mind and spirit has been well elucidated and defined in the aim of education during the first world conference on Muslim education held in Mecca in the year 1977:

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of Man’s spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all its aspects, spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See Hasan Langgulung, *Kreativiti dan pendidikan: Suatu kajian psikologi dan falsafah* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> See Hasan Langgulung, *Manusia dan pendidikan: Suatu analisis psikologi dan pendidikan* (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Al-Husna, 1986).

<sup>35</sup> Cited in Hasan Langgulung, *Manusia dan Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Al-Husna, 1986), p. 152.

The psycho-spiritual development of man explained by Islamic psychology makes it crystal-clear that education should not only focus much on the cognitive domain, but equally well on the affective and psychomotor domains. Hence, the Islamic concept of human nature in education not only demands education as a need for the development of the body and mind but also for the human soul. Al-Attas (1978) says:

Man of Islam, presupposes the emergence in him of a higher type of man capable of lofty inspirations towards self-improvement- the self-improvement that is no less than actualization of his latent power and capacity to become a perfect man. The man of Islam is a city dweller, a cosmopolitan, living a civilized life according to clearly defined foundations of social order and codes of conducts, is he to whom obedience of Divine law endeavors towards realizing true justice and striving after right knowledge and cardinal virtues. The motive of conduct of such man is eternal blessedness, entrance into a state of supreme peace.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Nature of Islamic Psychology**

Unlike the Western schools of psychology; namely the Freudian psychoanalysis, Behaviorism and Humanistic psychology, which are based on secular notion on human nature, Islamic psychology is one that is purely based on the religious ideas on man. In exploring the contents of Islamic psychology, one would discover that it caters to answer many of the unattended enigmatic issues on man by the Western mainstream psychology.

Islamic psychology is unique when compared to Western psychology in the sense that it provides a comprehensive understanding on man, his true nature, his origin before coming into this world, his supposed mission and role in this life and also of his eventual return upon completing this earthly life. In contrast to this thorough explanation on man by Islamic psychology, Western psychology only emphasizes matters pertaining to man of his physical, psychological and socio-cultural needs. Moreover, by being more concerned with man's 'here and now', Western psychology does not dwell on what was the state of man before he was born and what happens to him after death.

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<sup>36</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit. 1978, p. 64.

According to Islamic psychology, before human beings come to exist in this mundane world they have already existed in an earlier dimension of life, which was their actual beginning. This phase of existence which is their origin goes back to the spiritual world known as *‘Ālam al-Arwāḥ* (the realm of spirits).<sup>37</sup> Islamic scholars explain that it is during the time when the spirit of an individual comes in contact with the mortal body, he gains the honored position as the *Khalīfatullāh fī al-Ard* (Allah’s vicegerent on earth). This was the position that was given by God to Adam (a.s.) when He created him as the first human being. This title as the vicegerent of Allah is inherited by his progeny.<sup>38</sup>

Based on the teachings of the Qur’an and Sunnah, Muslim scholars and psychologists believe that during the time when the spirit is breathed into the fetus in the mother’s womb, together with the elements of *Fiṭrah* (primordial nature of being good, pious and God-consciousness), the *Asmā’* (the names and attributes of Allah/ innate knowledge), the *Mīthāq* (covenant), the *Amānah* (the trust) and the freedom of choice and *‘Aql* (intellect) are bestowed upon man.<sup>39</sup>

With all the above gifts from Allah, man has been given the greatest honor as the best creation. Being born with the *Fiṭrah*, man is good by his nature. Islamic psychology emphasizes that there is a great possibility that the human *Fiṭrah* at birth which is in its purest nature can be hindered of its full bloom during puberty and in later years of an individual’s life due to wrong education and negative social environment which are adverse to the nature of the *Fiṭrah* itself. When the qualities or potentials of the *Fiṭrah* and the *Asmā’* are blocked from being actualized in man’s life, man becomes a perverted-transgressor in his nature and at times can become rebellious towards Allah. Muslim scholars and psychologists believe that though wrong education and negative social environment cannot change man’s *Fiṭrah*, the least they can do is to pervade, pollute and distract its proper functioning. In Islamic psychology too, one would find a very unique concept of personality development which ex-

<sup>37</sup> See (Al-Qur’Ēn 7:172).

<sup>38</sup> Zafar Afaq Ansari (ed). (1992). *Qur’anic concepts of human psyche* (pp.1-14) (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought Pakistan, 1992), p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit. 1997, p. 171.

plains that man or rather his soul undergoes three stages of development/transformation termed by Badri and other Muslim psychologists as psycho-spiritual development. This development that describes the journey of the human Self which starts with the subduing of the demands of *Nafs Ammārah* progresses into *Nafs Lawwāmah* and finally ends in *Nafs Muṭma'innah*. According to Islam and Islamic psychology, the reason why man who is given the *Fiṭrah*, *Khilāfah*, and other bounties and honors has to undergo these stages could be well explained and interpreted as nothing more than trials and tribulations set by Allah in order to verify those among mankind who are good and obedient and those who are bad and evil.<sup>40</sup>

Islamic psychology unlike Western psychology gives a comprehensive explanation on the journey undertaken by man during his entire life, more accurately it explains that his journey starts even before he comes to exist in this world. This journey which starts from the *ʿĀlam al-Arwāḥ* (the realm of spirits) is an extra ordinary one and should be rightly stated as man's spiritual journey. In going through the contents of Islamic psychology one is made to understand that man who starts his journey from the realm of the spirits makes a stopover in this mundane world for a transitory period of time. While undergoing his earthly life he has to make preparation in the form of doing good deeds before he enters into the next dimension of life which is known as the *Barzakh* (life after death). The state of *Barzakh* is also seen as another transitory period which the human soul has to go through before it passes on to the next stage, which is the resurrection. The description given in the Qur'an and Hadith on the resurrection explains that this stage of the spiritual journey is the eventual return of the soul to the spiritual world, its actual place of origin. Furthermore, the discussion on the human soul viewed from the perspectives of Islamic psychology and Sufism reveals interesting facts that man in his nature shares some of the basic characteristics found in animals and at the same time he also inherits some attributes found in the angels and also some of God's attributes. For example, in his desire for food, sex, etc. man resembles the animals. In his piety, meditation and

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 172

devotion to Allah, man also resembles very much like the angels, and finally in showing love, care, grace, kindness, sympathy, mercy, etc. towards others and animals he imitates the many attributes of Allah.<sup>41</sup>

Going deeper into the topic on human nature in Islamic psychology, one would come to understand that the laxity of man in developing and actualizing the angelic and godly attributes which lie in his psyche, leads him to the animal realm of nature, making him a perverted transgressor in his behavior against all the bounds set by Allah in the Qur'an. Islamic psychology explains that when man undergoes spiritual purification by subduing his evil urges that come from his animal nature he is able to develop and actualize the angelic and godly attributes, and thus he becomes an angelic as well as a godly person in his character and personality that qualifies him for gaining Allah's good pleasure and an everlasting state of happiness in this world and felicity in the hereafter.<sup>42</sup>

### **Similar but not the Same**

Despite many fundamental differences that exist between what is termed as Western and Islamic psychology, there exists somewhat fine lines of similarities between the two psychologies. Though some of the concepts on man and personality in these psychologies might look similar on the surface, deep down in the very core of the matters discussed on man, one would discover that they are different and can analogically be termed as 'chalk and cheese'. Basically, a researcher into the two psychologies would realize that the parting of the way between the two is that one is religiously oriented in its concept of man while the other entertains the secular notion of man, largely influenced by Darwinism. The following will be an exposition to prove that ideas on human nature conceptualized by Islamic psychology are different from what has been explained by Western psychology.

### **Psychoanalysis**

The Freudian theory on personality development which explains the struggle that goes on between the id, ego, and superego might in a

<sup>41</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit., 2011, pp. 347-348.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 348-349.

way sound similar to the personality development advocated by Islamic psychology. The id, ego, superego in the psychosexual development depict the on-going battle in the human psyche that never promises any change and maturity of the id's sexual and aggressive impulses. The least the ego can do to bridle the reckless impulses of the id is to employ some defense-mechanisms that can release its sexual energy in a disguised form. On the other hand, the psycho-spiritual development in Islamic psychology, which starts with the *Nafs Ammārah*, goes through the stage of *Nafs Lawwāmah* and eventually culminates in *Nafs Muṭma'innah* that promises salvation, reward, and relief from stress and anxiety by rewarding man with peace and tranquility in this world and felicity in the hereafter. In Islamic psychology, a child is not all id during birth, but contrary to Freud's idea, the child is in the purest of pure in its nature without any stain of sin and sexual inclination towards its parents. The existence and role of *Nafs Ammārah* explained in Islamic psychology, the presence of which can be well felt by an individual during his age of discretion and later all throughout his life is nothing more than a test and trial set by Allah the almighty to see how obedient an individual is towards his Lord and Cherisher.<sup>43</sup>

### Behaviorism

The Behaviorists concept of human nature which states that man is a 'tabula rasa' at birth and the stimuli that come from the environment play a decisive role in deciding the personality development of a child in a way sounds similar to the condition of a child being born in the primordial nature (*Fiṭrah*), so clean and pure. A fragment of Muslim scholars who are Western-oriented, have accepted the idea that the nature of 'tabula rasa' and the *Fiṭrah* are parallel to each other. But, the actual or perhaps the true understanding of the concept of man being born with the *Fiṭrah* goes beyond the concept of mere 'tabula rasa'. In other words, Islamic psychology emphasizes that man is not only born in the purest nature, but along with this condition, he is given the *Asmā'* (names and attributes of Allah), the *Mīthāq* (covenant), *Amānah* (trust), *Khilāfah*

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<sup>43</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit. 1997, p. 174.

(vicegerency), etc. which lay latent in the form of innate potentials and tendencies that need to be actualized when the new born baby grows into maturity and during the other stages of an individual's life on earth.<sup>44</sup>

### **Humanistic Psychology**

Humanistic psychology like Islamic psychology advocates that man is good by his nature and has innate knowledge and hidden potentials that need to be actualized. But through analysis one will stumble across the fact that there runs a demarcation line that separates the humanistic and the Islamic concepts on the matter of man's innate knowledge and potentials. What demarcates the two concepts is the fact that humanistic psychology does not state the source or rather explains from where man has acquired these latent or hidden potentials. Islamic psychology on the other hand, explains that the hidden and innate potentials have been given to man by Allah at the time the spirit is breathed into the growing fetus in the mother's womb.<sup>45</sup> In analyzing some aspects of the mainstream Western psychology on their concept on human nature and personality, the analysis vividly highlights that, among the three schools of psychology, only humanistic psychology comes close to the ideas of human nature put forward by Islamic psychology. Humanistic psychology's overwhelming optimistic view on man, who is good and has the tendency to actualize his innate and hidden potentials is strikingly close to the Islamic viewpoints on human nature, despite the fact that humanistic psychology, like the other schools of the Western psychology, does not provide a comprehensive concept on man, and leaves unexplained several issues such as the origin of man, his spiritual dimension, his final destiny after death, and his relationship with the Creator.

### **Analysis and Synthesis**

The Western approach to psychology and personality study which started as a philosophical one later became an empirical and scientific one. The reason for this is very simple. Ever since the European renaissance, science played an important role in the lives of the people in the

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<sup>44</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit., 2011, pp. 350-351.

<sup>45</sup> Mohd Abbas, op. cit, 1997, p. 175.



modern West, marginalizing the role of religion. After a long while being obsessed with the scientific tools in the research on man and his behavior, many Western psychologists of late have come to realize that it will be an insurmountable task for them to answer all the enigmas and intricacies that surround the issues pertaining to man and his nature by just using scientific approach. In realizing the fact that man is a being too complex to be understood by any one single theory, as a latest trend in the area of personality study, many psychologists apply and propose an eclectic approach in the understanding of man by utilizing the scientific and philosophical approaches. By going back to philosophy, psychologists in the West are taking back psychology to its initial point of departure.

It seems that much of the chaos and confusion in the understanding on man and his personality in the West can be rightly attributed to the dichotomous way of thinking practiced by scholars and the masses alike in issues related to human lives. The dichotomous way of thinking as a legacy passed on from the European renaissance, splits or segregation between what is religious and scientific, between what is sacred and secular. In the West, with the secularization of the Western mind, the act of referring to religion in matters related to human lives is deemed as an act of 'backwardness', 'superstitious' and 'regression'. Conversely, being scientific and secular in the Western connotation reflects one's mental state of being rational, liberalized and progressive. Moreover, in the Western arena of research, to merge religious ideas with those discovered by science is somewhat 'unprofessional' or 'unscientific'. This notion is true with the mainstream psychology in the West. Being interested in the tangible hard facts, the mainstream psychologists are only inclined to the observable behavior of man, as predictors of his nature. Apart from that, by being more concerned with man's 'here and now', mainstream psychologists do not show much interest in questions like; what is the state of man before he came into this world and where he is going after completing his mundane life.

Being too scientific and empirical in their research, psychologists from the Western mainstream psychology have missed the real essence to the word psychology. In Latin, the word psychology is a combination of

two terms; 'psyche' means 'soul', and 'ology' means 'study'. Going by the meaning given in Latin and Greek for the word psychology, modern psychology in the West, which by right should be studying the soul entity in the human being, for the last hundred years or more, has been preoccupied just in the study on man's external behavior and appearance. This has been true with the behaviorist school of psychology. This missing element on the investigation of the human soul has caused them many problems in the understanding on man.

Unlike the scenario in the West, Muslim scholars and psychologists of the past and present have a harmonious approach and relationship with science. The Muslim mind is a non-dichotomous one as there does not exist any split between what is sacred and secular, between what is religious and scientific, and between what is considered the mind and the body. In the Muslim scholastic works one would not discover that there exists any serious conflict between science and religion. Islamic psychology, which is based on the religious ideas on man, pays great attention to the understanding of man from his physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions. As such, Islamic psychology provides a theory on human nature and man's personality which is more comprehensive and all-encompassing compared to the ideas presented by Western psychology.

Unlike Western mainstream psychology, Islamic psychology is much concerned about the state of humanness in man and to the study of his soul/spirit. In its investigations on man and personality development, Islamic psychology tries to understand the functions of the *Rūḥ*, *Qalb*, *Nafs* and '*Aql*'. For many Muslim psychologists the four entities are one and the same thing referring to the *Rūḥ*. For some, the four act as different entities in the human body. Yet, the four entities form the spiritual dimension on man. The knowledge and understanding of these four entities have helped Muslim psychologists solve many psychological issues pertaining to human problems.

In response to the prevalent chaos found in the Western psychology, Muslim psychologists offer Islamic understanding on man as an 'arbitrator' or a 'peace-maker' in harmonizing the divergent ideas on man

offered by the different paradigms existing within mainstream Western psychology. Islamic psychology can solve many of the psychological issues in the West, which are increasing with the increasing rate of complexity with their modern lifestyle. There are indicators within the latest development in the field of psychology in the West, that depict the likelihood of some of the ideas on the inner dimension of man explained in Islamic psychology may gain acceptance within some quarters of Western psychology. If Buddhist ideas on the state of 'Nirvana' can be integrated within what is known as Transpersonal psychology in the West, the Islamic ideas on man championed by Muslim psychologists too can one day gain acceptance in the midst of Western psychologists.

### **Conclusion**

Western psychology which evolved from a philosophical approach to a scientific one in the study of man has somehow neglected the true essence of psychology which is the study of the human soul. As such it is now regarded as a 'soulless psychology'. In realizing this situation, the latest trend in Western psychology indicates that psychologists are incorporating some Eastern philosophical and religious ideas into their existing scientific ideas on man. Considering this as an open invitation, Muslim scholars and psychologists have initiated the works on Islamization of modern psychology by sharing ideas on man's spiritual dimension found in the Islamic primary sources. The Islamization process is not a total rejection of all scientific research done by Western scholars. The rejection of science and scientific research is not the true spirit of the Qur'an. With this in mind, Muslim scholars, scientists and psychologists only reject all atheistic, secularist, agnostic and nihilistic ideas found in the researches done by Western scholars. Muslim psychologists should not totally reject all ideas on psychology provided by the Western psychologists. As stated by Badri (1979) and other Muslims psychologists that it will be good for Muslim psychologists to adopt and adapt some of the ideas found in Western psychology so long as these ideas are not contradictory to their Islamic faith, into their own system of psychology. Psychological tools, measurements to conduct intelligence tests, behavior therapy and behavioral psychotherapy which are founded

on learning theory can be well incorporated into the realm of Islamic psychology. Moreover, such psychological tools have great relevance in the fields of education, military and medicine. Since the contributions of early Muslims in the field of psychology are rarely acknowledged by the West, contemporary Muslim psychologists believe that some of the ideas found in modern psychology pertaining to human outward behavior and behavioral modification therapy actually reflect what have been conceptualized by the Muslims during the heydays of their civilization.