

## **Man: A Contrastive Analysis between Western and Islamic Psychologies**

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In the field of psychology, the research on man, which started in the ancient past, is an on-going study even during this modern and scientific age. It is an undeniable fact that with the passing of time from the primitive to modern, new things have emerged with regard to the study on man and his nature. Being perennial in nature, the old and the new studies conducted on man, try to unearth and bring to light many of man's potentials, which were not known previously. Although at times many of these studies complement one another in answering the intricate questions on the nature of man, there are also times when they contradict one another in their understanding on man. In view of this reality, this qualitative research is an attempt to provide a contrastive analysis on the concept of man portrayed in the mainstream Western and Islamic psychologies. As such, the researchers will analyze and highlight the differences and similarities found on the concept of man in psychoanalysis, behaviorism, humanistic psychology and Islamic psychology.

Keywords: Man, Contrastive Analysis, Western Psychology, Islamic Psychology

### **Introduction**

Man with his power of speech and intellectual capacity dominates life on this planet. It is interesting to note that he is the only creation on earth that has the potential to explore and investigate the universe as well as the flora and fauna. Despite having the power to explore and conquer outer space with all the stars and planets that are millions of miles away from his own planet, man is yet left in a position unable to conquer his own inner space which explains what is his true nature and for what purpose he has come to exist in this world.

In the West, man is at the brink of destruction for his life has been subjected to an ever-changing trend of lifestyles; from feudalism to monasticism, from communism to capitalism and secularism, etc. This changing trend of life has made life difficult for man, especially in his effort to discover who he really is. Due to the fact that man has failed to understand his true nature and his ultimate destiny in life, his life has become chaotic, stressful and full of anxiety and frustration. In the past, this situation in the West had led nations into war with one another and now into other regions of the world. In rendering a helping hand to the drowning man in the ocean of his problems, there came in the West different schools of psychology to solve all his psychological problems. The three main schools of psychology in the West; psychoanalysis, behaviourism and humanistic psychology had contributed their portion to make man understand his nature and to solve his problems. Regardless of their arduous attempt, these schools of Western psychology which differed in their concept on man failed to give man a comprehensive understanding of who really he is. As such, man is left in a dilemma at the crossroads in discovering his real self (Mohd Abbas, 2011).

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In contrast to Western mainstream psychology, Islamic psychology which is based on revealed knowledge and the ideas of early Muslims scholars comes to the rescue of Western psychology with a more comprehensive explanation on the status of man as the best creation of God. Moreover Islamic psychology provides explanation on man's pre-existence, his role in this world and his final return to God. The central theme of this paper is focused on the concept of man found in Western mainstream psychology and in Islamic psychology.

### **Man in Psychoanalysis**

Since Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) did not articulate his views on man in a direct manner, one has to deduce ideas on how he conceptualized on man from his vast volume of writings alongside with what have been stated by authoritative researchers on him and psychoanalysis. Based on these sources, it can be said that the founding father of psychoanalysis has given a rather negative view on the image of man in comparison to what has been stated by the behaviourist and humanistic schools of psychology. Though a Jew in his origin, he took pride in calling himself 'a godless Jew'. Being an avowed atheist, he portrayed an image of man which is contradictory to what has been described in Old and New Testaments. In contradiction to the scriptural messages found in the Torah (Book of Genesis) and Bible which state that man has been created in the image of God, Freud gave a negative image of man who is not very much different from the rest of the animal kingdom. To him, man is an intellectual beast doomed for destruction. His idea of putting man as equal to animals is a reflection of what has been said by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) earlier on through his 'Origin of Species' (1859). Impressed with the Darwinian concept on man, Freud could have possibly agreed on the three aspects highlighted by Darwin in his understanding on the origin and nature of man. Among others, the three aspects are:

- a) Man is a terrestrial and materialistic being and he is fully occupied with his material needs in this life.
- b) The story of man's origin that goes back to Adam is a fabrication and man is in no way exalted in nobility, superiority and spirituality.
- c) Human instincts are what man has inherited from his forefathers who belong to the ape family (Qutb, 1985, pp. 29-30).

Upon reading further into Freud's ideas on man, one will discover that his concept on the nature of man is pessimistic and deterministic at the same time. His pessimistic view on human nature is based on his assumption that man is evil and selfish by nature. Besides being pessimistic he also believed that the concept of human nature is a deterministic one due to his assumption that every human being is chained to the psychosexual developments of his life. According to him, man is no more than an animal enslaved to his sexual impulses. He further thought that man is controlled by his libidinal impulses and therefore should be un-socialized and irrational in his behaviour. As such, Freud believed that man has no freedom to cut loose from the shackles of his psychosexual development. As a consequence of not having the freedom of choice, man's behaviour is determined by the warring parties of his psyche, namely the id, ego and superego. An exploration into Freud's ideas on the id, ego and superego gives a clear-cut understanding that man undergoes endless tensions, stress, conflict, dilemma, chaos, and a whole range of other psychopathological illnesses due to the turmoil caused by the forces that reside within the his psyche. Furthermore, Freud believed that there exist in man two types of instincts. One is the life instinct, which he called the Eros, and the other is the death instinct known as the Thanatos. In describing the two basic instincts residing in the human beings, he said:

I have combined the instincts for self-preservation and for the preservation of the species under the concept of Eros and have contrasted with it an instinct of death or destruction which works in silence. Instinct in general is regarded as a kind of elasticity on living things, an impulsion towards the restoration of a situation which once existed but was brought to an end by some external disturbance.... The picture which life presents to us is the result of the working of Eros and death-instinct together and against each other (Freud, 1948, p. 105).

According to Freud, the life instinct represents all that is essentially important for the survival of man on earth, like hunger, thirst and sex. Further reading of Freud's ideas on the instincts, reveals that the life instinct functions itself by using a form of energy called libido. Basically, the term libido refers to sexual energy, but in Freud's terminology libido refers to all life instincts. The death instinct, according to him refers, to all acts of violence, aggression, war and destruction to human lives. These are the ways, through which the death instinct manifests itself. Freud also asserted that man's natural feelings to die are the manifestation of the death instinct at work. In contrast to the explanation given to the life instinct, Freud did not furnish adequate information on the nature of the death instinct other than some flimsy description of it. Apart from this, Freud painted a mental picture for those who immerse in his thoughts that human beings are caught in an ongoing conflict between their basic sexual and aggressive needs on the one side and the demands of the society on the other (George & Cristiani, 1990).

In contrast to the life instinct, Freud's ideas on the existence of the death instinct came much later. His assumption on the existence of the death instinct in human beings is something that dawned on him after witnessing the death of millions of people during the First World War. Freud believed that although human beings have been driven by the two conflicting instincts (Eros and Thanatos), and they are caught between the rivalry that goes on between them, nevertheless they should not be the victims of aggression and self-destruction. According to Freud, the great challenge faced by the whole of the human race is to know how to manage the aggressive drive. This idea has been highlighted in his book 'Civilization and Its Discontents' (1930) (Corey, 1986).

Peter Gay in his 'Freud: A Brief Life' (Freud and Gay, 1989a) was convinced that the First World War which took place between 1914 and 1919 must have affected Freud's perception on man in a negative way. According to him, Freud must have read and listened on the human carnage, brutality and act of aggression displayed by one portion of humanity against another and this must have made him believe that though civilization to a certain extent was able to control man's incestuous wishes, it definitely had failed to fully repress man's lust for killing. The magnitude of the death toll during the war left a pessimistic view on man in most of his academic writings that gave the impression that man is an aggressive and uncivilized beast.

Freud by over-emphasizing sex in all his theories has given a mental picture to anyone who explores his ideas on psychoanalysis that man is a sexual pervert right from the very beginning of his life as an infant. This nature, ingrained in man will reside in him and never get separated from him until the day he expires from this life. Freud is a strong believer who assumed that all cases of neurosis and psychosis in human lives are caused by matters related to sexuality. He made many claims that, through clinical investigations done by employing hypnosis, talking therapy and dream interpretation, he had found out that sex seems to be at the very core of all human problems. All throughout his professional life, Freud held the notion that sexuality does not begin during adolescent or later in adulthood, but it starts the day an infant comes to see the light of the day.

Childhood was looked upon as 'innocent' and free from lusts of sex, and the fight with the demon of 'sensuality' was not thought to begin until the troubled age of puberty. Such occasional sexual activities as it had been impossible to overlook in children were put down as signs of degeneracy and premature depravity or as a curious freak of nature. Few of the findings of psycho-analysis have met with such universal contradiction or have aroused such an outburst of indignation as the assertion that the sexual function starts at the beginning of life and reveals its presence by important signs even in childhood. And yet no other finding of analysis can be demonstrated so easily and so completely (Freud, 1948, p. 59).

Freud's understanding of the subject on sexuality is different from what is ordinarily understood, which is synonymous with the adult heterosexuality. In his view, the word sexuality carries the connotation of a polymorphous sexuality, and that includes all forms of sexual behaviour. As such, his idea on sexuality incorporates infant sexuality as well as sexuality during puberty and adulthood, heterosexuality as well as homosexuality. Freud dealt quite extensively on the topic of sexuality in his 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1975). By giving preference to the sexual instincts above all other psychological needs of man, Freud approved all forms of sexuality so long as they can relieve the tension created in the psyche. At one point, when he was asked to give his comments on the act of homosexuality, his reply was:

I gather from your letter that your son is a homosexual. I am most impressed by the fact that you do not mention this term in your information about him. May I question you, why do you avoid it? Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of sexual function by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality (Freud & Freud, 1992, p. 423).

Freud in 'Civilization and Its Discontents', states his notion that man is born with some characteristic instincts which are immutable in nature. Among the inborn instincts in man are; his craving for sex, which also includes incest, his predisposition to violent aggression when facing people having authority over him, and also towards his sexual competitors, cannibalism and lust for killing. In his view, Freud believed that the authoritative figures and the sexual rivals are both seen as people who impede the gratification of man's instincts. Furthermore, Freud is of the contention that human beings are propelled by the pleasure principle, and that demand can only be fulfilled by the instincts (Freud, 1962).

In discussing the topic on man's relationship with civilization, Freud painted a strained relationship that is full of tensions. With regards to that, he said: "Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city" (Freud, 1962, pp.70-71). The agency referred by Freud is the role played by the superego in the mental life of an individual which represents the values learnt from the parents, society and civilization itself.

For him, civilization with its demands, forces upon man to comply the laws that governs the lives of the citizens. The mechanism through which civilization achieves its objectives is by threatening man with severe punishments if the laws are broken. Laws created by civilization prevent rape, adultery and killing, etc. In short, Freud feels, civilization blocks man's freedom in seeking gratification of his instinctual needs. Moreover, civilization forces man to conform to its laws and represses his instinctual demands. In highlighting his thoughts on civilization, Freud also put forward his assumption as to why people hate civilization. In 'The Future of An Illusion' (1989b) he said:

We see that an appallingly large number of people are dissatisfied with civilization and unhappy in it, and feel it as a yoke which must be shaken off; and that these people either do everything in their

power to change that civilization, or else go so far in their hostility to it that they will have nothing to do with civilization or with a restriction of instinct (Freud, 1989b, p. 47).

In addition to the above, Freud felt that much of the misery in human lives have been caused by civilization. For man to avoid neurosis and all other psychopathological problems he suggested a way which takes man to an age of uncivilized living which is of primordial nature. He spoke of a living beyond civilization where man enjoys total freedom without any restriction in the way he behaves. As a lamentation towards what civilization has done to human lives, Freud wrote the following:

This contention holds that what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions. I call this contention astonishing because, in whatever way we may define the concept of civilization, it is a certain fact that all the things with which we seek to protect ourselves against the threats that emanate from the sources of suffering are part of that very civilization (Freud, 1962, p. 33).

Besides complaining that civilisation blocks man's basic instinctual freedom, Freud also argued that 'organised religion' like civilization prevents man from achieving his freedom for his instinctual gratification. Moreover, he claimed that religion hinders man's freedom by creating a community based on a shared principle of beliefs. As such, religion helps civilization in its demand for man to conform to the norms. As a self-professed atheist, Freud in 'The Future of an Illusion' (1989b) criticised religion as a collective neurosis that creates enormous psychological tension in the minds of its followers. According to him, religion makes man a slave to God all throughout his life. Moreover, he revolted against the idea that religious dogmas have been forced upon the human mind at a very tender age during childhood. Freud believed that children at that age have neither developed their faculty for critical thinking nor they are interested in absorbing such heavy stuff. Freud also criticized blind faith and questioned the authenticity of the doctrine followed by the masses, when he wrote the following:

We ought to believe because our fathers believed. But these ancestors of ours were far more ignorant than we are. They believed in things we could not possibly accept to-day; and the possibility occurs to us that the doctrines of religion may belong to that class too. The proofs they have left us are set down in writings which themselves bear every mark of untrustworthiness. They are full of contradictions, revisions and falsifications, and where they speak of factual confirmations they are themselves unconfirmed. It does not help much to have it asserted that their wording, or even their content only, originates from divine revelation; for this assertion is itself one of the doctrines whose authenticity is under examination, and no proposition can be a proof of itself (Freud, 1989b, pp.33-34).

Besides the many unfavourable comments he made on religion in many of his writings, he also gave the following reason as to why people of his time were rejecting religion and, also why religion was becoming less important in their lives:

Let us consider the unmistakable situation as it is to-day. We have heard the admission that religion no longer has the same influence on people that it used to. (We are here concerned with European Christian civilization.) And this is not because its promises have grown less but because people find them less credible. Let us admit that the reason- though perhaps not the only reason- for this change is the increase of the scientific spirit in the higher strata of human society. Criticism has whittled away the evidential value of religious documents, natural science has shown up the errors in them, and comparative research has been struck by the fatal resemblance between the religious ideas which we revere and the mental products of primitive peoples and times (Freud, 1989b, pp. 48-49).

Apart from the above, Freud in his view on human nature described that man being a selfish creature is more concerned about himself rather than those around him. His portrayal of the image of man who does not need the cohesiveness with the rest of humanity in the spirit of universal brotherhood can be clearly seen from the quote below:

... readiness for a universal love of mankind and the world represents the highest standpoint which man can reach. Even at this early stage of the discussion I should like to bring forward my two main objectives to this view. A love that does not discriminate seems to me to forfeit a part of its own value, by doing an injustice to its object; and secondly, not all men are worthy of love (Freud, 1962, p. 49).

In analyzing Freud's views on human nature in relation to his behaviours, one will detect that he believed that all human actions, feelings, gestures, speech, etc. are determined by events of the past that happened in a person's life, mainly during early childhood. According to him, the repressed thoughts during early childhood which are sexual in nature will reappear to the surface of the human psyche. The reappearing of the old contents in an individual's adulthood will cause an impact in his or her personality. With this contention in his mind, he basically believed that personality is the reflection of one's childhood experiences. In other words, what happens during childhood creates an impact on one's personality during adulthood.

Another aspect of human nature as explained by Freud which is very similar to the Epicureanism and hedonistic concepts is the portrayal of man as a social animal who is constantly in the pursuit of seeking happiness and avoiding misery and suffering. In other words, Freud described that it is of human nature to seek pleasure and avoid pain and suffering in this life. He further stated that man attains happiness when his instinctual wishes are fulfilled, and unhappiness sets in when his impulses are debarred or blockaded. Freud generalized that the whole of humanity is driven by the pleasure principle that has been programmed within his psyche. As such, man faces unhappiness and suffering due to the elements that threaten the body and psyche, the threat that comes from the external world, and also problems caused by other fellow human beings. He believed that these elements rob man of his happiness. In further describing the three states of unhappiness, he explained that the man's body and his mental state are prone to a pathological state which can cause harm and dissolution to his body. On the other hand, the external world threatens man with its merciless forces of destruction. Finally, unhappiness is also caused by fellow human beings in the form of rivalry, envy, war, etc. In his opinion, among the three sufferings endured by man, the one that is caused by his fellow human beings is the most severest and painful of all (Freud, 1962).

The discussion on Freud's ideas on human nature will be incomplete without dwelling into the area of gender differences between male and female. Although his views on human nature came under heavy criticisms, his views on women stirred greater consternation due to the disparaging and discriminatory statements made by him against women. In making his comparison between the sexes, Freud arrived at a conclusion that states women have made fewer contributions than men to the history of mankind. In his opinion, it was men who had immensely contributed to the civilization of human beings by coming up with great ideas, inventions and discoveries. He sarcastically said that women made no great contribution other than coming up with creativity in plaiting and weaving. Influenced by the Victorian era, Freud's ideas on women were in compliance to the image of women portrayed as one who should be a competent housewife and also as a woman who wants to be conquered by the opposite sex. Freud believed that, women as compared to men have a less developed superego. Due to this reason, they show less sense of justice and are incompetent to submit to the great demands of life. Moreover, he believed that women can be easily influenced by their feelings of affection and hostility in their judgments. As such he believed that men and women make moral decisions in a different way (Freud, 1962; Jacobs, 1991).

Many researchers who came later than Freud's time highlighted one thing which they all agreed upon. To them, his comments on women depicted the undertone of his opposition to the

women's emancipation movement. It is also believed that anyone who analyses his thought on women would trace that at the very core of it Freud assumed women are no better than someone only befit the job of producing children and functioning as a house maker. Such a thought, is not just typical of Freud, but was the mentality of most men during the Victorian era.

In addition to what has been stated this far, Freud also said that women as the weaker gender are more prone to suffer from hysteria and psychiatric problems than men. The reason he gave was that women unlike men were not able to sublimate their perverse sexual impulses into works of creative and artistic nature. In stating the general mental makeup of men and women, he said that: "in many families the men are healthy, but from a social point of view immoral to an undesirable degree, while the women are high-minded and over-refined, but severely neurotic" (Freud in Felski, 1995, 184).

Despite passing many unpleasant statements which are demeaning to the status of women, Freud did admit that at many things that he did not understand about women. It has been quoted by Ernest Jones in his 'The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud' (1955) that Freud once said the following comments for being unable to understand women fully:

The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not yet been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is "What does a woman want?" (Freud in Jones, 1955, p. 421).

The above ideas on Freud's gender differences reveal that he somehow puts the female gender at a level lower than the male gender. In explaining human nature in relation to human motivation in life, Freud is of the opinion that behind every human activity there is the instinctual drive that works as a motivating factor that brings upon certain types of human behaviour. More specifically, he described that motivation in human beings is mainly derived from the id impulses which lie in the unconscious region of the human psyche. In further explaining human motivation, Freud believed that the biological or metabolic part of man provides the energy for the instincts to manifest through behaviours. In Freud's assumption energy built up by the instincts create tension in an individual. These instincts in their pursuit to release tension and at the same time to seek gratification become the source of motivation in man to display a particular form of behaviour. The ego that acts as a gauge or a bridle checks the impulses that come from the id. As an entity that works on the reality principle, the ego only allows those motivational behaviours that are morally accepted, and at the same time, it suppresses those instincts that are irrational and unaccepted by the society. What is suppressed does not stay submerged in the unconscious but will re-emerge at other times in the life of an individual in a disguised form by using any of the ego defence-mechanisms stated in psychoanalysis (Langgulung, 1983).

Turning to the question of what makes a man mentally healthy, Freud explained that the psychological well-being of an individual is related to the harmonious relationship that prevails among the psychic forces; namely the id, ego and superego. As a result of this, an individual lives harmoniously in the real world in which he lives. The stable and harmonious condition of the human psyche which explains the state of good mental health is a reflection of the effort done by the ego in reconciling the id, superego and the external world. The ego as the referee of the human psyche carries out the duty of understanding the condition of the real world and chooses opportunities most suitable to satisfy the libidinal demands of the id. In performing this task, the ego also tries not to transgress the standards set by the superego (Stevenson, 1987).

In a nutshell, an individual who enjoys good mental health is someone who is a well-adjusted person in the sense that he is able to maximize gratification while at the same time he is

able to minimize punishment in the form of fear, anxiety and guilt. In other words, a psychologically healthy person will be able to satisfy the needs of the id in the real world without going against the moral standards set by the superego. Contrary to this situation, the failure of the ego to come in between the id, superego and the external world means chaos and disharmony in the psyche of an individual. Under a state of disharmony, an individual is bound to face psychological disturbances like stress, anxiety, frustration and many other mental illnesses. In the psychoanalysis concept of mental health, the ego plays a vital role for being a neutralizing force that does not go to any extreme ends in catering for the demands made by the id, superego and the external world (Morris, 1990).

In the case of an individual who shows psychopathological symptoms, Freud prescribed a form of psychotherapy that has two objectives while bringing the individual to a state of good mental health. The first one is to modify the individual's character and behaviour by making the unconscious conscious. The second objective is to strengthen the ego as this will make the behaviour of an individual to comply with the reality and not to be enslaved to the blind demands of the libidinal forces. In the process of psychotherapy, the individual's childhood experiences are reconstructed, discussed, interpreted and analysed. The effort done by the therapist during psychotherapy is not only directed towards solving problems and suggesting new behaviour, but also to venture deep into the past life style of the client. By doing so, the therapist will be able to develop the self-understanding of the individual which is very much needed for a change in character. In other words, the therapist explores and analyses the contents of the id of an individual to make adjustments so that he will be able to comply with the reality that exists in the external world (Corey, 1986).

With regards to the subject on human nature and creativity, Freud was of the contention that man's state of being creative is a sort of energy that is derived from the impulses of the id which are sexual and aggressive in nature. According to him, the creative energy which is originally sexual and aggressive in nature needs to be transformed into something creative by the ego. To do this the ego uses one of its defence mechanisms. Very precisely the ego uses sublimation to transform the forbidden impulses of the id which have been there ever since childhood. Freud believed that a creative work of an individual is the outlet through which an individual releases all the pent up instincts of his unconscious. It is through the creative work of an individual that the forbidden impulses of the id find acceptance in the society. Members of the society will no longer shun on the sexual and aggressive impulses of the id as it has been transformed into something that of an admirable nature (Langgulong, 1991).

### **Man in Behaviorism**

The behaviourist school of psychology came to existence in the West at the same time with 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 behaviourists 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. In the behaviourist concept, the environment refers to the physical as well as the social condition of family, society and the country at large. Some of major concepts of behaviourism of the modern times, as described by Hasan Langgulong (1981) are:



- 1) Psychology to the [behaviourists] is a science of behaviour that is observable. It also means an objective science that depends on the experimental and observable data.
- 2) All human actions and behaviours are the outcome of physiochemical processes. As a result of this, all human behaviours are very much related to the physiological and neurological reactions in the human body. This fact also reveals that psychology is related to the biological sciences. Therefore human behaviours are nothing more than the way man responds to the stimuli that come from the environment.
- 3) Behaviourists accept determinism in their version of psychology. They deem that every human response (behaviour and actions) can be predicted in relation to the type of stimulus that triggers man's responses.
- 4) Environmental factors are the dominant factors that produce the different types of human personalities (p.127).

Behaviourism as a school of thought in psychology has its roots in John Locke's (1632-1704) theory of associationism. J.B. Watson, the founding father of Behaviourism shared the same idea with Locke, which says that the child's mind is a 'tabula rasa' at birth- so pure and clean like the tablecloth, waiting to be written on by its experiences (Hayes, 1995). 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, either good or bad, through the system of education and by the nurturing of the parents and teachers. His strong contention on this matter has been voiced up through his famous quote:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any kind of specialist. I might select-doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and yes-even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocation, and race of his ancestors (Watson,1928,p. 104).

Moreover, by taking a neutral position in their concept of human nature, the behaviourists do not believe in ideas such as universal values or ethics that can be common to all humanity. On the contrary, they believe that every individual is a product of the culture, norms and customs in which he has been brought up. Badri (1996), in giving his comments on the behaviourist concept of human nature says:

Man's nature, if he can have any nature at all, is fully determined by his environment as though he were a feather or a dry leaf on a windy day. So, man's nature is neutral; a tabula rasa, His values are simply a product of his culture, and since every part of the world has its unique culture, then values and morals must be relative and there is no place in the behaviouristic conception for any fixed moral commandment or global ethical consciousness (pp.162-163).

Besides Watson, B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) who is one of the most influential experimental psychologists in behaviourism also believed that only science could enable man to understand the truth about nature and also on human nature. By giving science the top priority, he advocated that the empirical study of human behaviour will be the most appropriate way to arrive at the true theory on human nature (Stevenson, 1987).By giving preference to the scientific study of man over other earlier methods in the investigation of man, the behaviourists introduced three revolutionary principles to the field of psychology. Firstly, they believed that the content of psychology should be the observable behaviour of man, and not the consciousness. Secondly, the method applied in the study of man should be objective rather than introspective. Thirdly, the

concern of psychology should be 'prediction and control of behaviour' rather than engage in the investigation of the mental events (Hunt, 1994).

Being inclined in introducing and applying scientific approach in psychology, the behaviourists came to the assumption that any human behaviour can be studied by taking man to the laboratory for observation and experimentation. Furthermore, they also generalized results obtained from experiments and studies conducted on animals on human beings. The reason for this is because, like Freud, Watson too believed that man is similar to the animals. The quote below reveals Watson (1970)'s concept on human nature:

Attempts to do one thing- to apply experimental study of man the same kind of procedure and the same language of description that many research men had found useful for so many years in the study of animals lower than man. We believe then, as we believe now, that man is an animal different from other animals only in the types of behaviour he displays (p.ix).

In conducting experiments on man in the laboratories, Watson called his colleagues in the behaviourist school of psychology to treat man no more than an animal. The following quote, similar to the one above, describes man as not more than an animal:

The raw fact is that you, as a psychologist, if you are to remain scientific, must describe the behaviour of man in no other terms than those you would use in describing the behaviour of the ox you slaughter... (Watson, 1970, p. ix).

With the general assumption that the behaviours of animals and men are basically the outcome of learning experiences, they put great emphasis on the classical and operant conditionings in producing any desired behavioural change. Moreover, the behaviourists believe that all human behaviours can merely be explained in terms of stimulus- response reactions. In behaviourism, all of man's stimuli come from the environment and nothing comes from man's inner self.

As behaviourists do not believe that man's innate knowledge and other hidden potentials existing within him during birth can emerge and manifest in later part of his life, they take a neutral stand with regards to the question: whether man is good or bad in his nature. Their neutrality states that man is neither intrinsically good nor bad. Therefore, all human behaviours either good or bad are acquired via the learning process within the environment in which he lives. To them man learns through the normal learning process, as well as through the indirect social learning that takes place in the social milieu of a society. As such, they give much emphasis to the concepts of stimulus-response, reinforcement, reward and punishment, which are considered as important factors of the learning theories.

With regards to man's good mental health that describes the state of being free from stress and anxiety, Watson believes that man's attitude for feeling different and acting superior to the rest of the creations, causes problems to man. A vivid portrayal of what is described by Watson that causes problems to man has been explained in the quotation below:

Human beings do not want to class themselves with other animals. They are willing to admit that they are animals but 'something else in addition'. It is this 'something else' that causes the trouble. In this 'something else' is bound up everything that is classed as religion, the hereafter, morals, love of children, parents, country, and the like (1970,p.ix).

By over-emphasising learning as a key to changes in human lives, behaviourists believe that man is able to conceptualize ideas, and control his own behaviour. Furthermore, man has the tendency to influence others and likewise be influenced by others (George & Cristiani: 1990).

## **Man in Humanistic Psychology**

Humanistic psychology, which came to exist after psychoanalysis and behaviourism, has often been called the 'Third Force' in Western psychology. Much of its existence and establishment has been inspired by the principles found in the existential and phenomenology philosophies that emphasized much on the 'here and now' in the human life. It got its name from the basic belief that every individual has basic goodness, and his or her needs have to be respected. By this outlook on man, it came with a kinder or compassionate concept of human nature compared to psychoanalysis and behaviourism (Mohd Abbas, 1997).

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 main icons of humanistic psychology were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. This school of psychology has propelled much with the ideas of these two personalities. 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 (Misiak & Sexton, 1973, p. 115).

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. In his response to what has been conceptualized by Freud on man, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) refuted by saying:

It is as if Freud supplied to us only the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half. Perhaps this healthy psychology will give us more possibilities for controlling and improving our lives and for making ourselves better people. Perhaps this will be more fruitful than asking 'how to get unsick' (Maslow, 1968, p. 5).

One among the many concerns of humanistic psychology is to highlight the many positive aspects of human nature that have been overlooked by earlier schools of psychology. They paid much attention and emphasized strongly on the aspects 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 own intention and purpose in life and also able to undergo spiritual experience, otherwise called as 'peak experience' in one's life.

Even though humanistic psychologists emphasized a great deal on the above unique potentials of man, they did not fail to acknowledge the existence of the unconscious and irrational motives as elements of human nature. To them what was more important than the unconscious and irrational motives are the conscious planning and rational choice made by man in his life. Furthermore humanistic psychologists believed and emphasized that each person is unique due to his learning and personal experience. According to them, the uniqueness of an individual should draw the attention of that person to discover who he is, and to find out what

sort of a person he wants to be. Only through such an effort one can fully develop his potential as a self-directing human being (Morris, 1990).

The humanistic concept of human nature is very different from the psychoanalysis and behaviourist schools of psychology. Humanistic psychologists are against the ideas previously conceptualized by the earlier schools of psychology. They disagreed with concepts that man is irrational, un-socialized and self-destructive as believed by the psychoanalysts. Also, they disagreed with ideas that man is merely a mechanical being that reacts to the stimulus that comes from the environment as assumed by the behaviourists. On the contrary, humanistic psychologists present a very optimistic and positive concept of human nature. They believe that man is good intrinsically and can guide, regulate and control himself towards a 'fully-functioning person' and towards his 'self-actualization'. In order to understand further the humanistic concept on human nature one has to venture through their basic assumptions in psychology. The following will be their major assumptions in psychology:

- 1) Man is good by nature. His egoistic and aggressive natures are symptoms of mental illness, which he develops due to disappointment, frustration and due to his denial as a human being striving towards personal growth and self-actualization.
- 2) Man is different from all other creatures. Man's abilities and tendencies supersede that of animals, and in many ways animals cannot do the things man does. He also has the capacity to think and execute things according to his plans. The process of planning in man is a conscious intellectual process based on his tendency to recall what happened in the past, to perceive what happens at the present, and hope for what is about to happen in the future. Another unique characteristic of man which is not present in animals is that, he is capable of creating, developing and also of recording and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the other.
- 3) Human beings grow and progress in life. Man continuously grows and advances in life for better progress and improvements in life to attain self-actualization.
- 4) Every individual is a potential person to experience his or her life. Individual or personal experience in life is a unique experience in every human being. The 'here and now' in man's life is more important than interpreting the past hidden experiences and feelings that lurk from the unconscious part of the human psyche.
- 5) All psychological data pertaining to the study of man's behaviour, personality, motivation, etc. should be collected from people who are psychologically well and also from those who experience life in a happy and pleasant way, and not from people who suffer from psycho-pathological illness (Langgulung, 1995a, pp.6-7; 1981, pp.131-132).

### **Islamic Psychology**

In spite of their laborious effort and sophistication in using multiple approaches, Western psychologists even at the present age, have yet to come out triumphantly with a comprehensive explanation on what is the true nature of man. This situation in the Western mainstream psychology has caught the attention of many Muslim scholars to respond to this problem by offering the Islamic ideas on human nature and personality development. Among the many, Badri (1979, 1996, 2000), Langgulung (1981,1983,1995a,1995b), 'Uthman Najati (1979 &1985), Mohamed Yasein (1998) and Haque (1998, 2004a,2004b,2009) wrote quite extensively on Islamic psychology and have given their comments as to why Western psychology was not fully successful in finding solutions to the many psychological problems faced by man. According to these Muslim scholars, the obvious reason as to why the West is failing in many of its effort to resolve the human psychological problems is due to its neglect in paying attention to the issue on the existence of the human soul. They further assert that the neglect to understand the human soul, which should have been the paramount concern in the study of psychology, has caused much confusion and controversy in the field of modern psychology. They are of the

opinion too, that this prevalent situation in the Western psychology warrants the introduction of the Islamic psychology in solving the many enigmas in the understanding of man. 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. Muslim scholars like Al-Kindi (801-873) Al-Farabi (870-950), Ibn Sina (980-1037), Ibn Bajjah (1095-1138), Al-Ghazali (1043-1111), Ibnu Maskawaih (932-1030), Al-Mawardi (972-1058), Ibnu Thufail (1105-1185, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) bear great significance for their contribution to the understanding on the study of man.

The resurgence of Islamic psychology which started some two decades ago, is seen as an initiative to introduce Islamic ideas on man to the existing notion on man found in the Western psychology. Its approach which is mainly philosophical in nature, goes back to the ideas of man mentioned in the two primary sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. 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 Western psychological thoughts on man and clears the mist that surrounds most Western theories on man (Husain, 1996). In comparison to Western psychology, Islamic psychology recognizes the dual nature of man: one who possesses a physical body, which is obvious, and a soul, which is a non-material entity that lives within one's body. The human soul though not observable through any empirical study is yet indestructible, and upon death of an individual, it leaves the body to live on in a new dimension of life (Rahman, 1951, Qadir, 1991).

### **Man in Islamic Psychology**

The Islamic concept of human nature is a comprehensive and all encompassing one. According to the Islamic concept, among all creations in the heaven and earth, only man stands on the highest pinnacle to be called as the best creation of Allah the Almighty. It has been mentioned in the Qur'an that God has created man in the most beautiful and excellent manner: "*We have indeed created man in the best of moulds*" (*Al-Qur'an, al-Tin: 4*; Ali, 1989). This exalted position and stature makes man superior to angels and other luminous creations like the sun, moon, stars, etc. The greatness of man has been further explained in the following verse:

*We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours above a great part of our creation (Al-Qur'an, Al-Isrā':70; Ali, 1989).*

Having achieved a noble position in the sight of Allah does not guarantee man to be in that position forever. As explained in *Sūrah al-Tin*, verse: 5, man will fall from the honoured position given by Allah when he transgresses the limits set by Allah. As such, achieving the honour or disgrace in the sight of Allah, is a choice left to man to decide. Apart from being the best creation, man in the Holy Qur'an has been addressed as the *Khalīfatullāh fī al-Ard* (Allah's vicegerent on earth). This esteemed position was conferred to man in spite of the protest and remonstrance that came from the angels on the eve of his creation. The exact dialogue that took place between Allah and the angels explains clearly the angels' reason for protest, as can be well understood from the following verse of *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*:

*Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?-whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (names)?" He said: "I know what ye know not" (Al-Baqarah: 30; Ali, 1989).*

The exegesis on the above verse explains that the angels foresaw some negative attitudes of man, while Allah, the All Wise saw many of the positive things that man is capable of performing on earth. As such, Allah granted man with many gifts that will enable him to carry out his duties well as being Allah's vicegerent. Among the gifts that man acquired from Allah were, authority, freedom of action, intelligence, etc. In giving his comments on how man should use these God given gifts, Afzalur Rahman (1988) explains:

He was to be totally independent and autonomous in his sphere of work on the earth and would be well-equipped with knowledge so that he could discover the secrets of the Universe through study, research and experience, learn to explain the forces of nature for his benefit, and gain mastery over them according to his own requirements and plan (Vol. 6, p.1).

The title *Khalīfah* places man in an honoured position to be Allah's deputy; administrator; representative, etc. on earth. His position as Allah's *Khalīfah* gives him power and authority to rule, manage and preserve the earth. Al-Maududi, in his commentary of the Holy Qur'an, explains that man's status as the *Khalīfah* (pl. *Khalā'if* and *Khulafā'*) of Allah does not make him the master of the universe, but only as a deputy who is allowed to exercise the delegated powers given to him by Allah the all Supreme. He further expounds that the office to vicegerency can be used by man in two ways: to either abuse the power and authority for the spread of evil and injustice or to use them for things that are good for humanity (Al-Maududi, 1992).

In Islam, man is born with the *Fitrah* (primordial nature). *Al-Fitrah* in the Arabic language renders several different meanings that reveal the many positive and interesting dimensions of human nature. One meaning to the word *Al-Fitrah* explains that man comes to this world without any stain of sin. This Islamic concept of *Al-Fitrah* rejects the doctrine of the "Original Sin" as espoused in Christianity. The other meaning of *Al-Fitrah* as stated in the Holy Qur'an explains that naturally man has been born as a believer in Allah the Almighty (*Al-Qur'an, Al-Rūm: 30*).

Further exploration into the topic of man in the Holy Qur'an reveals that he has a dual nature; body and spirit (*Rūh*). The Holy Qur'an explains that after creating Adam (P.B.U.H.), Allah breathed into him His spirit: "Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay form mud moulded into shape; "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him" (*Al-Qur'an, Al-Hijr: 28-29*; Ali, 1989). As such, all human beings who are the progeny of Adam (P.B.U.H.) are made up of two elements; the physical body, which represents clay, is mortal, and the *Rūh*, or the spirit, which is immortal that leaves the body upon death of an individual.

Man, who has been made the most honoured creation of Allah, is also entrusted with the *Amānah* (trust) from Allah; "We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it- he was indeed unjust and foolish" (*Al-Qur'an, Al-Ahqāb: 72*; Ali, 1989). The word *Amānah* in the Holy Qur'an has very many diverse meanings. *Amānah* can be referred to reason, intellect or the faculty of volition (Asad, 1980). The other aspects of *Amānah* also mean the power and authority given to man through the office of vicegerency. Last but not the least, *Amānah* could also mean the sum total of all the decrees, commands (*Amr*) and prohibitions (*Nahy*) present in the *Sharī'ah* (Rahman, 1988).

Another aspect of man, which is contained within the Islamic concept of human nature, is that, man has been given the *Mīthāq* (covenant). Through this covenant, humanity as a whole has accepted Allah to be their Lord and Cherisher while they were in the form of spirits in ' *Ālam Al-*

*Arwāh* (in the realm of the spirits). This contract between man and his Lord has been made long before he was born into this world. The Holy Qur'an explains about this contract in *Sūrah Al-A'rāf*:

*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 Judgement: 'Of this we were never mindful' (Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'rāf: 172; Ali, 1989).*

According to Afzalur Rahman (1988), through this covenant, Allah has imbued in the heart of every human being the knowledge that He is Allah the One and the Only Lord that deserves to be worshipped. The content of this covenant is retained in the subconscious mind of man as potentiality that can be brought to consciousness. Factors like type of education, social environment, etc. could never totally efface or tarnish the covenant, but the least they could do is to pervert and prevent the covenant from coming to the conscious part of the human being. In addition to this, Rahman also believes that in spite of the perversion and prevention caused by wrong education and negative social influences, the covenant as a potential lays embedded in the subconscious mind of man and it will emerge to reality in response to the positive external factors. Some of these factors that have always invited and called humanity to the remembrance of the covenant were the prophets, heavenly Books, inviters to the Truth from among the followers of the prophets, good social environment, proper and correct education, etc.(Rahman,1988)

Man being the vicegerent of Allah was also elevated in his stature and position when he was taught *Al-Asmā'* (attributes of Allah/ the beautiful names of Allah) by God Almighty Himself. The reference to this, man as the recipient of 'the names' has been stated in the following verse:

*And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: "Tell Me the names of these if ye are right." They said: Glory to Three: of knowledge we have none, save what Thou has taught us: in truth it is Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom" (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah: 31-32; Ali, 1989).*

As a result of Allah teaching *Al-Asmā'* to Adam, Adam and his progeny are able to achieve the status of being the most knowledgeable of all creations in the heavens and earth. Muslim scholars differ in their opinion with regards to the exact meaning of *Al-Asmā'* mentioned in *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*, verse 31. In giving his comment on the view of early Muslim scholars on *Al-Asmā'*, this is what Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1989) says:

The names of things: "according to commentators means the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The particular qualities of feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by Allah into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the office of vicegerent (Note no. 48, p.24).

According to Langgulong (1986), *Al-Asmā'* mentioned in verse 31 of *Al-Baqarah* refers to *Al-Asmā' Al-Husnā* (the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah) mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He further expounds that these beautiful names represent the attributes of Allah given to man as potentials that need to be developed and actualized in the life of an individual Muslim. By doing so, the individual will be able to fulfill and perform his duties and obligations that will turn out to be '*Ibādah* (acts of worship done in seeking the good pleasure of Allah)(Langgulong,1986).

Whatever the meaning deduced from the word *Al-Asmā'*, one fact that is clearly related to human nature is that man has been exalted in his potential and knowledge compared to what has been given to the angels. With regards to the knowledge given to the angels and man, Zafar Afaq Ansari's opinion reflects the point that *Al-Asmā'* means an immense and unlimited potential of

knowledge. He further asserts that the knowledge given to the angels is limited and specific, while man is bestowed not only with knowledge but also the capacity to generate new knowledge (Ansari, 1992).

Another thing that needs to be highlighted here is the statement made by the angels in Al-Baqarah 2:31. This verse reveals the humble acceptance of the angels of their limited knowledge compared to that equipped and possessed by man. It also reveals that their protest and undermining of man's strength and potentials on the eve of his creation were mistaken. Moreover, man compared to the angels, has the freedom of choice to react and respond to the many of the biological, psychological and sociological (environmental) demands of his mundane life. In his choice, man can be either good or evil; a righteous or a perverted transgressor towards what has been instructed in the Qur'an. This has been stated in the Qur'an: "We showed him the way; whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)" (*Al-Insān* 76: 3) (Ali, 1989). A similar statement on the freedom of choice has also been mentioned in Surah Balad 90:8-10; "Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and shown him the two highways (of good and evil)" (Ali, 1989). Besides man, the other creation of Allah which is a 'rational' being and enjoys the freedom of choice is the *jinn* (genie). However, the freedom enjoyed by the *jinn* is limited compared to man (Mir, 1987, Mohd Abbas, 1997).

The final aspect of man in Islam is that, he is forgetful. In the holy Qur'an one can read the forgetful nature of man in the story of Adam (pbuh). As the father of humanity, he ate the fruit of the forbidden tree together with his companion Hawwa (pbuh) while he was in the garden of paradise. This incident has been mentioned in *Surah Tāhā* 20: 115, "We had already, before hand, taken the covenant of Adam, but he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve" (Ali, 1989). This nature of being forgetful is a trait that has been inherited by Adam's progeny. In concluding the preceding discussion on human nature from the Islamic perspective, it can be said that man shares some of his basic characteristics with animals and he also inherits some attributes found in the angels and also some of Allah's attributes. Man in his desire for food, sex, anger, greed and rivalry etc. resembles the animals. While being interested in singing the praises of God and in performing other meritorious acts of devotion he resembles the angels, and finally in showing love, care, kindness, sympathy, empathy and etc. man emulates some of the godly attributes of God Almighty. The laxity on the part of man in developing and in actualizing the angelic and godly attributes in him, make him go steep and deep in his animal nature. Due to this, he becomes a perverted transgressor and goes beyond all limits set by Allah in the Qur'an. On the contrary, when man develops and actualizes the angelic and godly attributes he becomes an angelic as well as a godly individual who qualifies himself or herself in gaining Allah's good pleasure. It has been envisioned in the Qur'an and Hadith that such an individual will taste happiness in this world and an everlasting felicity in the hereafter (Mohd Abbas, 1997).

## Conclusion

Though the three schools of Western psychology have contributed their portion in explaining the nature of man, the views provided by these schools were not able to explain comprehensively on the condition of man before he came to exist in this world and on what happens to him upon completing this worldly life. The Freudian and behaviourist schools of psychology equated man to the level of animals. These two schools are heavily influenced by the Darwinian concept of man. Humanist psychology's concept of man is though closer to the Islamic concept; it still cannot provide the explanation from where man got his state of being good, and also what happen to man upon death. One thing common shared by all the schools are that they are



founded on the Western atheistic, secular, materialistic philosophy of life that does not have any affiliation with religious ideas on man. Contrastively, Islamic psychology based on the religion of Islam has given a concept on man, which is diametrically opposed to what has been conceived, by the Western schools of psychology. It presented a concept of human nature, which is comprehensive and all encompassing; describing that man has physical, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions. The last mentioned dimension, is a thing missing in almost all Western schools of psychology. Islamic psychology highlights the many interesting facts about man that he is the best creation of Allah, born with the *Fiṭrah* (primordial nature). He has a dual nature; body and spirit, he is the *Khalīfah* of Allah (God's vicegerent), he is the recipient of the *Amānah* (trust), *Mithāq* (covenant), etc. With these concepts, Islamic psychology elucidates the condition of man before his birth, his life on this world and also on what happens to him after death.

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