

“ISLAMIC PERSONALITY and CHARACTER IN TODAY’S TROUBLED WORLD”

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات، وبفضله تنزل
الخيرات والبركات، وبتوفيقه تتحقق المقاصد والغايات، وأزكى
صلوات الله وتسليماته على سيدنا وحبينا محمد المبعوث رحمة
للعالمين وداعيا إلى الله بإذنه وسراجا منيرا وعلي آله وصحبه
أجمعين ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين. سبحانك لا علم لنا
إلا ما علمتنا إنك أنت العليم الحكيم ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله
العلي العظيم. أما بعد.

1.INTRODUCTION: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY TODAY’S TROUBLED WORLD?

The world of 21st century has been undergoing serious problems ever since it entered the year 2000 C.E. beginning with the imposition of US hegemonic control on the world, the totally unjustified invasion in the Middle East and Afghanistan; global economic and financial crisis; the environmental crisis as a result of unprecedented climate emergency; and currently it is ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Muslim world too has not only been suffering and bleeding from internal crises due to the emergence of Muslim extremism and radicalism; widening economic disparities between the rich and the poor; intense sectarian and

ethnic hostilities and polarisation; civil wars and proxy wars; and forced migration. The pandemic is causing more economic hardships and disruptions on millions of people in Muslim countries, while the Muslim political elite and power holders perpetuate the entrenched widespread culture of corruption, political hypocrisy and mismanagement in governance and national development. From the Qur'anic perspective, the root causes of many of these crises are moral and spiritual diseases ensuing from human failures and systemic defects which require paradigmatic shifts and transformation.

In today's troubled world, we are worried about what's going on in the minds and behaviour of many Muslim youth and the younger generation. In some Western countries as well as in Muslim-majority countries, there are reports about Muslims becoming atheists, skeptics, blasphemous, and "ex-Muslims" who are willing to lose their Islamic identity. Increasing mental psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, fear, self-injury, and temptations to be self-destructive (alias to commit suicide) are also on the rise as a consequence of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The increasing popularity of LGBTQ lifestyle and discourse on feminism How to deal with Muslims with LGBTQ tendencies, preferences, attitudes have become global issues. There is a greater need for Muslim parents and educationists to understand the complex psycho-social phenomenon and find the correct approaches or strategies to deal with Muslims who are inclined to LGBTQ lifestyle and mindsets as well as the issue of feminism, gender dystrophy problems which come from social media inducements, propaganda and Muslim intellectual discourse in the West.

With regard to the ongoing public health menace, it is obvious that the destructive pandemic has precipitated serious economic hardships on millions of many people, with higher costs of living and greater unemployment. New and more pockets of poverty and suffering have emerged in Muslim countries including Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt and Nigeria while the millions of already impoverished Syrians, Yemenis and Palestinians are struggling for survival. The Muslim minority communities in Mindanao, Kampuchea, Myanmar and Kashmir are also suffering from the new ravages and disruptions. These are reasons for us to be worried and concerned because as Muslims and Mu'mins, their problems are our problems just as their pain is also our pain. Under these depressing circumstances, Muslim leaders, elites and professionals will have to work together to plan for producing more Islamic personalities who have the knowledge and the skills, including entrepreneurial skills and resilience, to face the socio-economic challenges and come up with new innovative and creative socio-economic solutions. As for the ongoing intra-Muslim disunity, division, rivalry, enmity, Islamic da`wah leaders and scholars have to continue finding ways and means to unite the Muslims or reconcile the political differences among Muslims as is the case in Malaysia, Indonesia, Patani, and the Middle East.

The relationship between non-Muslim groups, parties and communities with the Muslim communities in plural societies such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Nigeria and others, remains a key factor of national harmony, stability and prosperity. As responsible community leaders, Muslim scholars and intelligentsia have to explore new ways of improving the relationship from the Muslim side to bring to an end the ethnic, religious or political polarization or divide. In Asia and Southeast

Asia, we are now witnessing the growing power of Communist China already flexing its muscle in Xinxiang and in the South China Sea, the rising tide of extremist Hindu islamophobia in a more fundamentalist India, and the Asian-wide Christian evangelical drive together with the material and moral support of the Zionist Christian organisations in America. The anti-Islamic sentiments, policies and belligerence of Communist China and India are the new challenges that the Muslim communities in Southeast Asia have to reckon with. Be that as it may, we believe that if we are guided by the Qur'anic wisdom which urges Muslims not to be motivated by hatred, pride or jealousy in inter-human relationship, but to relate to the non-believers with praiseworthy conduct, forgiveness, kindness and forbearance, the local non-Muslim communities may decide to relate to their Muslim neighbours in more friendly, generous and respectful ways. After all, we have many examples of such friendly and peace-loving inter-ethnic relationships in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Kampuchea and Southern Thailand.

2.UNDERSTANDING THE ISLAMIC PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

With the above global and local scenarios of current realities, worries and anxieties, my paper shall focus on the importance and urgency of Muslim communities – in Muslim majority or Muslim-minority countries – giving more attention to the development of a new generation of Muslims who are equipped with the Islamic spiritual, moral, intellectual and social values and skills that would make them effective **problem-solvers** to the societal crises and a really humanitarian and altruistic force which is truly appreciated and welcomed by the non-Muslim neighbours or communitiues. With the presence of such a group of mainstream Muslims and their peaceful and problem-solving actions, the negative

stereotypes, demonisations and misperceptions that non-Muslim communities and media have been attaching to Islam and the Muslims would hopefully fade away and a new image of Muslims as representing *Rahmatan li'l-`Alamin* shall prevail.

2.1. Aspects Of Islamic Identity, Personality And Character according to Two Muslim Scholars.

I would like to begin by sharing the scholarly views of two Muslim psychologists about Islamic personality types. In an important recent publication on “Souls Assorted: An Islamic theory of Spiritual Personality”, Dr. Zohair Abdul-Rahman and Dr. Nazir Khan (associated with Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, in USA) observe:

the concept of spiritual personality [demonstrate] that Islam has the breadth necessary for anyone to feel included within its mission. Spiritual personality refers to a person’s natural disposition that influences what aspects of Islamic practice, belief, and virtues naturally appeal to them. With a better awareness of this diversity, we hope that the Muslim community begins to create space for people of diverse interests, talents, and strengths to thrive and grow. We explore the concept of personality in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition as well as attempt to construct a model of spiritual personality. A preliminary typology of four spiritual personality orientations is proposed at the end.

On what is personality from a psychological perspective, the two scholars explain as such:

'Personality' is a construct used to account for the variance among people in their behavior, affect, and cognition.² Essentially, it is a construct used to understand why people feel, behave, and think about the world differently. The academic field of *personality psychology* has "never been in better health than at the present time," with integration of data from neuroscience and genetics, and a variety of tools to measure major traits like extraversion versus introversion.³ Perhaps the most famous personality test is the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI), which is based on the conceptual theory of archetypes developed by Carl Jung. The personality theory most commonly used in psychology research is the Big Five model which examines openness to experience, **conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism** (a convenient mnemonic is the acronym OCEAN). Recently, a landmark study found empirical evidence for the type theory by analyzing data from the Big-5 model.⁴ **They discovered four meaningful patterns of distribution across the 5 personality trait dimensions.**

They say that it is very important that we know our personality:

Sound knowledge of one's personality is indispensable. It has been said, "A genius in the wrong position could look like a fool."⁵ There is scarcely a job interview that does not require one to know their strengths and weaknesses. One of the fascinating aspects of the Prophet Muhammad's leadership is that he always

selected people for opportunities that were most suited to their natural talents and skills. Some personalities have the strength to endure the grimmest challenges, some have the creativity to find novel solutions, some have the tenderness to console someone in distress, and so on. These differences we observe are not random variations but result from our innate personalities.

They explain that the way we prefer to deal with the problems in our life and society is determined by our personality which is a set of dispositions and tendencies that characterize our way or style of interacting with ourselves, the world, and others:

Our personality represents our preferred method in dealing with the world. Frustration and anxiety often manifest when a person acts contrary to their preferred methods. This is commonly seen, for instance, when a person's job does not align with their personality strengths, resulting in job dissatisfaction.⁶ People who are high in creativity, for example, often feel shackled in jobs that are highly structured, repetitive, and resistant to change. Conversely, someone who is high in conscientiousness may thrive in such an environment.

The two scholars refer to some relevant hadiths and verses of the Qur'an point to the fact that different individuals have different dispositions or endowments: Personality in the Qur'an and Sunnah:

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ described personality differences as being rooted in the creation process of Adam:

Indeed Allah Most High created Adam from a handful that He took from all of the earth. So the children of Adam come in according with the earth, some of them come red, and white and black, and between that, and the lenient, the hard-headed, the filthy, and the pure.⁷

This *hadith* is profoundly comprehensive, referencing the fundamental components of the human being. It informs us of the interesting connection between the qualities of the earth and the qualities of the human being. The first category of attributes mentioned deals with the physical body, specifically skin color. The second category of attributes deals with personality, particularly on the dimension of agreeableness. The final category, according to the *hadith* commentator Mulla Ali al-Qari (d. 1014 AH), speaks to the akhlāq (character) of the human being in reference to spiritual purity and impurity.⁸ Altogether, the *hadith* references body, mind, and spirit.

The Qur'an also alludes to personality in a few places. For instance, the Qur'an states, ***“Everyone behaves according to their nature (shākil) [in a manner peculiar to himself/according to his rule of conduct], and your Lord knows who is the best guided way”*** (17:84). Imam al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH) mentions in his commentary that the early scholar Mujahid

said *shākil* means a person's nature (*ṭabee'ah*). He also quotes al-Farā' who said it refers to a person's way of being that he has been born upon.⁹

In a very intriguing narration about the human soul, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "The souls are like troops collected together, those that are familiar incline to each other, and those that are dissimilar are repelled."¹⁰ Badr ad-Deen al-'Ayni (d. 855 AH) mentions that the analogy means that human beings are one creation but are of different categories based on their traits (*sifāt*), just like an army is made up of different divisions, battalions, and squads that have their own distinguishing features.¹¹ Thus, there seems to be a subtle reference here to the diversity of human personality....

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 AH) describes a variety of views in the Islamic tradition regarding the meaning of souls inclining towards each other.¹² For instance, al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH) explains that souls differ by various features and those that share similar features are naturally drawn towards other members of the same category. Abu Suleyman al-Khattabi (d. 388 AH) notes that this could be due to the souls having met prior to life in this world, or it could be that their similar natures draw them together....

Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 AH) derives very valuable social advice from this narration, "One of the benefits of this narration is that if an individual finds something in his heart against a good and righteous person, he should

search for the cause of it,¹³ seeking to cease the ill-feeling.”¹⁴ On the other hand, it is also possible that we harbor ill-feelings not due to any fault of the other person, but just because of personality differences. Recognizing and being aware of these differences can help purify our hearts from ill feelings toward others.

The Prophet Muhammad’s companions paid attention to personality similarities and differences in their observations. One of the most explicit narrations comes from the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, Aisha, who made the following comments about the similarity between the Prophet ﷺ and his daughter Fatimah.

The two scholars show that there are several terminologies used in a particular hadith which describes the personality of Fatimah (r.a.) as being of the same character as her beloved Father, Muhammad (S.A.W.).

[W]hen describing whom he thought most closely resembled the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Hudhayfah used the same descriptors regarding personality. Hudhayfah said, “I have never seen anyone more similar to the Messenger of Allah in characteristics (*dallan*), disposition (*samtan*), and mode of conduct (*hadyan*) than Ibn Ummi ‘Abd (i.e., Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud).”¹⁶ These three terms are all considered to be similar in meaning and emphasize personality traits in interacting with people as well as some moral and spiritual traits (such as reverence/*khushu'* and

humility/*tawadu'*).¹⁷ The distinction between such categories of traits is examined in the subsequent section.

Explaining the subtle difference between personality types and character traits, Dr Abdul Rahman and Dr Khan say:

Contrary to personality, which is generally stable and value-neutral, character (*akhlāq*) is value-laden and can be changed. Our character refers to moral traits, qualities such as humility, sincerity, patience, gratitude or arrogance, hypocrisy, impulsivity, and ingratitude. Developing positive character traits is a task that we have been given by Allah and one for which we will be compensated according to our effort. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “I was sent to perfect good character (*akhlāq*).”¹⁸

It is known that Allah does not give an individual a responsibility that they cannot fulfill as explained in the Qur'an, “Allah does not place a burden on anyone more than they can bear” (2:285). Thus, our character, unlike our fundamental personality traits, can be changed according to whether we actively seek to develop it or choose to neglect it. Having said that, a person's personality can render certain *akhlāq* qualities easier or harder to obtain. For instance a person who is low in neuroticism (a personality trait) may find it easier to be optimistic (an *akhlāq* trait) compared to someone higher in neuroticism, who may be prone to pessimism.¹⁹ Furthermore, someone who is more

introverted may find introspection (*murāqaba*) easier while an extroverted person may find it easier to strengthen relationships with family (*silat ar-rahim*) or host guests with grace (*takreem ad-dhuyooof*).

The distinction and connection between personality and character is described in the story of Ashajj, of the tribe of ‘Abd Qays. When a delegation from his tribe traveled to Madinah, they raced to greet the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as soon as they arrived. However, Ashajj stayed behind, knelt his camel, and changed into a fresh pair of garments before going to meet the Prophet. The Prophet Muhammad said to Ashajj, “You have two characteristics which Allah loves: forbearance (*hilm*) and deliberation (*anāh*).” Ashajj asked, “Have I acquired them or was I born with them?” The Prophet replied, “Rather it is something you were born with.” Ashajj then said, “Praise be to Allah who created me with those very qualities which He loves.”²⁰

The narration describes forbearance and deliberation, roughly correlating to the ‘Big Five’ traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness, as being created as part of his innate personality.

Learning from the rich tradition of Islam and the Sunnah, Dr Abdul Rahman and Dr Khan analyse the psychological lessons which can be extrapolated from the Prophetic wisdom of utilising different personality types and characters for different purposes:

These personality traits facilitated the virtue he was able to demonstrate that was described as being loved by Allah. These included not causing any harm or

inconvenience to the others or the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by not participating in the initial race towards him. It also included taking the time to show extra care and respect to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by changing his garments and meeting him in a calm manner. The two scholars say that they have been able to construct an Islamic model of personality psychology based on the concepts of *nafs* (self), *hawa* (desires), *aql* (intellect), *ruh* (soul), *qalb* (heart), *lubb* (mind), *baseera* (insight), and *shakal* (predisposition). They say that although there is no specific term used in the Qur'an to describe the psychological construct of 'personality,' the concept ... exists in both the Qur'an and Sunnah. They explain that the first appearance of personality discussions in early Islam comes from the Muslim philosophers who were greatly influenced by Hellenistic philosophy.²²

Therefore, the terms that were used to discuss personality were mere translations of the terms used by the Greeks. Ishaq bin Hunayn translated Aristotle's treatise 'On the soul' into Arabic (known as *Kitāb an-Nafs*). Al-Farabi (d. 339 AH) wrote a commentary on this work and Ibn Rushd (d. 595 AH) later summarized it. *Nafs* (self), *dimāgh* (mindset), *shakhṣiyya* (personality), *tabee'atu nafs al-insanee* (nature of the Human Self) are all terms that have been used by Muslim scholars to talk about human personality.²³

One example of a classical scholar who discussed concepts in psychology utilizing Greek terms is Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) who described disease as

manifesting spiritually, psychologically, and physically.....Ibn Taymiyyah saw parallels between Islamic conceptions of psychology with Greek views as demonstrated by the connection between Melancholia and the disease of *waswās*.²⁵ Muslim scholars routinely engaged with contemporary sciences of psychology, medicine, and natural philosophy, critically analyzing the opinions in the Hellenistic traditions. Similarly, in our times, Muslim scholars must engage with the modern body of empirical research in the field of psychology to advance the study of spiritual psychology upon the edifices constructed by our predecessors.

Dr Abdul Rahman and Dr Khan distinguish the Western approach from the Islamic scholars' approach in the following way:

Modern psychology and personality theories are generally focused more on description rather than prescription. This means that they are focused on attempting to construct an objective view of how the mind works without subsequently explaining how it is relevant to the flourishing and growth of the human being. Some thinkers attempt to take these models and derive psychotherapeutic methods and approaches to attain meaning and/or happiness.

In contrast, the Islamic paradigm is considerably more focused on prescription rather than description. The Qur'an presents a system of guidance that is meant to transform an individual through their relationship with Allah. "This is the book, in which there is no doubt, guidance for those conscious of God" (Qur'an 2:2).

Thus, the Islamic tradition is concerned with how our personalities can be utilized to strengthen this relationship and ultimately grow as individuals. If it does describe the structure of the human psyche, it is more interested in describing spiritual elements and functions of our personality. *The purpose of knowledge is to act, and the purpose of knowing the self is to act in its best interests.*

It was Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) who explained people had different spiritual tendencies:

From amongst people, some find knowledge easier than zuhd, some find zuhd easier than ‘ilm, and some find ibādah easier than both of them. What is prescribed (mashroo’) is that everyone acts according to what they are capable of goodness based on the verse “Have taqwa of Allah as much as you are able” (64:16). So when the branches of faith become crowded, a person proceeds with what is most pleasing to God by acting according to what he is most capable.²⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to explain that what becomes the most virtuous action for a person is whatever comes more readily to him and provides the greatest benefit to his faith, even if that action might not be intrinsically better than other actions. For instance, a person who finds voluntary prayers at night onerous might benefit far more from engaging in more recitation and contemplation of the Qur’an, or more *dhikr* (remembrance), and these actions may be considered more virtuous for this individual. As a corollary, no one can belittle the good deeds of others,

since only Allah knows which of them are most valuable and most virtuous for which person. Moreover, Ibn al-Qayyim discussed the concept of spiritual stations (maqamat) in his work Madarij al-Salikeen and notes that while these are frequently presented in a chronological sequence by many authors, one person may pursue the stations of love, contentment, and tranquility at the beginning of one's spiritual journey while for someone else those stations may only be fully actualized at the end of the spiritual journey.²⁷

Indeed, even the structure of the cosmos bears witness to the plurality of spiritual personalities. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ informed us, "Paradise has eight gates, and one of them is called Ar-Rayyan through which none will enter but those who observe fasting."²⁸ Each gate relates to a different virtue, and whoever increases in the deeds of a certain gate becomes from the people called to enter it.²⁹ Thus, different people may have propensities for different types of virtue and will, therefore, enter Paradise from different routes...

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 AH) writes:

The path to Allah is one path, inclusive of all that which pleases Allah, and WHAT PLEASES HIM IS NUMEROUS AND DIVERSIFIED ACCORDING TO TIMES, PLACES, PEOPLE, AND SITUATIONS. All of these are Divinely pleasing paths, which God made numerous out of His Mercy and Wisdom for the differences of people in their dispositions (isti'dādāt) and their hearts (qulūb). And had God made them all one

category despite the differences in people's minds (adhhān), intellects (`uqū), and strengths and weaknesses of their dispositions, none would traverse the path to Him except [a few individuals,] one by one.³⁰

Ibn al-Qayyim then describes how this may manifest differently depending on one's spiritual personality. He says, "there are people whose chief action and path through which they worship Allah is the path of knowledge and learning." Such people may spend all their time in this pursuit, exhausting all of their resources and time in the thirst for knowledge of God. On the other hand, there are those "whose chief action is *dhikr*" and "whenever they find themselves lacking in it, they feel cheated and in loss." Still others may strive towards God with voluntary prayers, others with alleviating the afflictions and calamities that beset people, others with enjoining good and forbidding wrong, others with fasting or reading Qur'an. Others focus on spiritual introspection (*murāqabah*), examining their internal thoughts (*khawāṭir*), and preserving their time from being wasted. And some are able to combine multiple categories.³¹

Imam Malik was once asked why he was busy in circles of knowledge and not other aspects of Islam. He replied by explaining the diversity of spiritual personalities, "***Certainly, Allah has divided good actions like he has divided His providence (rizq). It may be that prayer has been facilitated for a person, but fasting hasn't. Another person may have a tendency***

for charity but not fasting... And I am happy with what Allah has facilitated for me (the pursuit of knowledge). I don't think what I am focused on is lower than what you are focused on. Rather, I hope that we are both upon goodness and righteousness."³²

It is clear from the study of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) that people naturally differ in what their spirituality drives them towards. Dr Abdul Rahman and Dr Khan elaborate:

The greatest example of the concept of spiritual personality is seen through the generation of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The companions were not homogenous in the way they served Islam. There were those who were focused on knowledge, such as Abu Hurairah, Mu'adh bin Jabal, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, and Abdullah ibn Abbas. Then there were those who were known for their bravery and courage, such as Khalid ibn al-Walid, Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah, and Zubayr ibn al-Awwam. There were those known for their intense devotion in praying and fasting, such as Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas, who also combined the virtue of narrating *hadith*. Hassan ibn Thaabit, on the other hand, was artistic and used his poetry to defend the honor of Islam. Uthman ibn Affan was particularly known for his modesty and shyness and Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq was known for his loyalty to, and companionship (*suhba*) with, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. *All of these companions and many more served Islam based on what was facilitated for them from their spiritual personality.*

The two scholars have been able to develop a very important typology of Islamic spiritual personality types in the following way:

2.2. A typology of spiritual personality

Hitherto, we have described two spiritual personality dimensions that capture variation in approach to knowledge (experience vs. judgment) and behavior (action vs. restraint). A human being goes forth into the world acquiring knowledge through experience and through rational judgments. This knowledge forms a representation of the world that provides the individual with an understanding of how to behave. The individual constantly makes decisions on whether they should initiate an action or exercise restraint when encountering daily situations.

In constructing a complete typology of spiritual personality, we should first note the relative merits of the two main contemporary approaches to personality, namely the trait approach and the type approach.⁷⁷ Personality traits refer to a spectrum with a normal distribution.⁷⁸ This means that for any given trait, the majority of people are in the middle of the spectrum, with a minority being at the extremes. On the other hand, the type model assumes that there is a bimodal distribution. This means that the majority of people congregate to the extremes with a minority in the middle. Thus, the type model is only concerned with direction on the spectrum rather than with placement.

The trait model provides useful statistical models,⁷⁹ but the type model provides a better conceptual model to

understand people. The type model allows the formation of distinct personality types that incorporate an archetypal pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior. People are categorized into distinct types and learn about the archetypal form of their personality traits. The trait model cannot be organized into distinct types but provides an exact placement on the spectrum. Therefore, the trait model provides a higher resolution representation of an individual's personality, containing more information.⁸⁰

The 16-personality website⁸¹ incorporates both the trait and type model into their theory. This allows people to see their personality traits on each spectrum and to learn about the archetypal pattern of personality most closely associated with their results. No model can capture the full complexity of each individual person. Personality types are like maps. Although they do not capture the full reality of the actual landscape, they provide a useful representation that can provide guidance for a person.

With this in mind, we propose an initial spiritual personality typology of 4 archetypal patterns. Within each spiritual personality dimension, a person may preferentially utilize one over the other. For instance, regarding acquiring knowledge they may utilize their experience more than relying on judgment. Regarding behavior, some may prefer to exercise caution rather than initiate an action. The more a person uses one over the other, the more developed that function becomes in fortifying the individual's faith. Everyone has a choice

on how to process the world (Knowledge Type) and how to act on it (Behavior Type). The combination of their preferences in each domain yields the following four spiritual personality types.⁸² The names have been constructed according to what best captures the essential theme of the spiritual personality type being described.

Hand of Power - When a person combines *Judgment* with *Action*, their spiritual passion for positive action merges with judgment to produce a practical solution-focused approach to doing good in the world, attempting to maximize benefit for those around them.

Example. Ali Ibn Abi Talib is a clear example of this category, known for his incredible passion in serving the truth and performing unmatched feats of virtue (risking his life during an assassination attempt on the Prophet, performing the *hijrah* on foot, his bravery during the Battle of al-Khandaq and his heroism during Khaybar, etc). When the *fitnah* (tribulation) occurred after the death of `Uthman, the approach of Ali was to act pragmatically to take the reins of leadership to bring stability and unity to the *ummah*. According to Ali, “Opportunity passes as quickly as clouds, so make use of opportunities for good.”⁸³

Voice of Justice - When *Judgment* merges with *Restraint*, this results in judgment concerning evils. This personality type is powerfully motivated to eradicate injustice, immorality, and falsehood. This is

the personality that best typifies the Prophetic saying, “The most virtuous struggle is a true word spoken in the face of a tyrant.”⁸⁴

Example. Umar ibn al-Khattab is the obvious example of this category. His relentless commitment to eradicating evil and opposing injustice has been noted by all who have studied his life. He announced his Islam openly in front of the Quraysh chieftains, condemned transgressions, and denounced those who perpetrated them in the strongest of terms. His justice was manifest in his swift retribution punishing the son of a governor who abused a Christian peasant in Egypt, and asking his father, “When did you enslave people when their mothers bore them free?”⁸⁵ As harsh as he was on those who did wrong, he was always harsher on himself,⁸⁶ and this in turn led him to soften on others.⁸⁷

Heart of Inspiration - A person who approaches knowledge with *Experience* combined with the behavior of *Action* possesses incredible vision, seeing the path that humanity must collectively tread in the pursuit of virtue and a better future. These are the visionaries the *ummah* needs as its guides and source of continued wisdom, compassion, and support.⁸⁸

Example. The prime example of this category is Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq. Without hesitation he was the first man to accept Islam, immediately seeing it for the truth that it was. One of the most remarkable aspects of who he was is the role he played in bringing so many of the other leading companions to embrace the

faith and the intense amount of striving for good he exemplified.⁸⁹ His experiential insight revealed to him meanings that were not readily apparent to others; when the Prophet announced that a slave was given a choice between this world and that which is with Allah and had chosen the latter, only Abu Bakr understood that the Prophet was announcing that he would soon pass away. Abu Bakr was a pillar of support for Muslims in the most calamitous moment the *ummah* experienced, namely the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, offering the powerful words that showed his insight: “Whoever worshipped Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad has died. And whoever worshipped Allah, then verily Allah is Ever Living, and shall never die.”⁹⁰

Eye of Vigilance - This spirituality type unites the caution of *Restraint* with the vision and foresight of *Experiential* knowledge, resulting in unparalleled awareness of the dangers and threats to true faith and worrisome trends in society. There is a focus on heeding warnings, escaping evil, and reflecting on the end-times and the afterlife.⁹¹

Example. The example of Uthman ibn Affan shines clearly in this category. He was not the most outspoken companion but rather was a tremendously reflective soul, contemplating the afterlife and punishment in the grave. It is narrated that when he stood over a grave, he would weep until his beard became wet.⁹² He worried about the negative consequences of seemingly mundane

actions.⁹³ His concern for preventing Muslims from differing about the Qur’anic text lead to his commissioning of Zaid ibn Thabit to compile the *mushaf*.⁹⁴ He paid tremendous attention to the prophecies of the end-times and, when the rebels surrounded his home, he warned them of the internecine violence it would lead to, and he forbade anyone to shed blood in his defense. In one of his famous sermons, Uthman said, “O people fear Allah, for fear of Allah is a great treasure. The smartest of people is the one who checks himself and strives for that which comes after death, and gains from the light of Allah light to illuminate his grave.”⁹⁵

The aforementioned categories are summarized in **Table 1**. The entire typology has been diagrammatically summarized in **Figure 1**.

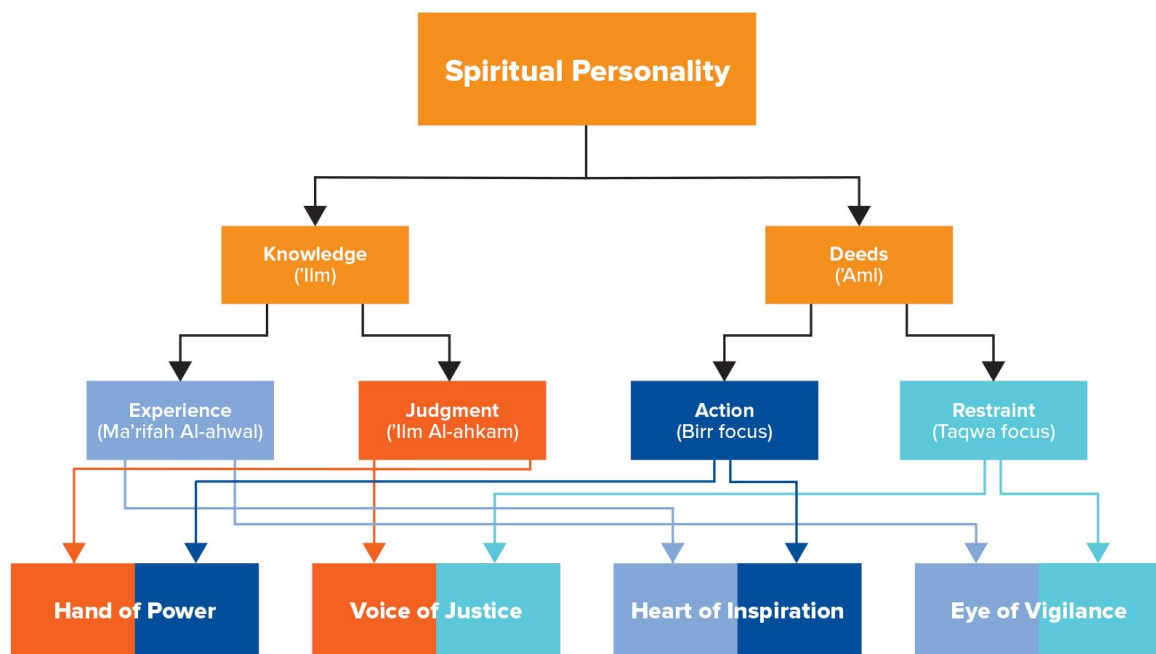


Figure 1. Spiritual personality typology. Every person’s spirituality is comprised of knowledge (*‘ilm*) and deeds (*‘aml*). Their primary approach to knowledge may either

be through experience of states or practical knowledge of rulings that aid in judging right from wrong. Their primary approach to deeds may either be focused on performing acts of virtue (*birr*) or restraining from evil (*taqwa*). Depending on which approach to knowledge is combined with which approach to deeds, a person acquires one of four possible combinations, each representing a distinct spiritual personality type— Hand of power, Voice of justice, Heart of inspiration, and Eye of vigilance.

Table 1. Spiritual personality types. Four fundamental spiritual personality types are conceptualized here by juxtaposing their approach to knowledge (experience versus judgment) and approach to action (action versus restraint).

There are some important potential sources of misunderstanding that it is necessary to clarify with respect to spiritual personality. First, there is a difference between religiosity and spiritual personality. Just as different colors may be indistinguishable in the dark, one's spiritual personality type may remain latent in the absence of strong religious practice. The more one increases in religiosity, the more they may discover elements of their spiritual personality of which they were previously unaware.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, these different categories of spiritual personality describe *dominant tendencies*; they do not confine a person's spiritual expression. Thus, it would be wrong to presume that

someone who exhibits the Hand of Power orientation is unconcerned with justice, or that the Heart of Inspiration does not see negative consequences. These spiritual personalities only describe what is the foremost tendency or greatest focus of one's passions. They may translate into a proclivity for different concrete actions, but righteousness includes all these actions and there is no reason why a person of one category can't excel in virtues typically dominant in other categories.

Thirdly, one may ask whether it is not possible for there to be more spiritual personality types; why limit it to four? Of course, each of these four could have many subcategories and further differentiation and variation, however given that it is constructed upon two psychologically evident and Islamically manifest conceptual spectrums (experience vs. judgment and action vs. restraint), which are both subsumed within the basic spiritual instincts in Islamic thought (knowledge and deeds), this categorization is conceptually fundamental. Moreover, its conceptual correlation with the psychological traits of the Big Five lends this classification an empirical basis for being considered fundamental as well.

Fourthly, one may ask whether one can change their spiritual personality. The answer is that one may acquire virtues of other categories but it requires expending somewhat greater effort or having unique life experiences since those virtues would otherwise not come as easily. One would surmise however that

the only human being who maximized and perfected the virtue of every single category, mastering them all with equal brilliance, was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who thus transcends any categorization.

I share also the conclusion of their well-researched study as follows:

It is especially important in our times to recognize the diversity that Allah has created in our spiritual personalities that manifest in our different approaches to the practice of Islam. We live in a world where many young Muslims are unable to experience a strong sense of belonging with the Muslim community because they find it so foreign to their natural orientation. When a person enters the community they may find themselves shamed for not being involved enough in a political movement or not learning enough about abstract theological issues. They may be shown a picture of a practicing Muslim that is focused on cultural dress codes and accessories. This can alienate our youth who find it impossible to express themselves and their own passions without fear of being judged negatively. Instead, we should recognize that practicing Islam beyond the obligations can be as diverse as life itself. These personalities should be utilized where they are best suited, allowing individual talents to flourish as they channel their passions for the sake of the Muslim community.

Reflecting on the tendencies of each spiritual personality type proposed can provide a Muslim with

greater self-knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. It can also build tolerance and acceptance of different approaches to Islamic practice. Everyone has a role to play based on their spiritual personality.

Say: Everyone will act according to their nature, and your Lord knows best who is rightly guided (Qur'an 17:84). (Zohair Abdul-Rahman, Nazir Khan, "Souls Assorted: An Islamic Theory of Spiritual Personality" from <https://yaqeeninstitute.org> › read › paper › souls-assorte...18 Oct 2018)

3. STRENGTHENING, EMPOWERING AND UPGRADING THE QUALITIES OF BELIEVERS (AL-MU'MINŪN, ALLADHĪNA ĀMANŪ) AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FORMATION OF PROBLEM-SOLVERS.

From the publication of Dr Zohair Abdul-Rahman and Dr Zahir Khan, we learn about the diversity of Islamic spiritual personalities and the existence of at least four basic personality types using the four *al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn* (the Rightly Guided Caliphs) as the archetypes. The two psychological experts have also developed a scientific test by which one can find out one's personality type. It is a useful instrument to be used for selecting the right kind of personality types for certain specific tasks in times of emergency or crisis.

When we look into the Qur'an and the Hadiths, we find that Allah SWT has made it His will and plan that the true Believers -- not mere Muslims -- become the principal agents and instruments for societal and civilisational change (*taghyīr*), transformation (*taḥwīl, taḥawwul*), evolution (*taṭawwur*) or revolution (*thaurah*). This is because, once a human being or a slave of Allah SWT

becomes a true Believer, he or she acquires a set of highly desirable inner qualities, moral habits and social attributes which Allah SWT has prescribed. Once the group of those Believers becomes a praiseworthy Community of Believers (*Ummah al-Mu'minīn*) with exemplary leadership, Allah SWT declares the Community as “the Best Community brought forth for mankind” (Q. 3: 110) in order to perform the responsibility of “*al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'n-nahy 'an al-munkar*”.

With a higher level of excellence, the *Ummah* is then designated by Allah SWT as the Most Just, Most Excellent, Most Balanced Community (*Ummatan Wasaṭan*) to become Witnesses (*shuhadā'*) for mankind as a whole as far as justice, moral-ethical excellence, goodness, equilibrium, and commitment to all the Allah-prescribed responsibilities and tasks of human leadership are concerned. It is therefore not surprising to know from the different verses of the Qur'an that Allah SWT instils peace of mind (*inzāl al-sakīnah*) on the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions, declares His support (*taufīq*) to the Believers, gives authority in the land (*istikhlāf*) to the people who possess faith and *taqwā*, extends protection (*ināyah*) to His creatures, cause change for the better or positive alteration (*tabdīl*), makes His religion well established (*tamkīn*), offers help (*naṣr*) or victory (*fath*) to the Believers in times of crisis. In the following verse we are told that Allah SWT is with (*ma'iyyah*) the Believers although they might be facing serious challenges in carrying out their religious mission.

إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ ۖ وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدَّ ۚ وَلَنْ نُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ
فِتْنَتَكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ ۚ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(Tell the unbelievers:) 'If you have sought a judgement, then surely a judgement has come to you. And if you desist from disobedience, it is all the

better for you. But if you revert to your mischief, We will again chastise you; and your host, howsoever numerous, will never be of any avail to you. Know well, Allah is with the Believers.[emphasis mine] (Q. 8: 19).

In another verse, Allah SWT says: (Q. 16: 97)

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Whosoever acts righteously - whether a man or a woman - and embraces belief, We will surely grant him a good life; and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds [emphasis mine] (Q.16: 97).

Abu'l A`la Mawdudi explains the above verse as follows:

This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say: This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world. And this is a fact that those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings enjoy a much better life in this world. For they enjoy that confidence and real honor and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding success as are denied to those who employ

dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in poor houses, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces. (Mawdudi (2016), *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

The true Believers need not be unduly worried in facing serious challenges in their lives because Allah SWT regards it as incumbent upon Him to provide assistance (*naṣr*) and deliverance (*najāh*) to the Believers in the following two verses:

وَ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاذْتَفَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا ۗ
وَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

We sent Messengers before you to their respective nations, and they brought Clear Signs to them. Then We took vengeance upon those who acted wickedly. It was incumbent on Us to come to the aid of the Believers[emphasis mine] (Q. 30: 47).

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ ۗ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Then, (when Allah's wrath falls upon the wicked) We save our Messengers and also those who believe. It is incumbent on Us to deliver the Believers [emphasis mine] (Q. 10: 103).

We are informed by the Prophet (SAW) that a true Believer is a servant of Allah with wonderful and amazing qualities. The Prophet said:

وعن أبي يحيى صهيب بن سنان رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "عجبا لأمر المؤمن إن أمره كله له خير، وليس ذلك لأحد إلا للمؤمن : إن أصابته سراء شكر فكان خيراً له، وإن أصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيراً له" ((رواه مسلم))

Abu Yahya Suhaib bin Sinan (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him".

([Hadith narrated by Muslim] from *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Chapter on Patience and Perseverance)

The other qualities that make the true Believers exceptional servants of Allah SWT are described in the following verses:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ۗ إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا ۖ يُضْعَفُ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا ۗ

The true servants of the Merciful One are those⁷⁸ who walk on the earth gently⁷⁹ and when the foolish ones address them, they simply say: "Peace to you";⁸⁰ (Q. 25:63) who spend the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing;⁸¹ (25:64) who entreat: "Our Lord! Ward off from us the chastisement of Hell, for its chastisement is one that clings. (25:65) Verily it is a wretched abode and restingplace."⁸² (25:66) (The true servants of the Merciful One are) those who are

neither extravagant nor niggardly in their spending but keep the golden mean between the two;⁸³ (25:67) who invoke no other deity along with Allah, nor take any life - which Allah has forbidden - save justly; who do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse⁸⁴ - and whoso does that shall meet its penalty; (25:68) his torment shall be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection,⁸⁵ and he will abide in it in ignominy - (25:69)

The commentary given by Abu'l A`la Mawdudi are as follows:

78. That is, though all human beings are by birth the servants of the Merciful before Whom you have been invited to prostrate yourselves, and which you disdain, his true servants are those who adopt the way of His obedience consciously and develop such desirable characteristics. Then the natural consequences of the prostration are those found in the lives of the believers and the evil results of rejecting the invitation, those found in your lives. Here attention is being drawn to the two patterns of character and life. First of those who had accepted the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and were following it, and the second of those who persisted in the ways of ignorance. Here only the prominent characteristics of the true believers have been cited, and for contrast, the characteristics of the disbelievers have been left to every discerning eye and mind which could see them all around in the society and make its own decision.

79. That is; they do not walk haughtily and arrogantly like the tyrants and mischief-makers, but their gait is of a gentle, right thinking and good natured person. Walking humbly does not mean walking like a weak or sick person, nor does it imply the gait of a hypocrite who walks ostentatiously to show humility or fear of

God. According to traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself used to walk with firm, quick steps. One day Caliph Umar saw a young man walking slowly like a weak, sick person, and asked him: Are you ill? When the man replied in the negative, the Caliph raised his whip, rebuked him and told him to walk like a healthy man. This shows that the humble gait is the natural gait of a noble and gentle person and not a gait which shows weakness and undue humility.

In this connection, the first characteristic of the true servants of Allah to which attention has been drawn, is their gait. This is because the gait indicates the character of an individual. If a man walks in a humble and dignified way, as opposed to a haughty, vain and proud manner, it shows that he is a noble and gentle person. Thus the different gaits of different types of people show what sort of characters they possess. The verse means to imply that the true servants of the Merciful can be easily recognized by their gait among the people. Their attitude of Allah's worship and obedience has changed them so thoroughly that it can be seen at first sight from their gate that they are noble, humble and good natured people, who cannot be expected to indulge in any mischief. For further explanation, see (E.N.43 of Surah Bani Israil) and (E.N 33 of Surah Luqman).

80. Rude and insolent people and not uneducated and illiterate ones. The true servants of the Merciful do not believe in vengeance, even though they may have to deal with the ignorant people who behave rudely and insolently towards them. If they happen to come across such people, they wish them peace and turn away. The same thing has been expressed in (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 55), thus: And when they hear something vain and

absurd they turn away from it, saying, our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you, peace be to you, we have nothing to do with the ignorant. For details see (E.Ns 72 to 78 of Surah Al-Qasas).

81. That is, they neither spend their nights in fun and merry making nor in gossips and telling tales, nor in doing wicked deeds, for these are the ways of the ignorant people. The true servants of Allah pass their nights in worshipping and remembering Him as much as they can. This characteristic of theirs has been brought out clearly at several places in the Quran, thus: Their backs forsake their beds and they invoke their Lord in fear and in hope. (Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 16). These people (of Paradise) slept but little at night, and prayed for their forgiveness in the hours of the morning. (Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayats 17, 18). And: Can the end of the one, who is obedient to Allah, prostrates himself and stands before Him during the hours of the night, fears the Hereafter and places his hope in the mercy of his Lord, be like that of a *mushrik*. (Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 9).

82. That is, their worship has not made them vain and proud to presume that they are the beloved ones of Allah and that the Fire of Hell will not touch them. On the other hand, in spite of all their worship and good deeds, they are so filled with the fear of the torment of Hell that they pray to their Lord to save them from it, for they do not depend upon their own work for success in the Hereafter but upon the mercy of Allah.

83. The true servants of Allah adopt the golden mean between the two extremes in spending their money. They neither go beyond prudence and necessity in expenditure nor live in wretched circumstances in

order to save and hoard money but are frugal. This was the characteristic of the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which distinguished them from the well-to-do people of Arabia, who were either spend thrifts in regard to the gratification of their own lusts or niggardly in spending their money on good works.

According to Islam extravagance is: (1) To spend even the smallest amount of money in unlawful ways. (2) To go beyond one's own resources in expenditure even in lawful ways, or to spend money for one's own pleasure. (3) To spend money in righteous ways not for the sake of Allah but for mere show. On the other hand, one is miserly if one does not spend money for his own needs and requirements and those of his family in accordance with his resources and position, or if one does not spend money for good works. The way taught by Islam is the golden mean between the two extremes. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: It is a sign of wisdom to adopt the golden mean in one's living. (Ahmad, Tabarani).

84. The true servants refrain from three great sins: shirk, murder and adultery. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself warned of their gravity. According to Abdullah bin Masud, when someone asked him about the worst sins, he replied, (1) It is to set up someone as equal in rank with Allah, Who has created you. (2) To kill your own child for fear of its sustenance. (3) To commit adultery with the wife of your neighbor. (Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nasai, Ahmad). Obviously this is not a complete list of the heinous sins. But these three instances have been cited because they were most prevalent in the Arab society of those days.

It is most assuring to the true Believers and a great tiding to them to be told by Allah SWT that they would gain *al-Falāḥ* – true success, gain, wellbeing and happiness – in the form of goodness in this world and in the Hereafter because they possess the following qualities which are spelled out in *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* with the commentary by Abu'l A`la Mawdudi as follows:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

The Believers have indeed attained true success:(Q. 23:1)

1. “Believers”, who have attained true success, are those who have accepted the message of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and have acknowledged him as their guide and followed the way of life taught by him.

This assertion cannot be fully appreciated unless one keeps in view the background in which it was made. On the one hand, there were the well-to-do and prosperous chiefs of Makkah, the opponents of Islam, whose business was thriving and who were enjoying every good thing of life, and on the other hand, there were the followers of Islam, majority of whom were either poor from the beginning, or had been reduced to poverty by ruthless antagonism to Islam. Therefore, the assertion: Most certainly the believers have attained true success, with which the discourse begins, was meant to tell the disbelievers that the criterion of success and failure that they had in mind was not correct. It was based on misconceptions besides being transitory and limited in nature: it led to failure and not true success. On the contrary, the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him), whom they regarded

as failures, were truly successful, because by accepting the invitation to the right guidance given by the Messenger of Allah, they had struck a bargain which would lead them to true success and everlasting bliss in this world as well as in the Hereafter, whereas by rejecting the message the opponents had incurred loss and would meet with the evil consequences both in this world and in the next.

This is the main theme of the Surah and the whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is meant to impress the same.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ۝

those who,² in their Prayers, humble themselves;³(Q.23:2)

2. The noble characteristics of the believers pointed out in ([verses 2-9](#)) are the arguments to prove the above assertion. In other words, it has been stated that people with such and such traits and qualities only can attain true success in this world and in the Hereafter.

3. *Khushi`un* in the text is from *khushu`* (to bow down, to express humility) which is a condition of the heart as well as of the body. *Khushu`* of the heart is to fear and stand in awe of a powerful person and *khushu`* of the body is to bow his head and lower his gaze and voice in his presence. In Salat one is required to show *khushu`* both of the heart and of the body, and this is the essence of the Prayer. It has been reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) once saw a person offering his Prayer as well as playing with his beard, he remarked: If he had *khushu`* in his heart, his body would have manifested it.

Though *khushu`* is actually a condition of the heart, as stated by the above tradition, it is manifested by the body as a matter of course. The *Shariah* has enjoined certain etiquette which, on the one hand, helps produce *khushu`* in the heart, and on the other, helps sustain the physical act of the Prayer in spite of the fluctuating condition of the heart. According to this etiquette, one should neither turn to the right or left, nor raise his head to look up, One may, however, look around from the corner of the eye, but as far as possible, he must fix the gaze on the place where the forehead would rest in prostration. One is also forbidden to shift about, incline sideways, fold the garments or shake off dust from them. It is also forbidden that while going down for prostration, one should clean the place where he would sit or perform prostration. Similarly it is disrespectful that one should stand stuffy erect, recite the verses of the Quran in a loud resounding voice, or sing them, or belch or yawn repeatedly and noisily. It has also not been approved that one should offer the Prayer in a hurry. The injunction is that each article of the Prayer should be performed in perfect peace and tranquility, and unless one article has been completely performed, the next should not be begun. If one feels hurt by something during the Prayer, he may cast it aside by one hand, but moving the hand repeatedly or using both the hands for the purpose is prohibited. Along with this etiquette of the body, it is also important that one should avoid thinking irrelevant things during the Prayer. If thoughts come to the mind without one's intention, it is a natural human weakness, but one should try his utmost that the mind and heart are wholly turned towards Allah, and the mind is in full harmony and tune with the tongue, and as soon as one becomes conscious of irrelevant thoughts, he should immediately turn the attention to the Prayer.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

who avoid whatever is vain and frivolous;⁴(Q. 23:3)

4. Literally, *laghw* is anything nonsensical, meaningless and vain, which is in no way conducive to achieving one's goal and purpose in life. The Believers pay no heed to such useless things, and they show no inclination or interest for them. If by chance they see such things being indulged in, they keep away and avoid them scrupulously, or treat them with utmost indifference. This attitude has been described in (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 72), thus: If they have to pass by what is vain, they pass by like dignified people.

This is indeed one of the outstanding characteristics of the Believer. He is a person who feels the burden of responsibility at all times. He regards the world as a place of test, and the life as the limited time allowed for the test. This feeling makes him behave seriously and responsibly throughout life just like the student who is taking an exam with his whole mind and body and soul absorbed in it. Just as the student knows and feels that each moment of the limited time at his disposal is important and decisive for his future life, and is not inclined to waste it, so the Believer also spends each moment of his life on works which are useful and productive in their ultimate results. So much so that even in matters of recreation and sport, he makes a choice of only those things which prepare him for higher ends in life and do not result in mere wastage of time. For him time is not something to be killed but used profitably and productively.

Besides this, the Believer is a person who possesses a right thinking mind, pure nature and fine taste. He has no inclination to indecent things. He can talk useful and

healthy things but cannot indulge in idle talk. He has a fine taste of humor, but is not given to jesting, joking, ridicule, etc. nor can he endure dirty jokes and fun. For him a society in which the ears are never immune from abusive language, back-biting, slander; lying, dirty songs and indecent talk is a source of torture and agony. A characteristic of the promised Paradise is: Therein you will not hear anything vain or useless.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

who observe Zakah;⁵ (Q. 23:4)

5. The word *Zakah* literally means purification and development, to help something grow up smoothly and develop without obstruction. As an Islamic term, it implies both the portion of wealth taken out for the purpose of purifying the rest of wealth and the act of purification itself. The words of the original text mean that the Believer constantly practices purification. Thus the meaning is not confined to the paying off of *Zakah* dues only but it is extended to self-purification which includes purification of morals as well as wealth, property and life in general. Then it does not mean purification of one's own self, but includes the purification of the lives of other people as well. So the verse means: The Believers are the people who purify themselves as well as others. This thing has also been stated at other places in the Quran, for instance: Successful is he who practiced purification and remembered his Lord and prayed. (Surah Al-Aala, Ayats 14-15). And: Successful is he who purified himself and failure is he who corrupted it. (Surah Ash-Shams, Ayats 9-10). But this verse is more comprehensive in meaning because it stresses the purification of both society and one's own person.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَعْيُنِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

who strictly guard their private parts⁶(Q. 23:5)

6. They are modest in every sense of the word. They are free from sex abuse and sex perversion. They are so modest that they even conceal those parts of their bodies which the law forbids to expose before others. For explanation, see (E.Ns 30 and 32 of Surah An-Noor).

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاحِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ۗ

save from their wives, or those whom their right hands possess; for with regard to them they are free from blame (Q. 23:6)

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ۗ

As for those who seek beyond that, they are transgressors⁷(Q. 23:7)

7. This is a parenthesis which is meant to remove the common misunderstanding that sex desire is an evil thing in itself and satisfying it even in lawful ways is not desirable, particularly for the righteous and godly people. This misunderstanding would have been strengthened, had it been only said that the Believers guard their private parts scrupulously, because it would have implied that they live unmarried lives, away from the world, like monks and hermits. Therefore a parenthesis has been added to say that there is nothing wrong in satisfying the sex desire in lawful ways. What is evil is that one should transgress the prescribed limits for satisfying the sex desire.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ۖ

who are true to their trusts and their covenants,⁸(Q. 23:8)

8. The Believers fulfill the terms of the trusts which are placed in their charge. In this connection it should be noted that the Arabic word *amanah* is very comprehensive and includes all those trusts which are placed in their charge by Allah or society or individuals. Likewise *`ahd* includes all those compacts, pledges, and promises which are made between Allah and man, and man and man. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself used to impress the importance of the fulfillment of pledges in his addresses: **The one, who does not fulfil the terms of his trust, has no faith, and the one, who does not keep promises and pledges has no Islam. (Baihaqi).** According to a tradition reported both by al-Bukhari and Muslim, he said: Four characteristics are such that if a person has all four in him, he is beyond any doubt a hypocrite, and the one who has one of these, is a hypocrite to that extent till he gives it up:

- (a) When something is placed in his trust, he commits breach of the trust.
- (b) When he speaks, he tells a lie.
- (c) When he makes a promise, he breaks it.
- (d) When he has a quarrel with somebody, he exceeds all limits (of decency and morality).

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

***and who guard their Prayers.*⁹(Q. 23:9)**

9. They strictly guard their Prayers: they strictly adhere to the prescribed times of the Prayers: they perform them with due regard for their pre-requisites, conditions and articles with clean body and dress and necessary ablutions: they do not regard their Prayers as an unnecessary burden, which has to be cast off

somehow: they do not recite mechanically but understand what they recite and are conscious that they are supplicating to their Lord like humble servants.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ»

Such are the inheritors (Q. 23: 10)

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

that shall inherit Paradise;¹⁰ and in it they shall abide for ever.¹¹(Q. 23:11)[all emphasis are mine]

11. The substance of this passage may be summed up in four parts for further understanding of the Surah:

(1) The above-mentioned excellent qualities of the Believers are not confined to any race, nation or country.

(2) These excellences can be attained only by sincere faith and excellent moral qualities, and by the observance of prescribed laws in all the aspects of life.

(3) True success is not confined to transitory worldly and material prosperity but it comprises both success in this life and in the life after death in the Hereafter, and is attained by sincere faith and righteous deeds. This is a fundamental principle which cannot be falsified either by the worldly success of the evil-doers or by the temporary failure of the righteous people.

(4) Let us reiterate that these excellent characteristics of the Believers have been presented as a practical proof of the truth of the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for these were the result of its acceptance.

There are two verses in the Qur'an which highlight the deep and profound quality of the faith of the true Believers. It is important that we understand why Allah SWT chooses to focus on those inner qualities of Islamic character. The following verses with Mawdudi's commentary are as follows:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا
وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ۝

The true believers are those who, when Allah's name is mentioned, their hearts quake, and when His verses are recited to them their faith grows,² and who put their trust in their Lord. (Q. 8:2)

1. A man's faith grows as he is able to confirm and submit to the command of God which he comes across. This is especially so where he submits to commands which go against his own personal predilections. A man's faith attains great heights if instead of trying to twist and distort the commands of God and the Prophet (peace be on him), he develops the habit of accepting and submitting to all the commands of God and the Prophet (peace be on him); if he strives to shape his conduct to the teachings which go against his personal opinions and conceptions, which are contrary to his habits, interests and convenience, which are not in consonance with his loyalties and friendships. For if he hesitates to respond positively to God's command, his faith is diminished. One thus learns that faith is not a static, immobile object. Nor is every act of belief, or unbelief, of the same quality. An act of belief may be better or worse than another act of belief. Likewise, an act of unbelief may differ in quality from another act of unbelief. For both belief and unbelief, are capable of growth and decline.

All this concerns the essence of belief and unbelief. However, when belief and unbelief are mentioned as a basis for membership of the Muslim community or in connection with legal rights and responsibilities as necessary corollaries of that membership, a clear line of demarcation has to be drawn between those who believe and those who do not. In this respect the determination of who is a believer and who is not will depend on the basic minimum of belief regardless of quality of belief. In an Islamic society all those who believe will be entitled to the same legal rights and will be required to fulfil the same duties regardless of the differences in the quality of their faith. Likewise, all unbelievers - regardless of the differences in the quality of their unbelief - will be placed in the category of unbelievers disregarding the question whether their unbelief is of an ordinary quality or an extremely serious one.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

Indeed the ones possessed of true faith are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger and then they did not entertain any doubt and strove hard in the Way of Allah with their lives and their possessions. These are the truthful ones. (Q. 49:15)[emphasis mine]

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۚ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

Surely Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their belongings and in return has promised that they shall have Paradise.¹⁰⁶ They fight in the Way of Allah, and slay and are slain. Such is the promise He

has made incumbent upon Himself in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an.¹⁰⁷ Who is more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made with Him. That indeed is the mighty triumph. (Q. 9: 111)

106. In this verse that aspect of the Islamic faith which determines the nature of the relationship between Allah and His servants has been called a transaction. This means that faith is not merely a metaphysical conception but is, in fact, a contract by which the servant sells his life and possessions to Allah and in return for this accepts His promise that He would give him the Garden in the life after death.

We should note it well at the outset that, in reality, this transaction is not in regard to the actual selling of the life and possessions of the servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is in fact the real Owner of man's life and possessions. Allah alone has the right of ownership because He is the Creator of man and of everything he possesses and uses. Therefore there is no question at all of selling and buying in the worldly sense; for man possesses nothing of his own to sell, and Allah has no need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. However, there is one thing which has entirely been entrusted to man by Allah, that is, the freedom of will and the freedom of choice, and the transaction concerns that thing.

Of course, it is true that this freedom does not make any change in the real position of man with regard to the right of ownership to his own life and his possessions. They belong to Allah Who has delegated to him only the authority to use or abuse these things as he wills, without any coercion or compulsion from Him. This

means that man has been given the freedom to acknowledge or not to acknowledge that Allah is the owner of his life and property. The transaction mentioned in Ayat 111 is concerning the voluntary surrender of this freedom to Allah's will. In other words, Allah wills to test man whether he acknowledges the ownership of Allah over his life and property, in spite of that freedom, and considers himself to be their trustee only, or behaves as if he were their owner and so could do whatever he liked with them.

Thus, the terms of this transaction from Allah's side are these: "If you voluntarily, and not by compulsion or coercion, agree to acknowledge that your life, your property and everything in this world, which in fact belong to me, are mine: And if you consider yourself only as their trustees; And if you voluntarily surrender the freedom I have given you to behave; And if you, in a dishonest way do not intend to become their master and owner; Then, I will give you in return, Gardens in the eternal life of the next world". The one who makes this bargain with Allah is a believer, for faith is in fact the other name for making this bargain. On the other hand, the one who refuses to make this bargain, or after making it adopts the attitude of the one who has not made the bargain, is a kafir. For, technically, kufr is the term applied to the refusal to make this bargain.

The following are the implications of making this transaction:

(1) Allah has put man to two very hard tests in this matter. The first is whether he acknowledges the real Owner as owner, in spite of the freedom of choice given to him. Or he refuses this and becomes ungrateful, treacherous and rebellious. The second test is whether

he puts his trust in his God or not. And he surrenders his freedom and sacrifices his desires and wishes in this present world in return for His promise of the Gardens and eternal bliss in the next world. Even though the world were to proclaim, “A bird in hand is worth two in the bush”.

(2) This matter helps to draw a clear line of demarcation between the legal conception of the Islamic faith and the higher and spiritual one according to which Allah will judge one in the Hereafter.

According to its legal conception, the mere verbal profession of the articles of the faith is a sufficient proof that one is legally a Muslim and after this no jurist is authorized to declare such a one to be a disbeliever or to expel one from the fold of the Islamic community, unless there is a definite and clear proof that the one made a false profession of the faith. But this is not so with Allah. Allah considers the faith of only that person to be true, who makes this bargain with Him and sells his freedom of thought and action to Him and gives up his entire claim to ownership in His favor. That is why a man might profess the articles of the faith and observe the prescribed obligatory duties, but if he considered himself alone to be the master and owner of his body and soul, his heart and brain and his other faculties, his property and his resources and other things in his possession, and reserved to himself the right of expending them as he willed, he shall be regarded a disbeliever in the sight of Allah, even though he should be regarded a believer in the sight of the world. This is because such a man has not made that bargain with God which is the essence of the faith according to the Quran. The very fact that a man does not expend his life and property in the way Allah approves of, or expends these

in the way He disapproves, shows that the one who claimed to profess the faith either did not sell these to Allah, or after having made the transaction still regarded himself to be their master and owner.

(3) The above conception of the Islamic faith draws a clear line of demarcation between the attitude of a Muslim and that of a disbeliever towards life. The Muslim, who sincerely believes in Allah, surrenders himself completely to Allah's will, and does nothing whatsoever which may show that he is independent in his attitude, except when he temporarily forgets the terms of the bargain he has made with Him. Likewise no community of the Muslims can collectively adopt an independent attitude in political, cultural, economic, social and international matters and still remain Muslim. And if sometimes it temporarily forgets its subordinate position and its voluntary surrender of its freedom, it will give up the attitude of independence and readopt the attitude of surrender, as soon as it becomes aware of its error. In contrast to this, if one adopts the attitude of independence towards Allah and makes decisions about all the affairs of life in accordance with ones own wishes, whims and caprices, one shall be regarded to have adopted the attitude of disbelief, even though one was a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

(4) It should also be noted well that the will of God to which a man is required to surrender himself is that which is specified by Allah himself and not the one which the man himself declares to be the will of God. For in the latter case one does not follow God's will but one's own will, which is utterly against the terms of the transaction. Only that person (or community) who adopts the attitude that conforms to the teachings of

His Book and His Messenger, shall be deemed to have fulfilled the terms of the transaction.

From the above implications of this transaction, it also becomes clear why the fulfillment of the terms by Allah has been deferred to the next world after the termination of the life of this world. It is obvious that the Garden is not the return for the mere profession that the buyer has sold his life and property to Allah but it is the actual surrender of these things in the worldly life and their disposal by him as a trustee of Allah according to His will. Thus, this transaction will be completed only when the life of the buyer comes to an end in this world and it is proved that after making the bargain, he went on fulfilling the terms of the agreement up to his last breath. For then and there alone, he will be entitled to the recompense in accordance with the terms of the transaction.

It will also be worthwhile to understand the context in which this matter has been placed here. In the preceding passage, there was the mention of those people who failed in the test of their faith and did not make the sacrifice of their time, money, life and interests for the sake of Allah and His Way, in spite of their professions, because of their negligence or lack of sincerity or absolute hypocrisy. Therefore after criticizing the attitudes of different persons and sections, they have been told in clear words the implications of the faith they had accepted: "This is not the mere verbal profession that there is God and He is One, but the acceptance of the fact that He is the Owner and the Master of your lives and possessions. Therefore, if you are not ready and willing to sacrifice these in obedience to the command of Allah, but expend these and your energies and resources against

the will of Allah, it is a clear proof that you were false in your profession of the faith. For, the true believers are those who have truly sold their persons and possessions to Allah, and consider Him to be their Owner and Master, and expend their energies and possessions without any reservations, where He commands them to expend, and do not expend the least of these where He forbids them to expend.

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَبْدُونَ الْحَمْدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَفِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Those who constantly turn to Allah in repentance,¹ who constantly worship Him, who celebrate His praise, who go about the world to serve His cause, who bow down to Him, who prostrate themselves before Him, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits set by Allah. Announce glad tidings to such Believers. (Q. 9: 112) [emphasis mine].

The Believers are distinguished from other types of human beings in one special dimension which the others do not have in their personality, i.e. the love of Allah SWT (*maḥabbah*) above every thing else as is made clear in the following verse :

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ۗ
وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۗ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

Yet there are some who take others as equals to Allah and love them as Allah alone should be loved; but those who (truly) believe, they love Allah more than all else. (Q. 2:165) [emphasis mine]

[Another reference to the subject of MAHABBAH OF ALLAH SWT is in verse 23 of Sūrah al-Taubah (9) which makes it clear that

Believers should love Allah SWT, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the Cause of Allah SWT above everything else].

Abu'l A'la Mawdudi gives the following commentary to the above verse:

[I]t is God alone Who can ask His subjects to acknowledge His sovereignty, to accept His commands as the source of law, to consider Him alone to be the Lord entitled to command men, to consider His commands supreme, and to turn to Him alone for correct guidance. Whoever either ascribes to any being other than God any of the aforementioned attributes or recognizes the claim of anyone save God to be entitled to any of the above-mentioned rights over His creatures is in fact setting up that being as a rival to God, and placing him on the same plane as God. By the same token, any individual or institution claiming to possess any of the exclusive attributes and rights of God (as mentioned above), is in fact claiming a position parallel and equal to that of God even though the claim to godhead may not have been categorically spelled out. True faith [of the Believers] requires that [the Believers] should give absolute priority to seeking God's good pleasure and should hold nothing too dear to sacrifice for the sake of God. (Maududi 2016)

The Believers are given a special privilege by Allah SWT in times of conflict with the enemies of Islam, that He will not open the way to the final success of the enemies when He says “....and never will Allah grant to the Disbelievers a way (of success) against the Believers. (Q. 2: 165). So admirable and praiseworthy are the ways and collective behaviour of the Believers that Allah SWT

recognises the methods of the Believers as “the Way of the Believers” (*sabīl al-mu’minīn*) in the following verse:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

As for him who sets himself against the Messenger and follows a Path other than that of the Believers even after true guidance had become clear to him, We will let him go to the way he has turned to, and We will cast him into Hell - an evil destination. (Q. 4:115) [emphasis mine]

Two of the most important religio-social skills of the Believers as problem solvers in times of crisis such as in the present COVID-19 pandemic, are the ability **a)** to provide psycho-spiritual therapies to people with mental disorders and the ability to **b)** forge good relationships and extend much-needed help to the neighbours, especially non-Muslim neighbours in plural societies.

4.PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL THERAPIES FOR PEOPLE WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

Mental well-being problems are usually caused by big life crises, such as serious or life-threatening illnesses, bereavement, or job-related crises arising from imminent redundancy. We have little or no control over such crises or emergencies, but it is our ways or habits of responding to such critical situations in life that will determine the state of our mental well-being. This is where our level of resilience, that is our ability to cope with adverse circumstances, is crucial. For Muslim youths and adults who are prone to suffer problems of psychological disorder in these

turbulent times, we would advise them to strengthen their level of physical, moral, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual resilience—instead of relying or depending solely upon secularism-based or materialism-based psychological or psychiatric solutions as provided by Western institutions or traditions—but by resorting to the God-given guidelines provided in The Qur’an and the normative traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.).

The symptoms of poor mental well-being -- such as: (i) being unable to concentrate; feeling depressed; (ii) confused for an extended period; (iii) having excessive fears or worries; (iv) undergoing extreme mood changes; (v) struggling with feelings of guilt; (vi) wanting to withdraw from friends and activities; (vii) not having high or normal energy level; (viii) wanting to cause self-harm or self-injury; (ix) having problems going to sleep not because of insomnia; and, worst of all, (x) entertaining or feeling like wanting to commit suicide -- could be triggered or brought about by any or a combination of several factors such as: (i) unemployment or losing one’s job; (ii) grave illness or death of someone dear; (iii) childhood abuse, neglect, or past trauma; (iv) loneliness or social isolation or forced separation from the family; (v) experience of discrimination, injustice, oppression, subjugation or stigma; (vi) severe or long-term stress; (vii) homelessness, poor living conditions or unhealthy social environment; and (viii) struggling with conditions of deprivation, poverty or heavy financial debt.

4.1.Cases of Mental- Psychological Disorders In Public Universities

It is worrying that that some Malaysian public universities are experiencing more cases of depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, LGBTQ trends, suicidal tendencies, addiction to pornography, substance abuse and drug-addiction, self-harm, atheistic or agnostic

thinking, secularistic dualistic behaviour, paranoia, xenophobia, and racial prejudices, among the students and some staff.

Our problem solvers should impart to the affected persons the conviction that Allah S.W.T. loves to save His servants who have transgressed His limits:

﴿قُلْ لِيَعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (Q. 39:53)

They need to be gentle, not hard or harsh, in dealing with people having symptoms of psychological disorder. Remember how Allah S.W.T. reminds the Prophet (s.a.w.):

﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

Only through the Divine Mercy have you (O Muhammad) been able to deal with your followers so gently. If you had been stern and hard-hearted, they would all have deserted you a long time ago. Forgive them and ask God to forgive (their sins) and consult with them in certain matters. But, when you reach a decision, trust God. God loves those who trust Him. (Q. 3: 159)

They must share The Qur'anic and Sunnatic principle that Allah S.W.T. loves gentleness:

عن أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ وَيُعْطِي عَلَى الرَّفْقِ مَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى الْعُنْفِ

Abu Hurairah reported:

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Verily, Allah is gentle and He loves gentleness. He grants reward for gentleness what is not given for harshness.”

To the Muslim youth and adults, including students and staff, who may be experiencing some problems of mental well-being, the present COVID-19 pandemic provides the best justification for them to find the right and lasting solutions to their problems of psychological trauma or spiritual illness – which are manifesting in poor state of mental well-being – from what the Islamic paradigm of psycho-spiritual well-being can offer (Hooman Keshavarzi 2018). As for the cures or remedies of specific psychological or mental well-being problems or ailments, the Islamic spiritual approach as embodied in the tradition of *taṣawwuf* (science of Islamic spirituality or Sufism) has developed a variety of psycho-spiritual preventive and therapeutic treatments, ranging from the simplest to the most complex remedies.

Bearing in mind that Islamic spirituality should not be undermined, weakened, corrupted or destroyed by spiritual-moral “diseases” (*amrād*), insinuations of the Devil/Satan (*Shaiṭān*) and the delusions of fleeting pleasures of worldly life (*ghurūr al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*), our problem solvers should understand and be able to recognise symptoms of the diseases of the heart including hypocrisy, insincerity, arrogance, pride, self-conceit, greed, miserliness, jealousy, rancour, envy, ostentation, craving for popularity, status and public praise, love of wealth, and love of worldly pleasures. Many of these diseases (or reprehensible character traits) are the deep-rooted causes of ethical, social, economic, political and environmental injustices, evils, vices and crises in contemporary societies and civilisations.

Islamic scholars of spiritual sciences consider it a religious responsibility of every individual to cleanse the spiritual heart

(*tazkiyat al-nafs*) of those afore-mentioned diseases or ailments by cultivating the spiritual virtues as well as the spiritual needs of knowing the One True God (*ma'rifat Allah*), and practising true repentance (*taubah*), internalising the values of God-consciousness (*taqwā*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), justice (*'adl*), abstinence (*zuhd*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), gratitude to Allah (*shukr*), spiritual intimacy with God (*uns*), love of God (*maḥabbatu'LLāh*), spiritual contentment (*qanā'ah*), self-examination (*muḥāsabah*), contemplation (*tafakkur*) and remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), of death and the Hereafter. In this connection the Believers learn from the Prophetic *Sunnah* and the writings of well-known Islamic spiritual scholars such as al-Ghazālī (d.1111) how to control the bad influence of the carnal soul (*nafs*) or base desires (sing. *hawā*) in their hearts by means of “struggling to control the desires” (*jihād al-nafs*), overcoming the dangers and traps of worldly temptations (*matā' al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) and recognising the continuous whisperings, evil suggestions (*waswasah, hamazāt*) and footsteps (*khuṭuwāt*) of Satanic forces (see al-Ghazālī 2007).

The duty of cleaning and purifying the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) is a fundamental religious duty of every adult Muslim. It involves a constant inner spiritual struggle of the self to overcome the ailments in the heart, with constant acts of seeking forgiveness from Allah S.W.T., true repentance to Him, and remembrance of Allah S.W.T. amidst the distractions of the *dunyā*. The aim is to liberate oneself from the downward pull of the “evil-inciting soul” (*al-nafs al-ammārah*), to be at least at the level of the “blaming soul” (*al-nafs al-lawwāmah*), and eventually – with divine assistance – attain the level of the “the tranquil soul” or “the soul at rest” (*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*) (*The Qur'an, al-Fajr* 89:27-28). In this vital inner struggle, the intellect or reason (*'aql*) of the Believer

has to play the positive role of strengthening, supporting and protecting the *qalb* from Satanic insinuations and misleading empirically or rationally acquired knowledge or information. The *'aql* of the Believer, according to The Qur'an, is not a separate or independent entity as understood in secular cultures: it is in fact the cognitive function of the *qalb* which is not supposed to be disconnected from the foundation of Tauhidic faith. As such the *'aql* of a Believer is naturally illuminated and guided by the light of Divine Truth and is nourished by Divine Wisdom so that its divinely-connected reasoning, contemplation or logical thinking would provide the much-needed solutions to many problems in human life—solutions which do not contradict revealed truths or Divine values and norms, as is the case in contemporary secular humanistic civilisation. It is for this reason that the Qur'an exhorts human beings to use their reason, intellect and rational observation not only to appreciate the teachings of Islam but also to understand the mysteries in Allah's creation and the universe. Islam also elevates the position of God-fearing scholars (*'ulamā'*) and "people who possess sound reason" (*Ulu'l-Albāb*) because they use the cognitive function of their spiritual hearts in the proper way as enjoined by the Creator.

One of the five principal objectives of the *Shari'ah* with regard to maintenance of mental well-being is the *hifz* (preservation, the protection and the sustainability) of the sound *'aql*. With sound reason being grounded upon true *īmān* and *taqwā*, the human mind knows and remembers its Compassionate Master and operates in accordance with the will of the Master, like the the mind of the true scholars (*'ulamā'* with *khasyah* – awe and fear – of Allah's wrath and displeasure (*The Qur'an, Fāṭir* 35:28) and the God-oriented mind of true Believers and the *Ulu'l-Albāb* (*The Qur'an, Āl 'Imrān* 3:190-194). However, under the steady influence

and dominance of secular education and culture, secularised media and ICT, and secularised science and technology of contemporary secular humanistic civilisation, the *‘aql* and thinking of many Muslim students, academics, scholars, professionals, economists, politicians and national leaders have been uprooted from the anchor of *īmān* and *taqwā* and freed from Divine Guidance.

The Muslim *‘aql* then becomes a creature, which transgresses all divine and religious limits on human freedom. It is transformed into an independent source of relativistic or speculative knowledge, and serves as an instrument of intellectual arrogance, ostentation, oppression, dehumanisation, injustice, agnosticism, cynicism, nihilism and relativism—these being some of the root causes of contemporary problems of depression, anxiety, despair, Islamophobia and meaninglessness among the younger generation of Muslims.

Under these circumstances, the *‘aql* becomes impervious to the Divine Light of wisdom and enlightenment, and the *qalb* in which the cognitive rational faculty resides becomes hardened. At this stage the *qalb* then deserves to be “sealed” as Allah S.W.T. says: *“their hearts were stamped so they do not understand/comprehend”* (The Qur’an, al-Taubah 9:87; al-Munāfiqūn 63:3) and *“Allah stamped their hearts so they do not know (have knowledge)”* (al-Taubah 9:93).

4. 2. Knowing The External Force of Satanic Influences

Now we come to a very important matter related to the inner spiritual struggle of human beings to reach the goal of *al-falāḥ* or comprehensive and holistic well-being, which is rarely discussed in mainstream intellectual discourses or mainstream human development modules; i.e. the disruptive and deviationist role of

an unseen “Perpetual Virus” (like the Coronavirus) in human life, culture and civilisation coming from highly conniving and persistent but invisible Forces of Evil, which have the ability to do, among other things, the following:

- (a) Camouflage or disguise what is *munkar* as *ma’rūf*, failure as success, falsehood (*bāṭil*) as truth (*ḥaqq*), vice (*radhīlah*) as virtue (*faḍīlah*), misery as blessing, poison as honey, or divine wrath as divine pleasure;
- (b) Convert the less educated Muslim masses or confused Muslim youth, students or young professionals to believe in polytheistic supernatural forces, or to become followers of hedonism, nihilism, relativism, post-modernism, neo-liberalism or neo-atheism;
- (c) Lead Muslim traditional rulers, political leaders (including Prime ministers, Ministers, and Members of Parliament), policy makers, business and industry players, senior civil servants, law enforcement (including the judiciary) and immigration officers, to be involved in practices of cheating, fraud, scandalous deals, corruption of all kinds, abuse of authority, cronyism, collusion, favouritism and cronyism.
- (d) Make Muslims believe that since Allah S.W.T. is All-Merciful and All-Forgiving, Muslims can afford to indulge in some kinds of *munkar* or sinful acts, because they would eventually be forgiven by their Compassionate and Merciful Master. They could also plan to perform *Ḥajj* or *‘Umrah* in the distant future when they would make the necessary *taubah* (repentance) sincerely with all their hearts, and seek forgiveness most of the time while performing pilgrimage, as a *Ḥajj* that is accepted (*mabrūr*) by Allah S.W.T. would absolve them of all their sins.

- (e) Instil and develop in young Muslim personalities or middle-age professionals or government servants, the popular Malay expression of “*tidak apa*” “*Ok lah*”, thus reflecting the attitudes or mindsets of complacency, laxity, mediocrity, irresponsibility as well as the tendency to procrastinate or to defer doing good deeds, including acts of seeking divine forgiveness (*istighfār*), *taubah* or *Ḥajj* to a much later date in one’s life. In the meantime, it should be quite O.K., they think, to “make hay while the sun shines”.
- (f) Inject into the mind and psyche of Muslims the idea – later to become a firm conviction – that there is no need to worry too much about the Hereafter; instead Muslims should concentrate on achieving material progress in their worldly life so as to be on par, if not better, than the Western standards of living, by imitating or adopting their models, systems or theories.

We know from the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* that *Iblīs* and Satan are capable of conjuring much more lethal, yet subtle, techniques or stratagems to lead Muslims and others astray from the path of the true Believers, the path that would lead to true goodness and well-being conditions in the world and true happiness in the Hereafter. Adult Muslims, including religious scholars, intellectuals and students can certainly learn more about the subtle techniques of Satan from the chapter on “Condemnation of Deception” (*Dhamm al-Ghurūr* in Book 3) of al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* in order to be better prepared to avert the deadly spiritual diseases of pride and arrogance, desire for human adoration or appreciation, and the deadliest disease in the form of self-admiration or conceit (*‘ujb*), which is considered to be a form of hidden *shirk* – associating things other than Allah S.W.T. as an object of worship.

The avowed aim of the *Iblis* and Satan is to take all human beings, if they could, along with them onto the outwardly attractive, appealing and seductive trajectories of human, societal or civilisational development which are designed to lead humans into the deep chasms of miseries in life on earth and life after death. Therefore, we need to study and understand profoundly some relevant verses of the Qur'an regarding our antagonistic relationship with the unseen evil force. Allah S.W.T. declares that Satan is an '*Aduwwun Mubīn* (an Obvious Enemy) in the following verse:

O mankind! Partake of what is lawful and good on earth, and follow not Satan's footsteps: for, verily, he is your obvious enemy [‘aduwwun mubīn] and he bids you only to do evil, and to commit deeds of abomination, and to attribute unto God something of which you have no knowledge. (The Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2:168-169)

Let us now look at those verses, which reveal: (a) the historical background of the fatal disobedient act of *Iblīs* which prompted him to plan for the vindictive spiritual destruction of the human species until the Day of Resurrection, and (b) what he and his armies have decided to do to spread their mischievous influence among mankind with the permission given by Allah S.W.T. and (c) what Allah S.W.T. had said upon hearing the evil strategies proposed by *Iblīs*:

And We have certainly created you [O mankind] and given you [human] form. Then We said unto the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam!” - whereupon they [all] prostrated themselves, except for Iblis: he was not of those who prostrated. (The Qur’an, al-A’rāf 7:11)

[And God] said: "What has prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" Answered [Iblis]: "I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas You have created him out of clay." (al-A`rāf 7:12)

As stated further in the Qur'an:

[Iblis said]: Tell me, is this [foolish being, Adam] the one whom You have exalted above me? Indeed, if You will but allow me a respite till the Day of Resurrection, I shall most certainly cause his descendants - all but a few - to obey me blindly! (al-Isrā' 17:62)

[God] said: "Descend then from this [Paradise] - for it is not for you to show arrogance here! So go out, then: indeed, you are of the debased!" [Iblis] said: "Grant me a respite till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead." [And God] replied: "Indeed you shall be among those who are granted a respite." [Whereupon Iblis] said: "Now that You have sent me astray, I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight path. Then I shall most certainly fall upon them from before them and from behind them [openly as well as in a manner beyond their ability to understand], and from their right and from their left: and You will not find most of them grateful to [You]" (The Qur'an, al-A`rāf 7:13-17).

However, Allah S.W.T. assures that

"Indeed, you shall have no power over My creatures - unless it be those who are [already] lost in grievous error and follow you [of their own will]" (The Qur'an, al-Hijr 15:42).

This means that although Allah S.W.T. has given the permission to *Iblīs* and his army to tempt human beings and cause havoc in inter-human relations, they would have no power to seduce those who are truly conscious of God. It would also appear from Allah's responses in the dialogue that despite *Iblīs*'s ostensible rebellion against his Creator, he and *Shaitān* would play a role of "the eternal tempter who enables man to exercise his God-given freedom of choice between good and evil and, thus, to become a being endowed with moral free will" (Muhammad Asad 2011: 463).

[And God] said: "Go out from here, disgraced and disowned! [And] as for those among them who follow you - I will most certainly fill hell with all of you! (The Qur'an, al-A'rāf 7:11-18).

The Qur'an provides an additional statement by Allah S.W.T.:

[God said] Entice, then, with your voice such of them as you can, and bear upon them with all your horses and all your men, and be their partner in [all sins relating to] worldly goods and children, and hold out [all kinds of] promises to them: and [they will not know that] whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude the mind. (The Qur'an, al-Isrā' 17:64)

Allah S.W.T. gives His assurance by saying:

"[And yet,] behold, you shalt have no power over [such of] My servants [as place their trust in Me]: for none is as worthy of trust as thy Sustainer." (The Qur'an, al-Isrā' 17:65)

In another verse *Iblīs* openly reveals, at this point, his mischievous plan:

I shall indeed make [all that is evil] on earth seem goodly to them, and shall most certainly beguile them - into grievous error – (The Qur’an, al-Ḥijr 15:39)

But, *Iblīs* did mention an exception as follows:

“[I will beguile all], Except those among them, who are Your sincere servants!” (The Qur’an, al-Ḥijr 15:40)

meaning that there would be, among human beings, “those who are so deeply conscious of Allah S.W.T. that no ‘blandishment of Satan’ can lead them astray”. (Muhammad Asad 2011: 462)

In order to know more about this ever-present, pervasive and spiritually-ethically destructive influences of the strategems of *Iblīs* and Satan, it would be useful for leaders of the Muslim community to be able to benefit from the insights and wisdom of our foremost spiritual masters and savants, such as al-Imām al-Ghazālī (1058/1059-1111 C.E.) particularly in his *Min ‘ajā’ib al-Qalb* (Wonders of the Heart), in which he describes in detail the eleven great gates or doors through which Satan enters the *qalb* of human beings (al-Ghazālī 2007: 106-135); Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (1292–1350 C.E.) in his *Ighāthat al-Lahfān min Maṣā’id al-Shaiṭān* (Aid for the Yearning One in Resisting Satan; and in *Talbīs Iblīs* (Deceit of *Iblīs*) of Ibn al-Jauzī (1116-1201 C.E.). They have taken great pains to write important ground-breaking treatises to educate Muslims masses as well as scholars on the lures, seductions, delusions, deceptions, traps and machinations, manufactured by Satans to deceive all kinds of human beings, in order to distance them from obedience to Allah S.W.T. and make them sin against God or become their followers or slaves.

Al-Ghazālī (2007: 106-135) states that there are seven physical organs of the body, which are capable of becoming tools for generation sinful acts that serve as the external gates to the heart of man. Those organs are the (1) tongue; (2) eyes; (3) ears; (4) hands; (5) private parts; (6) stomach; and (7) feet. But there are eleven major invisible inner gates of the heart by which Satan gains deeper penetration into the soul of human beings to corrupt and create diseases in it. Those major non-material gates are: (1) anger and appetance; (2) envy (*ḥasad*) and greed (*ḥirṣ*); (3) satiety (*shaba'*) of food; (4) love of material adornment; (5) covetous desire (*ṭama'*); (6) haste and lacking steadfastness; (7) love of material wealth and possessions; (8) stinginess and fear of poverty; (9) sectarian and partisan prejudices; 10) inducing the common people to indulge in abstract theological issues about the essence and attributes of God; (11) thinking ill of other Muslims (*sū' al-ẓann bi'-muslimīn*). Al-Ghazālī says that the way to overcome these personal shortcomings is to close the gates by cleaning the heart and through the constant remembrance of Allah S.W.T. (al-Ghazālī 2007: 122-123)

4.3. Addressing Psychological Disorders With Islamic Spiritual Approaches

In overcoming some cases of psychological disorders, Muslims are taught to seek divine assistance from the Compassionate Creator, Omnipotent Master and Beneficent Sustainer, because He alone has the power to solve all human problems. Believers are being advised by the Compassionate Sustainer to seek help from Him by means of internalising the virtue of patience and perseverance (*ṣabr*) and the channel of direct communion and communication with Him via prayer (*al-*

ṣalāh) and supplication. Allah S.W.T. has given this great advice to all His believing servants, because He is with those who persevere with self-restraint, patience and sincere prayer to Him alone:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

O you who do believe! Seek help and assistance (in your affairs) from sabr (patience, perseverance, self-restraint and constancy) and from prayer, for surely Allah is with those who have patience and perseverance. (Q. 2:153)

Allah S.W.T. Himself urges human beings to make supplications to Him and He would respond accordingly:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

(O Muhammad), when My servants ask you about Me, tell them I am quite near; I hear and answer the call of the caller whenever he calls Me. Let them listen to My call and believe in Me; perhaps they will be guided aright. (Q.2:186)

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible (Q. 40: 60)

Our problem solvers are mindful that Allah SWT has revealed that He Allah waits for **any one** to call upon Him in order to respond positively at a particular time at night:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ يَقُولُ مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ

Abu Huraira narrated: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, ***“Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of every night, and He says: Who is calling upon Me that I may answer him? Who is asking from Me that I may give him? Who is seeking My forgiveness that I may forgive him?”*** (Reported by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

The Prophet (SAW) has also said:

مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ دَاءً إِلَّا أَنْزَلَ لَهُ شِفَاءً.

There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment (Reported by al-Bukhari, Book 71).

The problem solvers should motivate the mental-health victims of serious personal problems The Compassionate Master has promised, in no uncertain terms in The Qur’an, that He will surely assist the Believers who possess true faith (*īmān*) and God-fearing (*taqwā*). It is remarkable that the virtue of *taqwā* in the personality of a Muslim or Muslimah would produce solutions to different kinds of inter-personal problems in the life of Muslims. The Rayan Institute has summarised in a very attractive way the wonderful consequences of *taqwā* in the following ways:

i. Ease in matters

And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him ease in his matter. (Q. 65:4)

Whoever has *taqwā*, Allah makes matters easy for him in this world as well as the next. This does not necessarily mean that the person will not face difficulty, but through the blessings of his *taqwā*, he is guaranteed ease and the strength to bear these difficulties without losing faith or hope.

ii. A way out of problems and difficulties

And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out. (Q. 65:2)

Taqwā serves as a divine guard against trials of this world as well as the difficulties of the hereafter. We see an example of this in the Qur'an where, in the story of Khidr ('*alaihissalam*), it was the righteous nature of the father that saved his sons from loss even after his death (Q. 18:82).

iii. Unexpected sustenance

“And He will provide for him from sources he could never imagine.” (Q. 65:3)

iv. Ability to distinguish truth from falsehood

“O you who believe! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (furqan).” (Q. 8:29)

v. Tranquility

“It is He (Allah) who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers.” (Q. 48:4)

Calmness and tranquility are sought after states in the daily rat-race of life. When a servant attaches his heart, actions, longings and aspirations to Allah SWT., The Almighty sees to

his affairs and keeps him in a state of peace which even those with abundant worldly wealth envy.

Those who believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured. (Q.13:28)

Besides the above benefits of adopting *taqwā*, The Lord of great bounty has more long term benefits in store for the righteous believers. The high status of the people of *taqwā* is mentioned in various verses of the Qur'an, one of which will suffice for all.

“For those who have taqwā there is Triumph (Paradise).” (The Qur'an, 78:31)
(Rayyan Institute, n.d.)

Dr Zohair Abdul-Rahman explains in an article on the importance of spiritual intelligence that:

The Islamic spiritual tradition contains a wide variety of practices and beliefs that can be analyzed for therapeutic benefit. Rather than presenting a comprehensive overview, we have elected to focus on one prescribed [Prophetic] practice for anxiety and depressive symptoms: a specific *du'ā'* (prayer) designed to ward off anxiety and depression (Zohair Abdul-Rahman, 2017)

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ، ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ، ابْنُ أُمَّتِكَ، نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ، مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ،
عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَاؤُكَ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ، أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي
كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، أَوْ اسْتَأْذَنْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ، أَنْ
تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَبِيعَ قَلْبِي، وَنُورَ صَدْرِي، وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي، وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي

Whoever is afflicted with grief or anxiety, then he should supplicate with these words, 'Oh Allāh, certainly I am your slave, the son of your male slave and the son of your female slave. My forehead is in Your Hand. Your Judgment upon me is assured and Your Decree concerning me is just. I ask You by every Name that you have named Yourself with, revealed in Your Book, taught any one of Your creation or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You, to make the Qurān the spring of my heart, and the light of my chest, the banisher of my sadness and the reliever of my distress.

He mentions further that:

The second category of diseases of the heart are based on emotional states such as anxiety, sadness, depression, and anger. This type of disease can be treated naturally by treating the cause or with medicine that goes against the cause...And this is because the heart is harmed by what harms the body and vice versa (Zohair Abdul-Rahman 2017).

4.4. *Du'ā'* and *Dhikru'LLāh* as Methods of Islamic Psychotherapy

There are many supplications practised and taught by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which are effective in overcoming personal, psychological or spiritual disorders. He recommended that Believers should supplicate Allah SWT with the *du'ā'* of Prophet Ayyūb (a.s.) who was afflicted with severe disease and poverty, when he called out to Allah S.W.T. *"Indeed, adversity has touched me and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful"*, or the *du'ā'* of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) when he was in the stomach of the sea creature that swallowed him:

لا إله إلا أنت سبحانك إني كنت من الظالمين...

...But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no one worthy of worship but You. Glory be unto You, indeed I have been among the wrongdoers" (Q. 21: 87).

Our problem solvers should advise Muslims suffering from psychological disorders to practise constantly one of the most popular *du'ā's* taught by the Prophet SAW for people facing serious emotional, physical, mental or psychological disorders. i.e.:

اللهم اني أعوذ بك من الهم والحزن وأعوذ بك من العجز والكسل وأعوذ بك من الجبن والبخل وأعوذ بك من غلبة الدين وقهر الرجال

O Allah! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief, I seek refuge in You from incapacity and laziness, I seek refuge in You from cowardice and miserliness, I seek refuge in You from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by (other) men.

As for the importance of *dhikru'LLāh* as a means of overcoming personal problems of all kinds, they are too numerous to be listed here. Suffice it to say that it is the quality of the *qalb* and conduct that Allah SWT looks at in considering His appropriate response. It is not the quantity of *dhikr*, *du'ā'*, *ṣalāh* and *munājāt* that matters to Allah SWT. It is the degree or depth of the Believers' sincerity, honesty, transparency, steadfastness, optimism and reliance upon Allah S.W.T. and conformity to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) which is the determinant factor in the sight of Allah SWT as the True Healer (*Al-Shāfi*) of all ailments, True Remover and Most Powerful Eradicator of all worries, anxiety, depression, sadness, pain, sufferings, persecutions, calamities, turmoils, oppressions, jealousies, hatreds, rancour, greed, egoism,

subjugations, manipulations, enmities and injustices. The importance of *al-ṣabr* and *al-ṣalāh* as spiritual means of overcoming all kinds existential problems, including psychological disorders cannot be over-stressed in Islam. The Prophet (SAW) highly recommends that Believers communicate and have spiritual communion with Allah S.W.T. during the period of *Tahajjud* prayers and at the time of *saḥūr*:

الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ

Men/women who are steadfast, truthful, obedient, spend (in the way of Allah) and implore the forgiveness of Allah before daybreak. (Q. 3: 17)

The Muslim victims of psychological disorders should be advised to seek divine assistance or Islamic spiritual or remedies, which would complement the medical or counselling solutions, without forgetting that the mainstream secular-based medical and psychological practices have their limitations as well as shortcomings, if not negative side-effects. The reliance on anti-depressant drugs such as Prozac and Sarafem, or the use of drugs such as Methadone to counter the symptoms of substance abuse is one such limitation. The Islamic approach, it should be noted, is holistic but it does not preclude proper medical or psychiatric treatment for certain symptoms or ailments. The Islamic approach is not limited to the biological or social dimensions of mental distress; it goes beyond the material, the biological, the emotional and the social causes. It seeks a complete and holistic solution by understanding the *underlying spiritual roots* or ailments of human psychological distress or mental disorders with the aim to bring about lasting as well as sound psychological growth of human

beings, knowing that human beings are essentially spiritual and moral beings created by God.

5. STRENGTHENING, UPGRADING AND OPERATIONALISING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS AND VALUES OF NEIGHBOURLINESS ESPECIALLY WITH NON-MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS IN PLURAL SOCIETIES.

Times of crisis are also excellent opportunities for Muslim problem solvers to portray the altruistic and humanistic dimensions of Islam and Muslim civilisation, thus changing the negative stereotypes that non-Muslims have been indoctrinated with by the Islamophobic media and governments in the West and in the East for the last several decades. First of all, we have to make our problem makers aware of the high religious value given by Islam to the values of good neighbourliness. We shall highlight the relevant scriptural references below.

1. Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “**Gabriel kept advising me to be good to neighbors until I thought he would make them my heirs.**”

(Source: Sunan Ibn Mājah 3674)

Grade: **Sahih** (authentic) according to Al-Albani

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا زَالَ جِبْرِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ
حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُورَثُهُ

2. Anas ibn Malik reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “**He is not a believer whose neighbor is not safe from his harm.**”

(Source: Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah 24836)

Grade: *Sahih li ghayrihi* (authentic due to external evidence) according to Al-Albani

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَا هُوَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ مَنْ لَمْ يَأْمَنْ جَارَهُ
بَوَائِقَهُ

3. Mujahid reported: We were with Abdullah ibn Amr and his servant was preparing a roasted sheep. Abdullah said, “Young man, when you are finished, then begin with our Jewish neighbor.” A man said, “Jewish? May Allah rectify you!” Abdullah said, “I heard the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, enjoining good treatment of our neighbors so often that we feared he would make them our heirs.”

(Source: al-Adab al-Mufrad 105)

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

عَنْ مُجَاهِدٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو وَعِغْلَامُهُ يَسْلُخُ شَاةً فَقَالَ يَا غَلَامُ إِذَا فَرَغْتَ
فَابْدَأْ بِجَارِنَا الْيَهُودِيَّ فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْيَهُودِيِّ أَصْلَحَكَ اللَّهُ قَالَ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُوصِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى خَشِينَا أَوْ رُنِينَا أَنَّهُ سَيُورَثُهُ

4. Ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “**How many neighbors will be brought with their neighbors on the Day of Resurrection? One will say: O Lord, this man closed his door to me and he refused to show courtesy.**”

(Source: al-Adab al-Mufrad 111)

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Suyuti

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَمْ مِنْ جَارٍ مُتَعَلِّقٍ بِجَارِهِ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ يَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ هَذَا أَغْلَقَ بَابَهُ دُونِي فَمَنْعَ مَعْرُوفَهُ

5. ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “**Among the first**

disputants on the Day of Resurrection will be two neighbors.”

(Source: Musnad Ahmad 16921)

Grade: *Hasan* (fair) according to Al-Arna'ut

عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوَّلُ خَصْمَيْنِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ جَارَانِ

6. Ibn Abi Qurad reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Whoever is pleased to love Allah and his messenger, or to be loved by Allah and his messenger, let him be truthful when he speaks, let him fulfill the trust to whom it is due, and let him treat well anyone who would be his neighbor.”**

(Source: Shu'ab al-Imān 1439)

Grade: *Hasan* (fair) according to Al-Albani

عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي قُرَادٍ قَالَ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُحِبَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أَوْ يُحِبَّهُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَلْيَصِدُقْ حَدِيثَهُ إِذَا حَدَّثَ وَلْيُؤَدِّ أَمَانَتَهُ إِذَا انْتَمَنَ وَلْيُحْسِنْ جَوَارَ مَنْ جَاوَرَهُ

7. Abu Umamah reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was upon his camel during the farewell pilgrimage and he was saying, **“I enjoin you to be good to your neighbors.”** The Prophet repeated it so much that I said, “Indeed, he will make them inherit from us!”

(Source: al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr 7397)

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

عن أبي أمامة قال سمعتُ رسولَ الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وهو على ناقته الجذعاء في حجة الوداع يقول أوصيكم بالجار حتى أكثر فقلت إنه ليورثه

(Source: <https://www.abuaminaelias.com> › dailyhadithonline › tag)

Additional hadiths regarding value of good neighbourliness.

Narrated Samurah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A neighbour has the best claim to the house or land of the neighbour. - Sunan Abu Dawood, 1556

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The neighbour is most entitled to the right of pre-emption, and he should wait for its exercise even if he is absent, when the two properties have one road. - Sunan Abu Dawood, 1557

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As: Mujahid said that Abdullah ibn Amr slaughtered a sheep and said: Have you presented a gift from it to my neighbour, the Jew, for I heard the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) say: Gabriel kept on commending the neighbour to me so that I thought he would make an heir? - Sunan Abu Dawood, 2446

Malik related to me from Ibn Shihab from al-Araj from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "No one should prevent his neighbour from fixing a wooden peg in his wall." Then Abu Hurayra said, "Why do I see you turning away from it? By Allah! I shall keep on at you about it." - Malik Al-Muwatta, Volume 36, Number 32

Yahya related to me from Malik from Said ibn Abi Said al-Maqburi from Abu Shurayh al-Kabi that the Messenger of Allah,

may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or be silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be generous to his neighbour. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should be generous to his guest. His welcome is for a day and a night, and his hospitality is for three days. Whatever is more than that is sadaqa. It is not halal for a guest to stay with a man until he becomes a burden." - Malik Al-Muwatta, Volume 49, Number 22

Yahya related to me from Malik from Zayd ibn Aslam from Amr ibn Sad ibn Muadh from his grandmother that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "O trusting women, none of you must consider even a roasted sheep's trotter too small to give to her neighbour." - Malik Al-Muwatta, Volume 49, Number 25

Malik related to me from Zayd ibn Aslam from Amr ibn Muadh al-Ashali al-Ansari that his grandmother said, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'O trusting women! Let none of you despise giving to her neighbour even if it is only a roasted sheep's trotter.'" - Malik Al-Muwatta, Volume 58, Number 4

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The best friend in the sight of Allah is he who is the well-wisher of his companions, and the best neighbour is one who behaves best towards his neighbours. Transmitted by Tirmidhi. - Al-Tirmidhi, Number 120

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "The best companion in Allah's estimation is the one

who is best to his companion, and the best neighbour in Allah's estimation is the one who is best to his neighbour." Tirmidhi and Darimi transmitted it, Tirmidhi saying this is a hasan gharib tradition. - Al-Tirmidhi, Number 1287

Narrated AbdurRahman ibn AbuQurad: The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed ablution one day and his companion began to wipe themselves with the water he had used. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked them what induced them to do that, and when they replied that it was love for Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) he said, "If anyone is pleased to love Allah and His Messenger, (peace be upon him) or rather to have Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) love him, he should speak the truth when he tells anything, fulfil his trust when he is put in a position of trust, and be a good neighbour." Bayhaqi transmitted it in Shu'ab al-Iman. - Al-Tirmidhi, Number 1289

Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas'ud: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "Allah Most High has allotted you your characters just as He has allotted you your provisions. Allah Most High gives worldly things to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love, but He gives religion only to those whom He loves, so he who is given religion by Allah has been loved by Him. By Him in Whose hand my soul is, a man is not a Muslim till his heart and tongue are submissive, and he is not a believer till his neighbour is safe from injurious behaviour on his part." Ahmad and Bayhaqi, in Shu'ab al-Iman transmitted it. - Al-Tirmidhi, Number 1292

Narrated AbuHurayrah: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "Who will accept those words from me and act upon them,

or teach people who will act upon them?" When he replied that he would he took him by the hand and counting five characteristics, said, "If you guard against the things which are forbidden, you will be the most devout of men; if you are pleased with what Allah has allotted, you will be the richest of men; if you are kind to your neighbour, you will be a believer; if you like others to have what you like for yourself, you will be a Muslim; and do not laugh immoderately, for immoderate laughter causes the heart to die." Ahmad and Tirmidhi transmitted it, Tirmidhi saying this is a gharib tradition. - Al-Tirmidhi, Number 1334

Narrated AbuHurayrah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Give presents to one another, for a present removes rancour from the breast, and a woman should not despise even the gift of half a sheep's trotter from her neighbour." Tirmidhi transmitted it. - Al-Tirmidhi, Number 899

(Source:

https://www.islamawareness.net/Neighbours/neigh_hadiths.html)

6. CONCLUSION

The problem-solving breed of Believers have more than sufficient Divinely-inspired motivations, justifications and rationale to face the challenges of the current and future pandemics – as scientists predict that there are going to be more challenges in the form of pandemics, environmental catastrophes, political turmoil and moral decadence. They will be resilient, perseverent and courages because they are convinced in the nobility of their

struggle, consoled by Divine assurances and motivated by the following Prophetic advice:

Jabir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “The Believer is friendly and befriended, for there is no goodness in one who is neither friendly, nor befriended. The best of people are those who are most beneficial to people.” [emphasis mine]

(Source: al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ 5937)

Grade: *Hasan* (fair) according to Al-Albani

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمُؤْمِنُ يَأْلَفُ وَيُؤْلَفُ وَلَا خَيْرَ فِيمَنْ لَا يَأْلَفُ وَلَا يُؤْلَفُ وَخَيْرُ النَّاسِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ

[\(https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2014/02/1/1/beat-people-kind-friendly-beneficial/\)](https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2014/02/1/1/beat-people-kind-friendly-beneficial/)

The internal challenge to the problem solvers is how to sustain their level and quality of *iman*, *ihsan*, *taqwa* and *mahabbah* of Allah SWT as the storms and the calamities keep coming at them. They are to sustain their by means of *al-salah* and *al-sabr* with *istiqamah* and by holding fast to the “rope of Allah” and constant *dhikru’Llah* at the individual level. At the collective and group level, they will be assisted with sincere, dedicated and caring Brothers or Sisters who have reached a higher level of spiritual purification, because they constitute a *Bunyān Marṣūṣ* (a single mutually reinforced structure) which makes it extremely difficult for any of them to be deceived by the Satanic impulses or by the *ghurūr* (deceptions, illusions, seductions) of the worldly life.

The End

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