

HUMANITY AND THE SOUL: A BRIEF INSIGHT FROM ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The human soul is deeply connected to spiritual strength and plays a crucial role in psychological well-being. The wisdom of classical Islamic scholars has profoundly influenced generations, emphasizing that the soul shapes spirituality, thought, and behavior. However, the concept of the soul is often misunderstood, as it is frequently conflated with Western interpretations that do not necessarily regard the soul as a source of spiritual strength. This article explores different perspectives on the concept of the soul from both Islamic psychology and Western schools of thought through a review of existing articles and scholarly reading materials on humanity and the soul. The literature was examined using major academic databases, including Scopus and Google Scholar. The findings of this study provide a foundational understanding of the soul as the essence that constitutes human existence, viewed primarily from the perspective of Muslim scholars.

Keywords: Soul; Islamic Psychology; Spiritual; Spiritual

INTRODUCTION

Psychology is defined as the study of the human mind and behavior. But what is Islamic psychology, and how does it relate to the religion of Islam? Islamic psychology has no single, conclusive definition, but it is consistently described as a line of knowledge that integrates the study of the human mind and behavior with the soul of the human being based on Islamic principles (Rassool, 2021). This integration acknowledges Allah as the source of knowledge and the guidance towards soul tranquillity, which is the primary focus of this discussion.

The secular framework of Western psychology tends to neglect the influence of spirituality on psychological well-being. Early philosophical thought, spanning from ancient Egypt to the early

Christian era (around 2600 BCE – 5th century CE), regarded the soul as the governing faculty of emotions, virtues, and reasoning. Greek philosophers such as Plato (427–347 BCE) and Aristotle (384–322 BCE) described the soul as the essence directing rational and moral behavior. The Stoics (3rd century BCE–2nd century CE) viewed it as a spark of divine reason (logos), while St. Augustine (354–430 CE) linked the soul to divine truth and moral consciousness. In modern times, philosophers began to see the soul as the mind—the source of thinking and reasoning. The way this idea evolved in the West is fascinating, as it reflects how human understanding has changed over time. The philosophical and theoretical foundations of Western psychology are largely influenced by human nature and human reasoning, rather than derived from Islamic principles. This contrasts with the Islamic perspective, which views the soul as fitrah—the innate, pure, and good nature bestowed upon every human being at birth (Rothman & Coyle, 2018; Al-Attas, 1990).

When confronted with the complexities of worldly life, the soul becomes engaged in an internal struggle between opposing moral forces, shaping one's cognition, emotions, and behavior, and determining the extent to which it remains aligned with the fitrah. Additionally, the human soul is composed of four interrelated components: nafs, 'aql, qalb, and rūḥ. However, the balance and development of these components may differ among individuals, influenced by factors such as religious practice, environmental conditions, level of knowledge, and the varying inclinations of the nafs—both good and bad.

In the Islamic model of the soul proposed by Rothman (2021), it is argued that Western conceptualizations of the soul are predominantly confined to behavioral and cognitive aspects, with minimal attention given to emotional and spiritual dimensions. Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, 980–1037 CE), a distinguished Islamic philosopher and physician, posited that the soul cannot exist independently of a living organism and that the human body can function only when it is endowed with life. In this context, “alive” specifically denotes the state of human existence (Mushtaq, 2019).

Although Islamic thought conceptualises the soul as comprising interconnected components such as nafs, 'aql, qalb, and rūḥ, these dimensions are insufficiently addressed in contemporary psychological models. This conceptual gap highlights the need for a comparative examination of Western and Islamic perspectives on the soul to develop a more holistic and spiritually grounded understanding of human psychology. Accordingly, this article seeks to examine the concept of the soul through a comparative analysis of Western and Islamic psychological perspectives.

WHAT IS SOUL? IN THE VIEW OF WESTERN DEFINITION

The concept of the soul has a central theme in Western intellectual discourse, reflecting deep ontological and metaphysical inquiries about the essence of life, identity, and consciousness. Historically, the soul has been perceived as a non-material entity integral to the human experience, shaping the understanding of personal identity and morality (Churchouse, 2018). While the notion of the soul transcends various disciplines—spanning philosophy, theology, and psychology—it has been subject to continual reinterpretation in Western thought, adapting to evolving epistemological frameworks and scientific advancements (Arroisi, Ihsan, & Abdussalam, 2023; Bowins, 2017).

In Western intellectual history, the soul has been a foundational concept, particularly within metaphysical inquiries concerning human existence. Early formulations of the soul in the Western tradition can be traced to the works of pre-Socratic philosophers; however, it was Plato (427–347 BCE) who offered one of the most influential and enduring conceptions. In his dialogues, notably *Phaedo* and *Republic*, Plato articulated a dualistic understanding, positing the soul as an eternal, non-physical entity that exists independently of the body (Ebrey, 2023). For Plato, the soul represents not only the seat of reason but also the source of moral virtue, eternally striving toward truth and goodness. This Platonic dualism established the groundwork for subsequent philosophical inquiry, positioning the soul as the true essence of personhood, distinct from the perishable physical body (Broadie, 2001).

In contrast to Plato's radical dualism, Aristotle (384–322 BCE) offered a more nuanced and integrated view of the soul in *De Anima*. Aristotle conceptualized the soul as the form or essence of a living being, intrinsically linked to the body and inseparable from it (Gregoric, 2007). He argued that the soul is responsible for animating the body and enabling various life functions, such as growth, perception, and rational thought. Unlike Plato, Aristotle did not regard the soul as an independent, eternal entity but rather as a functional aspect of living organisms. His hylomorphic framework—the idea that the soul and body constitute a unified substance—provided a compelling alternative to the Platonic view and profoundly influenced subsequent philosophical and theological interpretations in the Western tradition (Coombs, 2017).

During the medieval period (5th–15th centuries), the concept of the soul underwent further development through the synthesis of classical philosophy and Christian theology. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), deeply influenced by Neoplatonism, emphasized the soul's capacity for self-reflection and its innate longing to seek divine truth (Lane, 2013). For Augustine, the soul's ultimate purpose was spiritual union with God, aligning with the broader Christian focus on salvation and eternal life. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE), building on Aristotle's hylomorphic framework, offered a more systematic theological interpretation, asserting that the soul is both the form of the human body and an immortal substance that transcends death (Pasnau, 2001). Aquinas's synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy with Christian doctrine became a cornerstone of Scholastic thought, shaping a comprehensive metaphysical understanding of the soul that bridged faith and reason.

The early modern period (17th century) marked a significant transformation in Western conceptions of the soul, driven largely by the philosophical contributions of René Descartes (1596–1650). In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes revitalized the Platonic notion of dualism by asserting that the soul—or mind—is a non-material substance distinct from the body (Demertzi et al., 2009). According to Cartesian dualism, the mind (or soul) serves as the seat of consciousness and rationality, existing independently of the physical world. This radical separation of mind and body laid the groundwork for much of modern Western philosophy, shaping subsequent debates on consciousness, identity, and personal agency.

However, with the rise of materialism and the scientific revolution in the 19th and 20th centuries, the traditional concept of the soul faced significant challenges. In the nineteenth century, philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and scientists like Charles Darwin (1809–1882) challenged traditional conceptions of the soul, shifting the focus from metaphysical and theological interpretations to biological, psychological, and existential perspectives. Both thinkers questioned the very existence of an immaterial soul, instead advocating for a naturalistic and evolutionary understanding of human existence. Their ideas marked a decisive move away from earlier dualistic and spiritual frameworks, emphasizing the continuity between human beings and the natural world. The advent of psychology as a scientific discipline further complicated the discourse, as the focus shifted towards understanding consciousness and mental processes in empirical and material terms (Zhao et. al, 2019). While the concept of the soul remains relevant in theological and philosophical discussions, contemporary debates in Western thought often frame the discourse in terms of consciousness, identity, and selfhood, largely eschewing metaphysical notions of an immaterial soul (Block, 2011).

The concept of the soul in Western thought reflects a dynamic and multifaceted intellectual history. From its philosophical origins in ancient Greece to its contemporary reinterpretations, the soul has remained a central focus in humanity's quest to understand the nature of existence and selfhood. Despite the gradual shifts toward materialism and scientific empiricism, the idea of the soul continues to resonate within discussions of identity, morality, and consciousness—demonstrating its enduring relevance in the Western intellectual tradition.

THE SOUL IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

In Islamic thought, the soul is regarded as inseparably connected to both the body and the mind, forming a unified whole rather than distinct or opposing substances. In other words, the state of the soul determines the condition of both the body and the mind. Professor Malik Badri, in his book *Abu Zayd al-Balkhi: Sustenance of the Soul*, discusses the ideas of the 9th-century Muslim scholar Abu Zayd al-Balkhi (850–934 CE), who proposed that emotional stress and psychological distress can manifest as physical symptoms and illnesses. From his observations, al-Balkhi emphasized that the health of the soul parallels the health of the body—just as a body free from disease is physically healthy, a soul free from spiritual or emotional disturbance is psychologically sound.

The concept of the soul in Islam can be understood as the integration of four different components: the self (Nafs), the soul or spirit (Ruh), intellect (Aql), and the heart (Qalb). The term "soul" can be used interchangeably with "Ruh," which refers to the unseen parts of a human being. This encompasses feelings, emotions, and actions that are dictated by the thinking processes of the brain. The word Ruh in Arabic and soul in English translation has been mentioned by Allah SWT many times in the holy book of Al-Quran with different contexts of meaning (Abdul Rahim & Ya'kub, 2007; & Dalhat, 2015). In Surah Ash-Shuraa (42:52), the term ar-Rūh refers to the Qur'an itself, described as a divine light and guidance for humankind to attain the mercy of Allah (SWT). In another verse of the same surah, Ash-Shu'araa (26:193), ar-Rūh refers to the Angel Jibrīl (Gabriel), through whom revelation was conveyed. The term Rūh is also mentioned in Surah An-Nisā' (4:171), where it refers to Prophet 'Īsā (Jesus) a.s., and in Surah Al-Mujādilah (58:22), it denotes the strength and divine support granted by Allah to believers in their faith (īmān).

The use of the word Rūh to signify the soul as distinct from the body appears in contexts describing its separation from the physical form on two occasions in human life—during sleep and at the time of death. This understanding is based on Surah Az-Zumar (39:42), in which Allah (SWT) says:

“Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.” (The Qur'an 39:42).

As described by Dr Yusuf Dalhat in his article entitled “The Concept of al-Ruh (Soul) in Islam) (Dalhat, 2015), this verse implies that sleep is similar to death, where the body is separated from the soul, even though the partition of them both temporarily happens during sleeping, the soul remains connected to the body. Following the above interpretations of soul and rūh, it can be deduced that the concept of the soul is intrinsically connected to the rūh, which constitutes the spiritual essence and strength of the human being.

HOW DOES SOUL CONNECT TO PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN BEING?

Psychology, in its original essence, is the study of the soul. The term Psychology is derived from a Greek word 'psyche', which was equated to the soul (Gregory, 2024). Ironically, during its growth and development as a scientific discipline, the soul component is forced out of modern mainstream psychology because of its immaterial and unquantifiable nature, hence placing no value in the secular epistemology, which is dominated by an empirical approach that subjects everything to scientific scrutiny (Abdul Razak et al., 2012, Noor and Ahmad, 2021).

In modern psychology, understanding the psychology of human beings includes the understanding of one's overt and covert being. The focus on the overt aspect of human being dominated the discipline for decades due to behaviourism's insistence on studying only the tangible and observable aspects of being as they can be directly observed and measured. The behavioural

perspective of psychology argued that for psychology to position itself as an empirical discipline, scientific rigor, measurable outcomes, and objective methods should remain in its foreground. The covert component of human beings, encompassing internal cognitive processes, emotions, and other inner subjective experiences only claims its position in modern psychology as critics argued that the dismissal of the influence of internal subjective processes was too restrictive, and simply focusing on the observable component could not adequately explain complex human behaviours.

The acknowledgement of the role and influence of the covert, internal processes of the mind in modern psychology marked a significant advancement in the discipline. The study of cognition and the mind became one primary focus in psychology. In particular, the discipline of cognitive psychology further solidifies the mind's inner workings as essential to understanding human behaviour. In modern psychology, the mind is conceptualised as the seat of human cognition, as it handles cognition and thought (Noor & Ahmad, 2021). It is the mind that creates and controls mental function and plays a major role in the psychology of being and is essential for human survival. In sum, it is well accepted that, without the knowledge and understanding of mind, the psychology of being cannot be entirely comprehended.

The mind is, however, conceptualised as a separate entity from the soul in modern psychological perspectives. This is because, in modern secular thought, the mind is understood as a physical, biological and material structure (Noor & Ahmad, 2021). For instance, in the modern cognitive psychology, the mind is conceptualised as a computational information processing system that is actively receives environmental inputs, processes them and produces outputs as behaviours and mental processes (Goldstein, 2018, McBride et.al., 2022). On the other hand, the biological and neuroscientific approaches relate mind to the brain, and brain to anatomical structures within the brain (Noor and Ahmad, 2021). In short, the mind, in the psychology of human beings, is acknowledged; albeit, its nature and working is made with no relation to the soul.

Unlike the secular psychological perspectives, which separate mind and soul, in Islam the belief in the spiritual component of man is at the forefront. According to the Islamic perspective of psychology, the spiritual nature of man is emphasized as man is believed to consist of a dual nature; the physical and the spiritual nature. The physical component or the body, is materialistic in nature, the one that can be sensed and perishable, while the spiritual component or the soul is eternal and refers to the immaterial and unseen part of the human being. In Islamic psychology, the discussion of the mind is tied closely to it as a spiritual component. According to Islamic psychology, the mind in its spiritual aspect relates to ruh (spirit), qalb (heart), 'aql (intellect) and nafs (self or soul), all of which are used interchangeably or for different but interrelated concepts representing the spiritual component of man (Faheem Uddin & Yosafzai, 2024).

When viewed through the lens of Tawhidic epistemology, the study of psychology that neglects the role of the soul in understanding human beings is regarded as both incomplete and inconsistent with the holistic Islamic view of the self (Noor and Ahmad, 2021). The soul is regarded as the essence of one's life and consciousness, playing a central role in shaping an individual. It is the soul that drives behaviour, emotions, cognition and influences how one understands themselves, their experience and moral decisions (Noor and Ahmad, 2021). According to Noor and Ahmad (2021), the soul governs the body and without it the body lacks purpose, intellect ('aql), and spiritual connection to Allah.

In short, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a human being - physically, emotionally, cognitively, socially, and spiritually- one must include the concept of soul in the psychology of the human being. Psychology aims to grasp the core of human experience necessitates acknowledging the real essence, the soul. Al Ghazali emphasized that the soul directly influences one's wellbeing and overall happiness (Noor Shakirah, 2010). Therefore, holistic wellbeing, which integrates physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health cannot be achieved without considering the soul. The soul is very much related to the psychology of human beings. The study of the soul remains and should be the fundamental purpose of psychology as a discipline of knowledge that focuses on the

study of human beings. In other words, the psychology of human being would be meaningless and irrelevant without the inclusion of soul.

THE LINKAGE OF SOUL TO WELL-BEING AND TRANQUILITY

This section reviews the literature on the connection between the soul, well-being, and tranquillity. The focus is on the significance of soul development and purification in supporting individual well-being, particularly in terms of emotional expression, thought processes, and behavioral responses. Islam emphasizes the importance of the positive interaction between the soul (nafs) and the body (jasad) as the foundation of psychological harmony. As stated by Abu Zayd al-Balkhi (850–934 CE) in his book *Sustenance of the Soul*, the body without the soul is meaningless, as human creation consists of both soul and body. Thus, these two elements must be united for true well-being. Al-Balkhi argues that the soul (nafs) should be treated with the same care as the body when it comes to health, and he criticizes medical practitioners who overlook the importance of spiritual well-being. He suggests that a healthy soul can be nurtured through both external and internal means. Externally, a person must protect themselves from continuous disturbances, such as negative stimuli from what they see or hear, which can increase stress and provoke negative emotions. Internally, a person must manage negative thoughts, which can lead to worries and irrational beliefs (Badri, 2013).

When we are in a calm state, we must remind ourselves that not all expectations will be fulfilled, and we should accept the uncertainties of the future. This mindset helps us filter and manage anxiety by employing reciprocal inhibition, where we challenge anxious thoughts and gradually weaken them. Al-Balkhi also advises against overreacting to minor incidents or situations, emphasizing the importance of gradually training ourselves to tolerate discomfort, such as irritation or frustration. Finally, if we possess strong willpower, we can face challenges more effectively. However, if we are not in a stable state, it is advisable to step back and prioritize protecting the well-being of our soul (Badri, 2013).

Next, Al-Ghazali (2015) emphasized that achieving well-being requires the purification of the soul, or tazkiyah an-nafs. To reach the highest levels of morality, which are essential for the well-being of our soul, we must make sacrifices and work diligently. This process involves two key stages: tazkiyatun-nafs (emptying the soul of disgraceful traits) and tahliyat al-nafs (filling the soul with noble virtues). Through these stages, we can draw closer to Allah. Additionally, we must free ourselves from the cycle of various spiritual diseases (takhliyat) through purification (tathahhur) and then fill ourselves with good character (tahliyah), which serves as evidence of our devotion to Allah. This purification process not only leads to well-being and tranquillity but also acts as a protective barrier against negative behaviours such as disbelief (kufr), hypocrisy (nifaq), innovation in religion (bid'ah), and showing off (riya') (Hasan & Tamam, 2018).

According to Rothman (2020), the Islamic psychology model of the soul, based on the responses of 18 scholars, identifies four central themes: the nature of the soul, the structure of the soul, the stages of the soul, and the development of the soul 1. In terms of the soul's development, scholars emphasize tazkiyat an-nafs (purification of the soul), jihad an-nafs (struggle of the soul), and tahdhib al-akhlaq (refinement of character). These processes allow us to achieve tranquillity and wellbeing, especially when we recognise the need to reflect on our wrongdoings and refine our behaviour. When we wrong ourselves, we feel discomfort and are motivated to change, having moulded our souls according to the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

The highest level of the soul is the nafs al mutmainah (tranquil or serene soul), which will be achieved after a person strives to resist the strong interference of the dunya and shaytan (at the stage of nafs al ammarah) and move towards ruh and akhirah (afterlife; nafs al mutmainah). However, human nature is constantly fluctuating, with periods of both strong and weak faith (iman), and moments of ghafla (forgetfulness of God) (Rothman & Coyle, 2018). Therefore, when we recognise our wrongdoings, it is best to strive toward the stage of tahdhib al-akhlaq (refinement of character).

Our heart (qalb) and intellect ('aql) continuously interact to guide us back to the struggle of the soul (jihad an-nafs) and lead us toward well-being and tranquillity (Ali et al., 2023).

Keskin (2016) further emphasized that Islam is deeply connected to tranquillity, particularly when we internalize the spirit of aqidah (faith) in our daily lives. The key concepts that promote inner peace and soul enlightenment include *riḍa* (contentment), *sakina* (serenity), and *itmi'nān* (peace). Inner peace is achieved through soul development when we align ourselves with the circle of *tawhid* (the oneness of God), which satisfies both the heart (qalb) and intellect ('aql), the centre of the soul. The growth of soul wellbeing arises from the harmonious interaction among the self, others, the environment, and the sources of revelation, which serve as guidance and reference points. The manifestation of soul wellbeing is reflected in the moral values demonstrated in both intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions (Afandi, 2021).

The concept of *fitrah* also plays a significant role in understanding the soul and its connection to tranquillity. *Fitrah* is the innate disposition within human nature that inclines us toward doing good, devoting ourselves to Allah, and following the principles of Shariah. In this context, *fitrah* represents the true, fundamental state of human existence (Joshanloo, 2013; Joshanloo, 2017). However, *fitrah* is often challenged by the influence of *hawaa* (desires), which act as negative forces. Allah tests every individual to see whether they will follow the path toward Him or succumb to the pull of *hawaa* (selfish desires). This is where the importance of *mujahadah* (struggle) comes in, particularly in fulfilling the rights of Allah as the Creator by controlling our desires (*syahwat*) and allowing the intellect ('aql) to take precedence. Through this awareness and effort, we can achieve a peaceful soul (*nafs al-mutmainah*). Individuals who make continuous efforts to refine their character (*akhlak*) and worship (*ibadah*) are better equipped to nurture their soul. They become more attuned to the conflict between the intellect and desires. In such situations, they experience guilt and self-doubt upon recognising their wrongdoings and engaging in *muhasabah* (self-reflection), which ultimately brings them back to Allah (Fachrunisa & Chizanah, 2020).

Amiruddin et al. (2021) found a significant relationship between spirituality and happiness among 5,000 citizens of the Volga Federal District in Russia. Spirituality was assessed using the Multidimensional Measure of Islamic Spirituality, while happiness was measured by the 29-item Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. The study emphasized the importance of the Qur'an and Sunnah as sources of spirituality, asserting that knowledge, faith, and virtue, according to Islamic law (Shariah), are essential. The study also linked happiness to positive effects such as optimism, hope, trust, and joy. The connection between the soul and well-being (*saadah*) is also explored from the perspective of *maqasid al-shariah* (the objectives of shariah) (Mubarak et al., 2022). These objectives include the protection of faith, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. Their studies highlight that all of our behaviors should be guided by the principles of Shariah (what we are permitted and prohibited to do), so that we may protect ourselves. The ultimate goal of Shariah is to secure *maslahah* (benefit) and avoid *mafsadah* (harm). By adhering to the rules of Islam, we safeguard these five components. For example, protecting the intellect ('aql) enables us to think, reason, plan, analyse, and act in ways that contribute to our well-being and prevent negative behaviours, ultimately leading to happiness (*saadah*).

Munsoor (2015) emphasized a key principle of *ihsan* (excellence), where we worship Allah as if we see Him, and even though we cannot see Him, He sees us in all that we do. This understanding of *ihsan* helps develop sincerity, ensures we perform actions correctly, and instils a deep commitment to offering our best to Allah. This belief system is a gateway to purifying the soul, ultimately resulting in tranquillity and well-being. Another important aspect of empowering soul development and achieving tranquillity is through the pursuit of knowledge. The first revelation to Prophet Muhammad in Surah al-'Alaq emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge:

“Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (1), created man from a clot (2), Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous (3).” (The Qur'an 96: 1-3)

The Prophet Muhammad also stated, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim." These teachings highlight that Islam encourages us to seek knowledge to guide us toward the right path, distinguish between right and wrong, and ultimately nourish our soul's well-being. Through the guidance (hidayah) of knowledge, we can live as good believers and Muslims, centering our behavior, thinking, and emotions around tawhid, which leads to holistic wellness of both body and soul.

In conclusion, the literature clearly shows that Islam empowers and encourages individuals to engage in the purification of the soul (tazkiyat an-nafs) through consistent mujahadah to achieve well-being and tranquillity. If the soul is not properly cultivated with good qualities, such as faith and knowledge, it will lead us astray and diminish our well-being and tranquillity.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON THE SOUL: PERSPECTIVES FROM ISLAMIC SCHOLARS

Islamic scholars have long highlighted the profound connection between psychological states and the soul (nafs), emphasizing that mental and emotional well-being are closely tied to spiritual health. In Islam, the soul is considered the essence of human existence, with its state influencing an individual's relationship with Allah, themselves, and others. Scholars such as Ibn Sina, Imam Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah have explored this interplay, offering valuable insights into how psychological states affect the soul and overall spiritual well-being.

i) Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna): 980–1037 CE Perspective

Ibn Sina viewed psychology as the study of the human soul, focusing on how internal and external factors influence its state. He identified three key aspects of psychology that affect the soul: self-knowledge, soul education, and soul healing (Kholifah et al., 2023):

1. Self-Knowledge: Ibn Sina emphasized understanding the soul's characteristics, such as intellect, desires, and emotions, and how these are influenced by external circumstances.
2. Soul Education: He stressed the importance of cultivating moral and spiritual values to nurture the soul.
3. Soul Healing: Ibn Sina was among the first to use psychological methods to treat mental and emotional disorders, focusing on restoring the soul's balance.

Ibn Sina believed that the soul plays a dominant role in human existence, serving as a spiritual essence that gives life to the body and facilitates learning and spiritual growth (Prasetia et al., 2022). He also discussed how the body and soul are intrinsically connected, with intense emotions such as joy or sorrow potentially affecting bodily functions (Pajevic et al., 2021).

Additionally, Ibn Sina highlighted the psychological significance of giving children good names, rooted in a hadith that emphasizes its impact on a person's identity and soul. His perspective came from a hadith narrated by Abu Darda', where the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, you will be called by your names and your father's names, so give yourselves good names" (Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith No. 4948). Thus, the act of naming a child is not merely a social custom but also holds spiritual and psychological significance, shaping their identity and potentially impacting their soul. This underscores the interconnectedness of cultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions in Islamic teachings.

ii) Imam al-Ghazālī: 1058–1111 CE Insights

Imam Al-Ghazali, in his seminal work, *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, discussed how inner peace and harmony are achieved when the soul aligns with divine guidance from the Quran and Sunnah (Hasliza et al., 2016). He noted that negative emotions like anger, anxiety, and jealousy disrupt this harmony,

causing spiritual and psychological distress (Arroisi & Rahmadi, 2022; Hasliza et al., 2016). To address this, Al-Ghazali introduced the concept of tazkiyatun nafs (self-purification), which involves reflection, repentance, and acts of worship to cleanse the soul. He outlined a process for achieving this:

1. Self-Awareness (Makrifatun An-Nafs): Recognizing personal strengths, weaknesses, and negative traits that harm the soul.
2. Purification from Negative Traits (Takhalli): Striving against one's desires (Mujahadah An-Nafs) to eliminate undesirable traits.
3. Enhancing Virtuous Qualities (Tahalli): Cultivating positive traits through continuous soul training (Riyadhah An-Nafs) and regular self-reflection (Muhasabah).

When practiced consistently, these steps lead to inner peace and ultimate happiness (Saadah), both in this world and the hereafter. Al-Ghazali's teachings emphasize the role of self-awareness, self-discipline, and personal growth in achieving spiritual and psychological well-being.

iii) Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: 1292–1350 CE Contributions

Ibn Qayyim shared the same understanding of the concept of Tazkiyatun nafs and expanded on the psychological effects on the soul, highlighting the importance of tafakkur (reflection), tadabbur (contemplation) and ta'aqqul (comprehension) as contemplative efforts in shaping mental health and spiritual purification. He emphasized dhikr (remembrance of Allah) as food for the soul, stating that just as the body cannot function properly when diseased, the soul cannot experience faith's sweetness when it neglects remembrance and becomes consumed by worldly desires.

Ibn Qayyim highlighted balancing worldly attachments with spiritual practices, such as prayer and reliance on Allah (tawakkul), to maintain harmony between the mind and soul. Today, Islamic psychology integrates these classical teachings with modern approaches to address psychological challenges within a faith-based framework. Practices like Quran recitation, dua' (supplication), and tawakkul are incorporated into counselling to restore psychological and spiritual well-being. Islamic scholars have provided a comprehensive understanding of how psychological states impact the soul, emphasizing the need to align emotional well-being with faith. By addressing negative traits, fostering self-awareness, and seeking divine guidance, individuals can achieve inner peace and resilience. This harmony nurtures both the mind and soul, highlighting the timeless relevance of Islamic teachings in fostering a balanced and fulfilling life.

SOUL AFTER DEATH

The concept of the soul after death differs notably between Western and Islamic thought. In much of Western philosophy and theology, the soul is regarded as an immaterial and enduring entity that continues to exist beyond the body. For instance, Plato viewed the soul as eternal, separating from the body at death and ascending toward the realm of Forms, while Christian theology emphasizes judgment, with the soul destined for heaven, hell, or purgatory based on moral conduct and faith. In contrast, Islam teaches that the soul (rūh) survives physical death and enters an intermediate state known as Barzakh, where it experiences awareness and preliminary reward or punishment. On the Day of Judgment (Qiyāmah), all souls are resurrected and judged by Allah (SWT), with their final abode in Jannah (paradise) or Jahannam (hell) reflecting their deeds and spiritual purification during life. While Western views often emphasize the immortality and metaphysical destiny of the soul, the Islamic perspective underscores continuity of moral and spiritual accountability, linking earthly life directly to the soul's experiences in the afterlife.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of the soul is interpreted differently in Western and Islamic psychology. Based on the discussion, the soul in Islamic psychology is not limited to the idea that it forms the self of a human being. Rather, the development of the soul arises from cultivating good character, sound thinking, and emotional stability—outcomes of aligning with the divine guidance of the Quran and Sunnah. At the same time, this process fosters inner peace and harmony. From this discussion, it is evident that soul development is highly emphasized in Islam, revealing that our holy religion is not limited to religious practices but also promotes the spiritual growth of human beings. It is recommended that future discussions expand on the concept of the soul beyond character, emotion, and thinking to include aspects of mental health and overall well-being.

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