

Editorial

Psychology is the study of human behavior in its observable and unobservable dimensions. It is important to study psychology in order to understand human actions and their relations to various aspects of human life.

From an Islamic standpoint, human behavior is distinctive from other animate and inanimate beings, because it is based on a conscious response to divine commandments. Human behavior in this sense is subject of revelation. Revelation addresses humans to behave intentionally towards the realization of Allah's commandments in their lives. Revelation, human behavior and human life are the three main components of the religious phenomenon which is an intrinsic reality in human psyche and social reality of all nations in human history.

Psychology is an old science. It is a response to Man's existential anxiety which is as old as human consciousness. Man has been indulging in psychological analysis since he started trying to understand himself, his behavior, his emotions, his thinking and learning process, etc. In the West, psychology was a part of philosophy. But since the early twentieth century when it became the last field to breakaway from philosophy, it has become a separate discipline, enjoying the status of science. In the Islamic history of knowledge, education of the self and of others was based on well developed psychological principles such as motivation (internal and external),

gradual change, and individual differences. The study of human behavior was also the subject of many Muslim scholars in their attempts to elevate the personality of individual Muslims from Islam to Iman and to Ihsan; and to avoid the various sicknesses of the heart. This subject was also of a major concern to the Sufis. Al Ghazali for example developed the science of behavior "Ilm al-Suluk". His book *Al-Ihya* has long chapters on various psychological phenomena using a systematic methodology. Al Ghazali would typically choose a particular psychological problem, study it, describe it, analyze it, compare it with other problems, advance a diagnosis and then prescribe ways to deal with the problem.

Human behavior, in al Ghazali's mind, though directed towards religious purpose included worship as well as worldly behavior at individual as well as societal levels.

Behavior for al Ghazali is not a reflexive response to external stimuli, it is a purposeful and intentional effort governed by motives of feelings, thought, and will; and it is also the outcome of heart, tongue and senses. Al Ghazali has been studied as a jurist, a philosopher, and a Sufi. But very little attention has been given to his contributions from a psychological perspective. Indeed al Ghazali can be considered as the father of psychology in the same vein as Ibn Khaldun is considered as the father of sociology.

The contemporary field of psychology is experiencing a crisis which is also effecting other disciplines which derive their theoretical foundations from psychology. There are many contending theories on every aspect of psychology, such as heredity, environment, motivation, which often take diametrically opposite positions. There is very little common ground. This crisis often linked with the crisis of modernity is acknowledged by Western scholars themselves. However, such an awareness is missing in the Muslim World and also the rest of the Third World. Scholars in this part of the World take pride in referring to Western sources of psychology and psychological knowledge is amazingly taught as an undisputed science. This failure to recognize the contested nature of Western psychological knowledge, exaggerates the crisis of psychology in the Muslim World.

While the contemporary schools of psychology in the West vary and even challenge each other's assumption, the dominant paradigms all are founded on the same philosophical grounds. They all adhere to a world view and secular philosophy which adopt material and organic evolution of Man and Universe as ontological basis and accept only material and behavioral sources as epistemologically valid. They also adopt "the" scientific methodology of natural sciences as the sole methodology for ascertaining truth. These are the common foundations of the structure of dominant psychological theories.

When we focus on the details of the theories we find that a large part of psychological "knowledge" is mere individual experiences developed within psychological, political, societal and ideological parameters. This is manifest in the vastly different results obtained at the laboratory of psychology in Lyzbeck Germany and at the American laboratory of psychology at Harvard. In the differences between the behavioralism of Skinner in America and the behavioralism of Pavlov in Russia. In the absence of the

influence of psychologists like Munsterberg in America where John Dewey enjoys major say. This is also manifest in the dominance of Jung's psychoanalysis over Freud who was the father of Psychoanalysis.

It is extremely difficult to ignore the fact that psychology in general belongs to the cultural environment in which it was established. It is natural therefore to find research findings colored by cultural biases. This does not however deny the possibility of objective knowledge free from cultural prejudices; the human being, like all creation, is governed by universal laws, which Man is commissioned to explore, discover and utilize. But we must recognize that the level of complexity of human creation is much more than a mere material view of universe.

Some philosophers and historians of modern science see that the concept of paradigm has different roles in different disciplines and in different stages of each discipline. Modern psychology started at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a non-paradigmatic discipline. What were called as schools of psychology to describe certain positions taken by some researchers such as constructionism, pragmatism, action school, did not correspond exactly to the concept of the paradigm. With the beginning of the 20th century, psychology became multiparadigmatic, especially with the rise of Psychoanalysis, the Gestalt and Behaviorial schools. Behavioralism altered the discipline of psychology and made it a normal science for over thirty years after the decline of Behavioralism in the 1950's, psychology has reached the state of a revolutionary science, where two main paradigms, cognitive psychology and human psychology, are competing with each other. It is not easy to envision the future right now, to see when and how relative stability will be achieved. We know that such a stable stage will arrive when one paradigm dominates.

At this point, when the discipline of psychology is in a revolutionary state, Muslim psychologists may be able to achieve some success in building the Islamic paradigm in psychology. Their efforts may well have an impact on Islamic thought as well as on the discipline of psychology itself.

Efforts in Islamic psychology have usually adopted two strategies. They have either sought to examine the Western approach critically in order to reject those assumptions and conclusions that are un-Islamic while embracing those that correspond to Islamic values. Or, Muslim scholars advanced by classical Islamic heritage in order to identify initiatives in psychology that were advanced by classical Islamic scholars, and begin endeavors to develop Islamic psychology from there. A third alternative, as suggested by

some scholars, would be to make *al Quran* the starting point and try to understand the context where the word *nafs* appears (It appears 367 times in 294 different verses). From these verses psychological categories and insights can be derived to comprehend various aspects of human behavior within a *Quranic* framework. Needless to say, even in the endeavor, a researcher cannot escape the influence of various source of knowledge that he or she is already familiar with.

This issue of AJISS is dedicated to psychology. The reader may find some ideas repeated in different articles because Muslim psychologists have the same concerns. We are committed to the development of Islamic psychology and this will not be the only special issue on psychology. Indeed we need to still cover the various topics that were mentioned in the initial call for papers such as history of psychology, learning theories, personality, human growth, research approaches in psychology, schools of psychology, use and abuse of psychology, survey of the Islamization efforts in psychology, counseling, etc.

We hope that the issue will stimulate further interest and research in the Islamization of psychology and add to the already emerging body of literature on the Islamic view of psychology.

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