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THE KHALIFA CURRICULUM:

"ETHICAL PARADIGMS FOR THE RENEWAL OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION"

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ABSTRACT

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What makes Islamic education "Islamic" in the modern context where secularism shapes identity formation? The scholars S.N. al-Attas, Wael Hallaq and Umar Farouq Abd-Allah have answered this question by stating that the principal essence of Islam is its ethico-moral system, which informs humanity of its identity as God's moral subjects by instilling within them the prophetic ethic. Yet Islam's identity formation, which is meant to protect the human *fitra*, i.e. the primordial human state, and is a foundation of its educational paradigm and ethical philosophy, is interrupted by the rise of the modern nation state through its refashioning of the human self and its use of secularism as a medium to make citizenship the primary principle of identity.[1] This article contends that due to the traumatic social and psychological effects of the modern nation state and colonialism upon the Muslim collective consciousness and religious identity, restoration of Islamic education must take place through holistic means. Achieving the ethical aims of Islamic education must come through reclaiming the Islamic identity, rerooting its pedagogy in the Qur'anic worldview, reviving traditional spiritual orthopraxy and

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[1] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 5.

utilizing relevant psychological research to integrate contemporary psychological models

aimed at identity development and healing. Restructuring Islamic curriculums ought to be

a holistic enterprise that seeks to reformulate an "alchemy of happiness"[2] that heals,

edifies and informs the Muslim psyche - imbuing it with the traditional Islamic identity in

a way that is therapeutic, relevant and reinvigorating.

Thesis statement

The integrity of Islamic education hinges upon restating Islam's concept of the human

self, re-rooting its pedagogy in Islamic Ethical Philosophy and gearing its curricula

towards Islamic identity development, i.e. man as God's *khalifa*, as to initiate structural

educational renewal that allows Islam's ethical aims to be achieved: intellectual

empowerment and spiritual development of the psyche through self knowledge as a

sacred means of instilling knowledge of God, piety, moral virtue and psychological well

being.

Key Terms and Concepts*: Modernity; Eurocentrism; Fact-Value Split; Moral Relativism; Orientalism; Colonialism; Secularism and Secular Identity Formation; Laicite; Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy; Islamic Identity Formation; Soul-centered education; Ethics and Virtue (Adab); Islamic Ethical Philosophy; Weltanschauung; The Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame; Teleology; Epistemology; Islamic Metaphysics and Cosmology; Intellect*

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[2] This is meant to evoke the work of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, where he places self-knowledge as the first step in coming to know God; conveying a self-knowledge in accordance with Islam's ethical paradigm ought to be an immediate priority when restructuring Islamic curriculums.

INTRODUCTION

In light of contemporary research that has deconstructed colonialism's culture, orientalism as an enterprise at the control center of modernity, and their pernicious effects upon Muslim society through political subversion of the Islamic religious identity, legal system and educational ethos, rectification of Islamic education hinges upon the reclamation of the Islamic self concept, i.e. the Quranic *khalifa* concept, and a revival of its ethos through reintegrating Islam's ethical paradigms into Muslim education. Along with providing a brief delineation of the pernicious psycho-sociological effects of colonialism, its reimagining the human self concept and how its power structures recast the purpose of education, this paper presents a holistic approach towards integrating these ethical paradigms into Islamic curricula design. The aim here will be to articulate a practical pedagogy that instructs Islamic teachers to prioritize self knowledge and identity development as means of attaining Islam's higher religious aims. In other words, the immediate aim is to teach the teachers - this paper has not been written as a tool to immediately instruct Islamic school students. As an attempt at holistic cultural reclamation and educational renewal that is fully in-tune with the contemporary context, this paper looks to anchor itself among other attempts towards social liberation, restorative justice and cultural reclamation; in light of this, this paper will integrate themes from liberation theology and evoke some of its leading proponents in civil rights

activism and the anti-colonialism movements. These figures include Bob Marley, W.E.B. Dubois, Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X.

A few brief comments on modernity: The term "modern" as will be used throughout this paper is to be understood as a philosophical system that has its roots in a reductionist approach to knowledge that limits itself to sensory experience and empirical data. Like this, "modernity" represents a worldview that stands distinct from that of Islam, which has a synthesized approach to knowledge that takes into account (1) revelation as a primary source of knowledge, (2) the rational sciences, i.e. logic, as a means of objective, intellectual discourse, and (3) the empirical science as a means of measurement and recording of sense data. References to the "modern" nation state in this paper is then a reference to a socio-political system whose policies and identity is informed by a reductionist view of the world and the beings that inhabit it. This paper argues that this methodological reductionism - and the political structures that perpetuate it – have disastrous effects upon Islamic education and these effects must be accounted for in realigning Islamic curricula with its traditional character.

The Khalifa Curiculum's goals are as follows below.

1. This paper will restate the Islamic Concept of Self and its purpose in attaining knowledge of God and virtue, i.e. the primary objective of Islamic education. The aim here is to restructure curriculum in accordance with the prophetic ethos of

"Whoever knows himself will come to know his Lord."[1] Islam's *moral*[2] educational paradigm, which this paper will refer to as the Ghazalian method, is further corroborated by empirical research that clarifies the critical role of self-schema in informing identity, stimulating cognitive development, fostering psychological self-awareness, shaping human behavior and increasing motivation - stressing that verified self-knowledge provides a set of interpretive frameworks critical to how a person interprets the world, finds meaning therein, learns from past experiences, patterns future behavior and decides which courses of action to take in life.[3]

2. It aims at further defining, distilling and simplifying Islamic Ethical Philosophy, i.e. the Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame (IWCF), so as to be made more accessible to educators and curriculum developers. This article provides practical steps and diagrams to allow the IWCF to effectively inform Islamic education and be the foundation for curriculum design - this renewal being a necessary step in reinstating the Islamic Self Concept as a means for Islamic educational aims to be achieved, i.e. good stewardship *[al-khilafa]*.

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[1] Although many Islamic scholars do not regard this statement as a hadith, the likes of Imam al-Ghazali built his theological orthodoxy and spiritual orthopraxy upon it as an indispensable principle. It then represents an ethical maxim of Islamic pedagogy and must play a central role in curricular renewal.

[2] Islam shares a heritage of moral education with the classical Christian scholastic tradition - in borrowing from Aristotle, but two things are noteworthy here: the Christian scholastics, such as Thomas Aquinas, took from the works of al-Ghazali; and, secondly, the Aristotelian worldview is not entirely in accordance with the Qur'anic worldview - this fact requires a careful investigation and *process theology* - i.e. negation/deconstruction before assenting to that which Aristotle posits - to be able to reintegrate Aristotelian metaphysics back into Islamic education without compromising the Islamic worldview and identity formation.

[3] Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius, "Possible Selves," *The American Psychologist* 41, no. 9 (April, 1986): 956.

3. It will provide a brief genesis of the historical character of Islamic education nested in the Quranic worldview - while briefly documenting and problematizing the pernicious effects of colonialist schemes and the modern, secular worldview upon Muslim identity formation. Colonialism - which operated with Orientalism as its central paradigm and spread it to its political subjects - altered the Islamic concept of self and jettisoned the Qur'anic ethos, thereby, creating a ethical crisis[4] and the moral vacuum that still sits at the center of Islamic education and its societies at large. As Wael Hallaq argues, this moral predicament is inherent in the modern project and - when transmitted to Muslim psyche - leads to the "the crisis of modern Islam" as fundamentally a moral problem.[5] To be explicit, this is a moral crisis that is, simultaneously, an identity crisis affecting a central, paradigmatic level,[6] i.e. at the level of worldview or philosophical ethics that, naturally, centrifugally cascades into political chaos and social strife. This metaphysical issue often remains hidden and unaccounted for, but is, nonetheless a core reason for the social disintegration that saw many Muslim reformers and "nationalist elites"[7] further compromise Islam's educational paradigms in favor of the paradigms and educational systems[8] espoused by the colonialist powers, i.e.

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[4] Wael Hallaq, The Impossible State: Islam, Politics and Modernity's Predicament (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 3.

[5] Hallaq, The Impossible State, 4.

[6] Hallaq borrows this concept from the philosopher Carl Schmitt, who presents the notion of a paradigm inhabiting a "central domain." See his *The Impossible State*, 6, for more on this concept.

[7] Ibid, 1. The political leaders among these modernizers are referred to as "modernizing elites" throughout academic literature. The use of ibid is discontinued with CMOS. Please use the shortened footnote.

[8] For further information on this phenomena in the social context of Muslim India, see: Javed Majeed, "Nature, Hyperbole and the Colonial State: Some Muslim Appropriations of European

those who harmed the Muslim social consciousness and initiated the disintegration in the first place. Needless to say, fundamentally altering the metaphysical paradigms of Islam's institutions led to an alteration in the process of identity formation in Muslim society.

Islamic education must be recast in a manner that is informed by the Islamic ethos - and situated in its historical development. Policies such as Laicite intentionally formatted Islamic education - warping the Muslim social consciousness, subverting its social order and altering its ethical commitments to the Qur'anic worldview. This article will include a concise genesis of Islamic education rooted in the Qur'anic narrative and extended through Muslim history - in a manner that analyzes and deconstructs modernity as a worldview that was used to effectively engineer the secularization of education for political expediency. These schemes informed a secular identity development and were directly connected to producing colonial subjects subservient to the modern nation state - as opposed to an education meant to instill ethical virtues and imbue man with Islamic Self Concept, i.e. man becoming God's moral subject or *khalifa*.

Furthermore, given the psychological harm caused by modernity, Islamic curricula must be consciously centered around Muslim identity development by integrating the latest resources from contemporary psychological researchers - specifically those who share a common commitment to fostering moral virtue and uphold

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Modernity in Late Nineteenth Century Urdu Literature," in *Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond*, ed. John Cooper, Ronald Nettler and Mohamed Mahmoud (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), 12.

traditional perspectives on the soul via the Aristotelian tradition. In invoking these theorists, our aims are, firstly, *eudamania*, i.e. fostering psychological healing and wellness, secondly, using their paradigms as a means of reinstating traditional moral education, and, thirdly, facilitating identity development that accords with the Qur'an's *khalifa* self concept. Further aims include fostering self-awareness so as to equip Muslim students to be competent in the social sphere, relate to the world and allow their virtues to inform their social interactions and professional aspirations. This article will include a preliminary curriculum that utilizes Self Determination Theory (SDT) as a contemporary psychological framework that is relevant to the modern age and shares common threads with traditional Islamic psychology - via the Aristotelian tradition. SDT is an empirical socio-psychological paradigm that is structured to enrich human relations by way of instilling competence, autonomy and relatedness. It is "an organismic perspective, approaching psychological growth, integrity and wellness as a life science."[9]

This article will utilize an integrative and interdisciplinary approach to initiate holistic curriculum renewal. It will highlight important metaphysical considerations that are often not given due consideration (especially as it concerns the metaphysical foundations, i.e. functional doctrine, of modern science); effectively addressing these metaphysical concerns through Islamic Ethical Philosophy is a fundamental part of ensuring that pedagogy is structured to deliver moral virtue, ensure sound Islamic identity development and secure the "Islamic" character of the entire enterprise of Islamic

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[9] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, Self Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development and Wellness (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 4.

education. Stating it differently, this article argues that if Islamic education is not rooted in its own, indigenous metaphysics, Islamic education then *altogether* ceases to be "Islamic" and does not foster Islamic identity formation. We incorporate the concept that properly addressing metaphysics is the key to instilling moral virtue - and this is Alisdair MacIntyre's primary contention in *After Virtue*; as he also states, this is why modern philosophers were consistent in their attempts to falsify the medieval moral tradition that was tethered to Aristotle's virtue centric metaphysical system.[10] This modern anti-metaphysical approach to knowledge and embrace of modern, "value-neutral" science - not surprisingly - has its analogue among leading Islamist ideologues, "Salafis" and other Muslim modernists who sought to import European technology, "progress" and integrate its modern-style jurisprudence in Islamic society while being oblivious to the fraught contexts in which those technologies were procured, the disastrous effects they had upon European populations and the morally bankrupt "reason" that propelled a "progress"[11] inseparable from the systematic genocide it inflicted upon so many indigenous populations. Indeed, it is the case that, as Andre Hammond suggests in *Late Ottoman Origins of Modern Islamic Thought*, a commitment to metaphysics was a bulwark against modernists incursions upon the integrity of Islamic education.[12]

The metaphysical discourse of this paper will be undergirded by the Quranic cosmology, i.e. its educational objectives, the role of spiritual praxis in acquiring virtue,

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[10] MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 117.

[11] Hallaq likes this conception of "progress" to "a god." See Hallaq, *Impossible State*, 15.

[12] Andrew Hammond, Late Ottoman Origins of Modern Islamic Thought: Turkish and Egyptian Thinker on the Disruption of Islamic Knowledge (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 169.

the narrative of man's origins, his primordial identity, his ability to choose and the momentous impacts of his choices upon himself and the world. Metaphysics is stressed, because it is a means to the objective establishment of value and worth and, most importantly, a means of warding off the specter of moral relativism. Unfortunately, as Dr. Robert H. Kane writes, there has been an academic war on the science of metaphysics since the end of the Enlightenment.[13] The precipitation of this metaphysical crisis within the Western civilization - which was, of course, also transposed to the Muslim society - led to "the sunderings of of subject and object, individual and community… and explanation and worth,"[14] and therefore is a stumbling block for achieving the holistic education needed for connecting the soul to the cosmos, restoring economic balance and social justice, and reinstating man as God's *khalifa* upon the earth.

This article will also present a preliminary, holistic synthesis of Islam's epistemological paradigm with the concepts of competence, autonomy and relatedness (CAR) from Self Determination Theory (SDT). This synthesis is meant to be the basis of a renewed, delineated paradigm for Islamic education. The attached curriculum will be based on this synthesis which incorporates SDT's CAR method that has been developed

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[13] Robert H. Kane, "The Ends of Metaphysics," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 33, issue 4 (December 1993): 413.

[14] Kane, "The Ends of Metaphysics," 416. By "explanation," Dr. Kane means scientific explanation that attempts to be value-neutral. By "value," he means the establishment of whether something is ethical, moral, beautiful, just and right - or unethical, immoral, ugly, unjust and wrong. These "sunderings" of modernity would also include Rene Descartes, "the father of modern philosophy," who through his radical skepticism posited a split between soul from body. This radical skepticism along with its "mind-body split" is a topic at the seat of most problems in modern education and philosophical discourse, and, as such, it is something that Islamic educators must account for and overcome when instructing students or, especially, when designing curriculums. By curriculum, we mean both those concerned with the "secular" and the "sacred."

with the aim of stimulating man's ethico-moral drive by meeting psychological needs as set down in SDT. This and other psychological frameworks are cited to posit the reality that any restructuring of Islamic education must be directly tied to the *systematic* restructuring of the Muslim psyche - in a manner that is healing, in accordance with Islam's science of purifying the soul and drawing upon the historical Islamic self for moral guidance. Much of the above and what follows is drawn from Wael Hallaq, who comments on pre-modern Islamic education being profoundly psychological and that in this tradition lies untapped resources for the moral resuscitation - through what he refers to as "technologies of the self" - of not only Muslim spiritual life but that of modern man altogether.[15]

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[15] Hallaq, Impossible State, 13.

SECTION 1:

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF NATURE: THE GENESIS OF

ISLAMIC EDUCATION

> I got the news from a whispering tree: This is a time when Man must be free. No
> more burden and pain. All we lose, we will have to gain.
> Get ready! Children, get ready… My sermon was built for freedom:
> the Good Lord said,'Son, you're a freeman!'
> — "Freedom Time," by Bob Marley and the Wailers

The genesis of Islamic education begins with a Divine command with far-reaching ethical and ecological implications. God Almighty commands the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to take the Quranic ethic as a means liberation through education. It is call to attenuating once self to the cosmos and revering it as an intelligent entity that God sustains and maintains to stand as a reminder of Him and man's duty towards Him. This cosmic order of morality fosters spiritual vibrancy, ecological balance upon the earth and puts man in a state of mind so that he can relate and be conversant with the world around him. We evoke Bob Marley in these regards to compliment the themes that God announces in the verse, "Read in the name of your Lord, who created. He created man from a clot. Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous. He taught by then Pen - instructing man in that which he did not know."[1] This verse, which is widely regarded as being the first verse revealed in the Qur'an, captures the epistemic principle

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[1] Qur'an 96: 1-5.

which would be the primary determinant of Muslim civilization - informing its identity, giving it its "distinctive shape and complexion."[2] Knowledge would be the impetus of Islamic civilization and the foundation of its educational institutions. S.N. al-Attas clarifies that this epistemic principle is inextricably tied to the Qur'anic ethico-morality *[adab]*, which serves as the primary aim and objective of Islamic education.[3] He describes the process of Islamic education as "the recognition and acknowledgment, progressively instilled into man, of the proper places of things in order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgment of God in the order of being and existence."[4]

Given these implications, the verse must be understood as a call to not only to read, but to read ethically, purposefully seeking knowledge in accordance with the Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame. It is an educational mandate to worship God through gaining sound knowledge of human origins, the purpose of life and of all that which fosters moral uprightness. This is a mandate that stands in stark contrast to the modern, *ateleogical*[5] worldview and pseudo-metaphysic[6] that informs modern science

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[2] Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, (Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2007), 2.

[3] S.N. Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1979), 1.

[4] Muhammad Hasanul Arifin Zawawi, *Al-Ghazali and Academic Excellence: The Art of Soul-Based Learning* (Kuala Lampur: Pertubuhan Pendidikan Futuwwah, 2019), 20.

[5] *Ateleological* science, which can also be called "natural philosophy," refers to a materialistic approach to studying the natural world that attempts to be value-neutral, and in so doing, it splits observations of nature, i.e. the facts, from ethics, i.e. making sound value judgments. Thus, Hume's famous fact-value split existed in Ancient Greece. This approach to studying nature existed in pre-Socratic Greece and was a reaction to polytheistic, mythological worldviews which ran counter to sound intellectual principles. The projects of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are an attempt at unifying knowledge and keeping ethical virtue and morality engaged in the process of scientific inquiry as a primary means towards the establishment of sound judgment and the acquisition of wisdom.

[6] Wael Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 235.

rendering it a morally bereft and value-free[7] enterprise that fragments knowledge.[8] Alasdair MacIntyre comments on this modern ethos as "a grave and harm engendering moral impoverishment."[9] He further laments how this moral vacuum - triggered by abandoning the epistemic unity inherent in the Aristotelian intellectual system - was exploited by the modern nation state,[10] which thrives on fragmentation of knowledge as it allows for moral relativism, injustice, and political policies of "might makes right" to pave a way for technology to more effectively be put in the service of power.[11]

Aristotelian thought would foreshadow the Qur'anic ethos' unified vision of knowledge - through which, it establishes a paradigm of ethical, scientific inquiry with the goal of human upliftment, spiritual growth, intellectual development, and, ultimately, the establishment of man as God's moral agent "vicegerent"[12] and a societal system of justice tied to the Unity of God.[13] Here, education is a sacred endeavor and a sanctified trust that are to be guided by the moral edicts of Qur'anic revelation. This educational paradigm inspired an Islamic culture that was defined by a particular range of theological perspectives on the world. Dr. Wael Hallaq comments on role of the Qur'anic ethos in

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[7] Leslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 36.

[8] Benedict M. Ashley, *The Way to Wisdom*, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2006), 1

[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2007), 2.

[10] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 117. Although MacIntyre does not mention the modern nation state explicitly, his logic and criticism of its philosophical proponents, such as Kant, Nietzsche and Weber, along with his condemnation of moral degradation in both the Marxist and liberal political spheres throughout *After Virtue* clearly implicates the modern nation state as an institution.

[11] Hallaq, Restating Orientalism, 235.

[12] S.N. al-Attas, *On Justice and the Nature of Man* (Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International, 2020), 5.

[13] Osman Bakar, *The History and Philosophy of Islamic Science* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1999), 2.

shaping identity, "Islamic cultures were defined by an ethos, by a particular range of attitudes to the world, and by a group of discursive and highly dialectical traditions that attempted to fashion, and often produced, certain kinds of subjects."[14] These theological positions were anchored to the Qur'anic worldview and teleology, which announce (1) the intelligibility of the cosmos *[al-alam]* as a means of man's moral enrichment and (2) the sanctity of its sense datum as Divine signs that yield certain knowledge and, ultimately, instruct man about God.[15] This epistemic culture was similar to the Greek-Aristotelian[16] synthesis of intellectual inquiry with virtue ethics - effectively merging "science" with morality - which is a heritage that Islamic civilization would integrate into its cultural fabric; traditional Muslim educators celebrated a unity of knowledge,[17] a dedication to the science of metaphysics and an educational ethos through which "knowledge was made triumphant."[18] This culture situated humankind as spiritual beings sent to earth to become good shepherds of a distinctly *conative*[19] cosmos. Professor Wael Hallaq provides an insightful contrast of the IWCF's cosmic *connativeness* with the coldness of the modern, secular worldview in his brilliant article, "Groundwork of the Moral Law," "Here, the physical world is not a scientific site, subject to cold and bland

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[14] Hallaq, Restating Orientalism, 72.

[15] For more on Qur'an's presentation of this sacred narrative which clarifies the important purpose of man upon the earth, the nature of identity and the significance of the intelligibility of the world one can read Surah al-Baqara, verses 30 to 33.

[16] Benedict M. Ashley, *The Way Towards Wisdom* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 27.

[17] This concept of "unity of knowledge" has its analogue in Aristotelian thought, which Muslim theologians employed as a tool to systematize Islamic theology and a variety of dialectical traditions.

[18] Rosenthal, Knowledge Triumphant, 2.

[19] Conative is used here invoking the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza who theorized a monist worldview which held the cosmos to be sentient, intelligent and, most important for our purposes here, intelligible - and, to an extent, psychological.

rational explanation, but rather a natural world saturated with spirituality and psychology, one wholly subservient to moral actions taken by the very humans that were created by God."[20]

This rich intellectual heritage flourished allowing a liberal spirit of scientific inquiry and human empowerment to surge within the Muslim social consciousness. True to the spirit of *tawhid*, i.e. God's oneness, Muslim scientists formulated a sacred epistemology that synthesized the knowledge of revelation with the use of logic and the empirical study of nature without veering towards secular rationalism or the sort of reductionist sensationalism that "regards sensual experience as the source of all knowledge."[21]

As it concerned classic Islamic educational philosophy, among the most influential of thinkers was Miskwayh who integrated the Aristotelian intellectual paradigm into Islamic teaching. The Greek intellectual heritage shared Islam's aims of informing the human soul through moral education, intellectual enrichment and unity in knowledge. Miskawayh formulated holistic pedagogy which tied a person's intellectual acumen to a person understanding his imperfections working to be moderate in the choice and intake of food, the clothes he wears and sexual intercourse - all as a means of gaining virtue in his rational soul. He designs a pedagogy that is centered on a traditional conception of the soul that is likened to "three different creatures assembled in one place: a king, a lion and a pig. Any of these three who overcomes by his strength the strength of

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[20] Wael Hallaq, "Groundwork of the Moral Law: A New Look at the Qur'an and the Genesis of Sharia," Islamic Law and Society 16, No. 3/4 (2009): 258.
[21] Bakar, History and Philosophy of Islamic Science, 5.

the others becomes their ruler...The ancients liked man and his condition with these three

souls to a person mounted on a vigorous beast and leading a dog or a hunting panther.

Now, if he is the one who tames his horse and dog… there is no doubt that the common

life of the three of them will be happy and fine."[22] Here, we must be keen to note

Miskawayh's view of the human soul and its role in identity formation. This traditional

conception of the soul had a central place in classical pedagogy, because, as S.N. al-Attas

puts it succinctly, "The aim of education in Islam to *produce* a good man,"[23] i.e. a

specific sort of identity formation. Furthermore, if instruction is to produce such a man,

then the system of instruction must be well informed of the dynamics of the soul that it is

instructing - to secure proper identity formation. Regarding Islamic education, if

knowledge of the soul is not accounted for - along with counteracting the pernicious

western inventions regarding the soul - then the default state is that of secular identity

formation.

Miskwayh's robust conception of the soul stands in stark contrast to the modern

perspectives on the soul. Modern opinions on the soul vary from those who deny its

existence, to those liken it to a *tabula rasa* and to the innatist philosophers from the

European Continental Tradition of philosophy who developed elaborate theories of mind

that effectively overthrew the premodern conceptions of the soul and abandoning

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[22] Bradley Cook, *Classical Foundations of Islamic Educational Thought* (Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2010), 75-78.

[23] S.N. Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1979), 1. The emphasis on "*produce*" is mine, and it is meant to highlight the importance of focusing upon what Islamic education is meant to produce, so that educators can work towards making Islamic curriculums a means of producing "a good man" through sound, Islamic identity formation.

revelation as means of informing its purpose, its identity and the means by which to regulate and uplift it. In the stead of a traditional discourse upon the soul aimed its moral rectification, the Enlightenment philosophers espoused an anthropocentric worldview that had a fixation with the "progress" of man, modern technological advancement, domination of the natural world and situating the power of "reason" over revelation in the determination of ethical philosophy and human identity formation. Needless to say, this conception of the soul - nested within the modern, secular worldview - is what colonialism superimposed on the Muslim psyche, Islam's educational institutions, its curriculums and its educational philosophy.

LIBERATION EDUCATION: IDENTIFYING IMPROPER TEACHING

AND REINSTATING SOUND INSTRUCTION

Imam al-Ghazali elucidates Islam's educational paradigm in *The Alchemy of Happiness*, writing "Knowledge of self is the key to the knowledge of God, according to the saying: 'He who knows himself knows God,' and, as it is Written in the Koran, 'We will show them Our signs in the world and in themselves, that the truth may be manifest to them"- where real self-knowledge consists of knowing the essence of human identity, knowing humanity's origins, knowing human purpose and knowing what brings happiness to the self versus what brings it misery. Achieving self-knowledge must be predicated upon knowing that the self is composed of an outer shape and, more importantly, an inner soul, which can also be referred to as the heart, i.e. a subtle spiritual entity that is an immediate means to attaining knowledge[1] - with its highest function being the ability to perceive truth.[2]

The Imam begins immediately speaking about the self as the most important part of the Islamic worldview's epistemological system, which pairs a proper conception of the self with a proper conception of *both* worlds - that is this world[3] and the hereafter[4] - to effectively allow for experiential knowledge of God, i.e. witnessing God through His

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[1] Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy of Happiness,* trans. Claud Field (Pretorian Books, 2020), 7.

[2] Al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy,* 10.

[3] Ibid*,* 17.

[4] Ibid, 20.

cosmos as His signs.[5] Below, we employ this schema to inform the Diagram of Islamic Epistemology, which is explained in the attached curriculum. The Islamic self concept is centered upon the human heart - locating it as the center of human intellect, cognition, faith *[iman]*, intentionality and knowledge *['ilm]*.[6] This simple self-schema represents man's fundamental identity and it is a central aspect of the Qur'anic worldview.

Being able to *ground*[7] Islamic curricula in the Qur'anic worldview - and thereby rectify Islamic identity formation - requires having a firm grasp upon the concept of what a *worldview* is. We will share a little bit about the history of this concept - along with a few definitions along with their scholarly context to provide an appropriate conceptualization. Although the concept of a worldview has its roots in the highly influential writings of the modernist philosopher Immanuel Kant, it was adapted by many religious scholars who saw its usefulness despite it being a part of a German idealist philosophy that is been regarded as being problematic because it builds it arguments on the fundamental assumption that the world is unintelligible. Furthermore, his philosophy entails an attack on metaphysics along with a set of logical implications that form the basis of modern epistemological subjectivism, eurocentrism, racism[8] and moral relativism.

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[5] Ibid, 12.

[6] Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Marvels of the Heart,* trans. Walter James Skellie (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010), i and 1.

[7] For more on this concept, see Nadeem A. Memon and Mohamad Abdalla, introduction to *Curriculum Renewal for Islamic Education*. They describe the importance of a grounded curriculum insofar as "the Islamic worldview *informing* curriculum design."

[8] Theodore M Vial, *Modern Religion, Modern Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 22.

Despite these drawbacks, Christian scholars recognized Kant's contribution to human thought. Among his contributions was his effective discovery and initial definition of worldview as a concept that exists as the center of human "reason." He describes human reason as a worldview that is "architectonic"[9] and possessing "a systematic unity."[10] This peculiar choice of words gives insight into the modern agenda embedded in Kantianism: a worldview being architectonic implies that there must be an architect to design and effectively *inform* the worldview at the center of the human heart - if not God, then someone else must *inform* it. The modern project's objective has always been to reinvent and refashion both people, i.e. their hearts or their selves, to effectively transform their societies - in accordance with the inner power of "rationality" or human "reason," which is a process that Wael Hallaq describes as "remolding, refashioning and, in short, re-creation of subjectives through sovereign power"[11] spurred by an all-encompassing teleology/theology of "progress."[12] We can conclude, as Hallaq makes clear, that colonialism began "at home" in Europe, in the minds of its subjects.[13]

Alparslan Acikgenc adapts Kant's *discovery* of the worldview concept and puts it into a theological language - employing a process of Islamization[14] - stating, "A

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[9] In other words, it consists of multiple parts that come together to form the metaphysical architecture of human thought, belief and ethics.

[10] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. By Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), A 474; B 502.

[11] Hallaq, Restating Orientalism, 100 to 101.

[12] Ibid, 110.

[13] Ibid, 100.

[14] This Islamization is a reference to deconstructing a concept, negating its false properties and then affirming the truth of its subject matter. Acinkgenc describes this as the process for the Islamization of modern knowledge. In this article, we call this Islam's *process theology*, which is rooted in the metaphysical structure of "There is no god, but Allah," i.e. negation of false concepts, before affirming the truth. The clear intent is to extend Islam's theological process beyond the boundaries of theology to also influence how Muslims view "secular" knowledge.

worldview is, therefore, an architectonic network of ideas, conceptions, beliefs and

aspirations in which all that make it up are organized in a coherent manner."[15]

Furthermore, when we consider the Qur'anic Self Concept, which identifies the human

heart as locus of the intellect, belief, intentionality and knowledge *[al-'ilm]*, we can posit,

as David Nagle does, "that a worldview is an inescapable function of the human heart and

is central to the identity of human beings as *imago Dei*."[16] This Christian reference to

imago Dei, i.e the image of God and man's relationship to the Divine, would be rendered

in Islamic terms as the *fitra*, or the Divine imprint of human primordiality, which God

created mankind upon.[17] This *imago Dei* also necessitates many *imago mundis*, i.e. image

of the world, as a fundamental part of the Islamic worldview and metaphysics. This

allows for multiple cosmological schemes, i.e. unity amidst diversity, rooted in one

Islamic metaphysic.[18]

     The *fitra*, the human heart and the concept of worldview are then inextricably tied

together. Of course, just as the human heart fluctuates, the *fitra* can be altered and its

worldview can be subverted - Acikgenc comments on this when he states, "The major

factors that shape a worldview are mainly psychological, cultural and educational."[19]

Imam al-Ghazali cites a hadith that comments on the primordiality of the *fitra* while

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[15] Alparslan Acikgenc, Islamic Science: Towards a Definition (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1996), 14.

[16] David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), xix.

[17] "The primordial human state" is mentioned in the Qur'an's Surah al-Rum (the Romans), verse 30.

[18] Osman Bakar, Qur'anic Pictures of the Universe: The Scriptural Foundation of Islamic Cosmology (Selangor: Islamic Book Trust, 2016), 24.

[19] Acikgenc, Islamic Science, 10.

giving insight into how worldviews are changed and identities altered, "It was at this truth the Prophet hinted when he said, 'Every child is born with a predisposition, i.e. *fitra*, towards Islam; then his parents make a Jew, or a, Christian, or a star-worshiper of him.' Every human being in the depths of his consciousness heard the question 'Am I not your Lord?' and answered 'Yes' to it."[20] Imam al-Ghazali likens this *fitra* to an image in a mirror where the mirror represents the heart, but some hearts are besmirched with "rust and dirt that they give no clear reflections."[21] Ghazali's analogy reminds Muslim educators that heart-focused spiritual regiments are also a crucial part of moral education, initiating higher cognitive functions and nurturing psycho-spiritual development - that need to be integrated into Islamic curricula. Protecting this *fitra* is critical part of developing what Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah calls "sound Muslim American cultural identity," which "must be resolutely

undertaken as a conscious pursuit and one of our community's vital priorities. It is not a problem that will sort out itself with time and cannot be left to develop on its own by default. Islam does not merely encourage but requires the creation of a successful indigenous Islamic culture in America and sets down sound parameters for its formation and growth."[22]

This *fitra* is so indelible that even if an agnostic refuses to define the universe, there would still lurk a "unifying theory of reality"[23] - functioning as an "unconscious

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[20] Al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy,* 17.

[21] Ibid*,* 8.

[22] Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, *Islam and the Cultural Imperative* (Chicago: Nawawi Publishing: 2004), reprinted in "Islam and Pluralism*,"* ed. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, special issue, *Islam and Civilizational Renewal* 1 no. 1 (2009): 12, https://icrjournal.org/index.php/icr/article/view/10/4

[23] Naugle, *Worldview*, 10.

metaphysic."[24] Islamic educators can longer afford for a concept so critical to Muslim identity to be left unaccounted for or to be formed by an unchecked, secular apparatuses, because a worldview is formed "by our mind as a matter of habit that is dominant in our daily life, either through culture, technology, scientific, religious and speculative ideas that we acquire through education. Curriculums must be *systematically*[25] designed - and teachers trained - to deliver Islamic education through an Islam's worldview to secure Islamic identity formation and, in a process that al-Attass would call "Islamization," liberate Muslim minds from secular control, magical subversion, myth, animism and other traditions opposed to Islam and the proper function of the human intellect.[26]

Another useful definition is that of Muhammad Abdullah and Muhammad Junaid Nadvi in which they state, "A worldview is the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of Reality that ground and influence all one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing. It is a study of the world; a view of life; literally, a perception of the world; a particular philosophy of life; a concept of the world held by an individual or a group… which derives practical consequences from its theoretical component."[27]

Synthesizing all of the above while giving consideration to Acikgenc's description that, "worldview is the broadest category and ultimate foundation in which

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[24] Ibid.

[25] This is as opposed to leaving the development of students' worldviews to *unnatural* causes in the secular context of modernity.

[26] S.N. al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International, 2020), 44.

[27] Muhammad Abdullah and Junaid Nadvi, "Understanding the Principles of the Islamic World-View," *The Dialogue* 6, no. 3 (September 2011): 270, https://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/6_3/Dialogue_July_September2011_268-289.pdf.

science is developed,"[28] we can justifiable substitute "science" in this sentence with "identity." The Islamic Worldview is critical to Muslim identity formation - irrespective of science or subject matter. Curriculum must be grounded in the Islamic worldview in order that they can affirm the Islamic worldview and avoid participation in the further development of what al-Attas calls, "immanent apostasy,"[29] in which religious teachers promote secularization. Further, Acikgenc, offers an important definition of what it means for curriculum or subject matter to be Islamic, "That idea, doctrine, disposition. behavior, or discipline (in the sense of science) is Islamic, only if it is developed out of or proceeds directly out of the Islamic worldview which is inclusive of various interpretations as well within its own context."[30]

To give a general breakdown of the *architectonic* nature of the *worldview* concept, we can consider the following categories, the answers of which, Islamic curricular design must effectively answer through the Qur'anic Worldview:

- Ontology: What exists?

- Cosmology: What is the cosmos?

- Epistemology: What is knowledge? How is it acquired?

- Anthropology: Who or what is man? What are his origins?

- Teleology: Is there a purpose (of man, the universe)?

- Morality and Ethics: What is right and wrong?

- Jurisprudence, Politics and Governance: What is justice?

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[28] Acikgenc, Islamic Science, 10.
[29] Al-Attas, Islam and Secularism, 4.
[30] Acikgenc, Islamic Science, 8.

- Aesthetics: What is beauty? How do we determine what is beautiful?

- Theology: What is god? What is god not?

Furthermore, these *architectonic* categories ought not to be understood as abstract subject matters, but rather as ontological categories that form the inner world of the human heart as the *small cosmos*,[31] which has its ontological correspondence - and is in a synergistic and symbiotic relationship - with the *big cosmos*.

Given the contingencies of secular modernity, these *architectonic* categories must be put through Islam's *process theology*. This can be described as a vibrant, theological "process-synthesis" derived from the metaphysical underpinnings of Islam's testimony of faith, i.e. "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger," which, in metaphysical terms, can be rendered as "Negation, Affirmation and Synthesis." This "process-synthesis" inheres in Islam's process theology, which is also inspired by the Prophet's statement, "Wisdom is the lost riding beast of the believer." That is to say, the riding animal is to be embraced, assessed, disciplined and reappropriated as the rightful vehicle of the believer. Acikgenc does this impressively in the case of deconstructing Kant's concept of *architectonic* worldview, negating its false dimension and then incorporating it into his project of grounding the sciences in the Islamic worldview.[32]

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[31] Bakar, Qur'anic Pictures, 25.

[32] Acikgenc, *Islamic Science,* 13. Here, Acikgenc negates the Kantian notion that takes for granted that a worldview is *necessarily* or *naturally* constructed - that is, Acikgenc makes it clear that a worldview can be invented, the *fitraic* worldview altered and systemically interrupted through outside intervention, e.g. Satan. When constructing curriculums in a context dominated by secular modernity, educators must give deep consideration to the hadith, "Every child is born with a predisposition, i.e. a *fitra*, towards Islam; then his parents make a Jew, or a, Christian, or a star-worshiper of him." For our purposes and given the content of our discourse here, we can elucidate this "predisposition" further and render it as the *fitraic* worldview. This is also to say that the Kantian *Weltanschauung* is invented; he assumes that his "categories of mind" are universal, when in reality they are fashioned by him and fashioned by his language, his German society, his

In more detailed terms, "Negation" would involve identifying dimensions of the "lost" beast which go against the ethical concerns of the public welfare, deconstructing those dimensions and putting them in a registrar of problematic concepts that ought to be, in principle, negated or, at least, exercised of their harmful effects. "Affirmation" would involve embracing the beast as a part of God's divine plan, utilizing its benefits and using them as a vehicle in the service of God, humanity and the public wellbeing. "Synthesis" represents the effective integration of the riding animal in the service of Muslim identity formation and allowing the study of Allah's cosmos to be a source of symbiotic development in which the Muslim psyche is nurtured and in which Muslim faith is not challenged by science, but rather, empowered by it.

This *process theology* is inspired by the structure of the verse, "So it is the case that whoever disbelieves Taghut, and then believes in Allah, this person has grasped a firm handhold that does not sunder,"[33] where one is required to disbelieve in, i.e. negate, falsehood before being able to believe in Allah properly. There is a diagram within the attached curriculum to facilitate this *process theology* being paradigmatically integrated into Islamic curricular design. This *process theology* was partially inspired by the Hegelian historical dialectic, which views the existence of difference, opposition and contradiction as an inherent part of existence in which plurality and contradiction lead to

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materialistic perspective on knowledge and, most importantly, his intentional choices, his beliefs as a Protestant and his modernist intellectual pursuits. Indeed, it is the case that, in general, Enlightenment philosophy was a systematically built, interventionist worldview that, as Hallaq makes clear, was delivered to the minds of European "subjects," who after being effectively *orientalized*, would spread this paradigm to the rest of the world - primarily through colonialism.
    [33] Qur'an 2: verse ?

deeper understanding,[34] religious growth and identity development. This is to say that Islamic curricula must also be *systematically* designed to equip their students to be conversant and religiously literate enough to effectively navigate a religiously diverse world with self-awareness, confidence and intentionality.

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[34] Rachel Mikva, *Interreligious Studies: An Introduction* (Cambridge: University Press, 2023), 72.

SECTION 3:

ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY, WORLDVIEW AND THE HEART

God mentions that He - literally[1] - directs Divine Truth *[ḥaqq]* towards the human heart. This truth can be understood as an all-encompassing worldview conveyed through the Arabic language. Through the Qur'anic *Weltanschauung* discourse, we highlight the heart as the center of human certainty, clarity, morality, knowledge, intellect, intelligible speech, higher purpose and intentionality: "Truly! This the Revelation of the Lord of the Sentient[2] Realms! The Holy Spirit descended with it upon your heart so you would be among the warners - conveying in the clear Arabic language!"[3] God thus situates man inside His cosmos - reminding him of Him, his place in creation and how man relates to the "natural" world. God effectively teaches man how to ethically approach knowledge.

The Qur'anic *Weltanschauug's* implications for Islamic education and Muslim identity are made even more explicit by the verse, "Indeed, we revealed this as an Arabic Quran so that you may intellectualize." This captures the Arabic language as the God's

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[1] This is meant to reference the reality that this sort of literal usage in the Qur'an appears enough times in the Qur'an to preclude, rebut and preempt the possible claim that Qur'anic references to the spirituality of the human heart are figurative; Islamic texts make it overwhelmingly clear the human heart is the literal seat of human identity, faith, intellect, intentionality and knowledge.

[2] This translation is meant to capture the proper etymology of the Arabic word *'alamin*, which is usually just translated as "worlds;" the compound phrase "sentient realms" is used instead of the word "worlds" to more accurately capture the Quranic presentation of the "natural worlds" as realms created for - and filled with - a specific knowledge that allows man to achieve certainty. The *'alamin* literally means "a tool of teaching," "an instrument of knowledge," or "signs that represent or point to something above and beyond themselves." In light of the Qur'anic narrative, the *'alamin,* point to God Almighty and allow man to come to know his Lord.

[3] Qur'an 26:192-195.

chosen means of ethically equipping and intellectually empowering human beings to be

good stewards upon the earth. Taking into account all of the above and employing an

analogy, we can establish that the ecosystem of this agent intellect is the Qur'anic ethico-

morality, and that curricula must be *systematically* informed by the Classical *[Fusha]*

Arabic in order to ensure proper Muslim identity development. The late great linguist

Toshiko Izutzu comments on the intricate, subtle link between the Qur'anic Arabic and

its ethical system:

> The whole matter is based on the fundamental idea that each linguistic system -
> Arabic is one and Quranic Arabic is another - represents a group of coordinated
> concepts which, together, reflect a particular Weltanschauung, commonly shared
> by, and particular to, the speakers of the language in question. Thus Quranic
> Arabic corresponds, in its connotative aspect, to what we may rightly call the
> Qur'anic world-view, which in itself is simply a segment of that wider world-
> view mirrored by the classical Arabic language. In exactly the same way, the
> ethical language of the Qur'an represents only a segment of the whole Qur'anic
> worldview. And the ethico-religious terms constitute a small relatively
> independent system within that ethical segment.[4]

Here, we must mention that Izutzu points to the reality that other modes of

Arabic, such as the pre-Qur'anic Arabic and its varying dialects among the Arab tribes,

carry separate ethical systems that are different to that of the Qur'anic Arabic. If we

except Izutzu's fundamental argument, then we can conclude that the Modern Standard

Arabic is then an insufficient mechanism for: (1) delivering the Classic Qur'anic

worldview, (2) imbuing the heart with Islam's ethico-moral system, and (3) informing

the Islamic identity. Many empirical frameworks also inform that there is a clear nexus

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[4] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 250.

between ethics and identity development. In this regard, Patrick Sweeney and Louis Fry state, "The integration of the leader's core values and beliefs into the self-identity is at the heart of character development. The supporting character strengths of agency, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, and social awareness and connection to others assist in the internalization and integration of core values, beliefs, and moral standards into leaders' identities and also ensure consistent moral and ethical behavior."[5]

Furthermore, the Qur'an contains a distinct set of ethico-religious concepts, which, of course, are delivered through the Arabic language. Izutsu comments on how these ethical concepts serve as the substratum of Islamic jurisprudence *[usul al-Fiqh]*, which itself is a fundamental part of the Islamic identity, as "regulations (that) constitute what we may call the system of social ethics, soon to be developed… into the grand-scale system of Islamic jurisprudence."[6] Izutsu illustrates the concept above by designating these ethical concepts as "primary level terms" that give rise to "secondary ethical terms" such as the five legal categories of acts: obligatory *[wajib],* recommended *[mandub]*, allowed *[ja'iz]*, disapproved *[makruh]* and prohibited *[haram]*. The primary ethical concepts are charged with evaluative or ethical force, whereas the secondary legal terms simply carry classificatory function. He summarizes, "These five terms for the categories of believers' acts represent an elaborate metalanguage (that) is evaluated with reference to a fixed standard of good and bad…Such a system of well-developed secondary ethical terms is not to be found in the Qur'an itself. It is but a superstructure, and the real basis of

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5 Patrick J. Sweeney and Louis W. Fry, "Character Development Through Spiritual Leadership," Consulting Psychology Journal: American Psychological Association 64, no. 2 (2012), 89–107.

6 Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an, p. 18.

ethical life of the Muslim is a far more intricate network of moral values expressed by

innumerable ethical terms belonging to the primary level."[7] Izutsu provides the nexus

between ethics and theology by stating, "Human ethics (is) the ethico-religious attitude of

man towards God."[8]

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[7] Ibid, p. 20 and 21.
[8] Ibid, 18.

THE QUR'ANIC WORLDVIEW AS THE GOD'S EYE-VIEW,[1] THE KEY

TO HUMAN IDENTITY, PURPOSE, EPISTEMOLOGY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

"Call to mind when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am making a *khalifa* upon the earth.' They responded, 'Will you place someone upon earth who spread corruption therein and shed blood - while we already praise You and glorify You?' He responded, 'I know that which you do not.' He then taught Adam the *identities*[2] of all things. He then presented them to the angels and said, *'Inform* Me of their *identities*, if you are truthful.' They responded, 'Glory be to you! We have no *knowledge* except that which you have taught us! Indeed, You are the All-Knowing, the Wise!' He said, 'Oh Adam, *inform* them of their names! When he *informed* them, Allah said, 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and that which you conceal?'"[3]

This verse captures two worldviews: that of the angels and that of God Almighty. The angels are in doubt about the actions that human beings will take upon the earth, but God announces the reality of the affair that He knows something special about humanity that the angels do not. God reveals that this special affair is concerning epistemology -

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[1] This title is inspired by Robert H. Kane, who writes in "The Ends of Metaphysics" that this God's eye point of view" is a potential perspective that would, theoretically, provide the necessary point of reference to transcend the specter of moral relativism, which is embedded in postmodernism.

[2] The Arabic word *al-asma* is usually translated as "the names," we have chosen to render it here as "identities," because this word captures the far-reaching, epistemic ramifications of this episode with the angels.

[3] Qur'an 2: 32-33.

particularly regarding the names or identities of things - and how this epistemic gift is something that gives Adam a rank above the angels. Man's identity as *khalifa* is inextricably linked to his ability to know the world through identifying its objects and informing and teaching others (even angels) of the reality of the world - thus establishing a sound mode of education that fosters justice and balance upon the earth. Educators must create curriculums, pedagogies and institutional structures that are *grounded* in this Qur'anic narrative in order for the current state of "Islamic" education to be brought in accordance with its real identity and fulfill its Divine purpose. This Divine discourse evokes the high-stakes debate concerning the science of metaphysics that rages in the academy. Muslims have something to contribute to this debate because of the epistemic authority and verifiability of the Qur'anic narrative, which confirms the perspective of Plato. Furthermore, it is known that without a metaphysical dimension that *grounds* identity and establishes objective reality, then meanings become dependent upon the human mind(s), and this logically gives rise to subjectivism, moral relativity, perspectivalism, nihilism and social injustice - in other words, it leads to the modern world which rests on a fundamental crisis of identity.[4] The Quranic worldview illustrates that this is not only a crisis of *identity* - but also of *identifying* - which all have profound ramifications for the viability of Islamic education. This is a crisis in what philosophers would call "essence." The soundness of Islamic education then depends on ensuring Muslims can not only identify themselves but also identify the world and identify the

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[4] S.N. al-Attas, The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality (Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International, 2018), 44.

signs of God that it contains - of course, all to realize the higher objectives of Islamic education.

This Qur'anic narrative also confirms Plato's Theory of the Forms as a metaphysical reality that holds merit. This metaphysical structure - which God determined and then taught Adam - is, of course, tied to language and its sound usage. If there is no basis for objective reality, then subjectivity and moral relativism are the result - along with structural injustice and oppression. The Qur'anic worldview then accords with Plato: the Names or Forms are the basis of objective reality, identifying things, sound epistemology, truth and justice. Furthermore, regarding epistemology, these verses teach us the importance of being *informed* by the Quranic discourse as a means of establishing man as *khalifa*.

We also make short mention here of the importance of sound epistemology - which is arguably the centrifugal[5] part of Islam's *architectonic* worldview. Allah says in the Qur'an, "If a corrupt person comes to you offering information, then be sure to verify and corroborate." We see the importance of this principle when we compare this epistemology of certainty and its foundational function in Islam. We can contrast this to the Christian epistemology and its controversial religious origins, which embraced an uncertain narrative concerning the Messiah. The dominant Christian narrative was built on the death of the messiah, yet this was an issue of dispute among the earliest Christians. Christianity also fully integrated the testimony of Paul of Tarsus, who was known to be

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[5] Evoking Hallaq's usage of "central domain," if our approach to knowledge, i.e. epistemology, is corrected then all other parts of Islam's worldview become corrected.

an opponent of Christians in his earlier years. He presents a narrative that ruptures between text and context of Judaic hermeneutics and fundamentals of faith. The other Apostles oppose Paul's efforts but his narrative becomes the one that is given credence amid the Roman political interventions into Judeo-Christian religious affairs. Paul presents a narrative that must be considered a psychotic break that impacts the course of Christianity.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) comments on Islam's epistemology of certainty, "Proper transmission of religion is from the religion itself, so be mindful of whom you take your religion." He says here that the soundness of religion is predicated upon the soundness of how it is transmitted. Muslim educators must be vehicles for securing the transmission of knowledge by giving priority to the science of epistemology in curriculum development. The science of epistemology is also called "Theory of Knowledge," and it plays a crucial role in identity formation. When unethical forces intervene in this delicate epistemic process, the result is a culture of psychological colonialism that will have direct impacts on how education functions. This saying highlights the ethical implications of how knowledge, news and information are transferred. That is to say, for knowledge - regardless of the source - to be ethical, it must be properly sourced, sound in its attribution and verifiable. The Prophet (peace be upon him) here is teaching that knowledge is a central, formative characteristic of being human. We also use the word "ethical" to invoke the idea that educators have a responsibility to spread knowledge that is sound and unconsciously spread deceitful knowledge. There is an epistemic maxim in Islamic jurisprudence that is relevant here,

"Judging a thing is a branch of its conception." In other words, if we misconceive

anything or anyone, our judgment will, by virtue of that fact, be necessarily faulty. If we

know that the media misrepresents, we must suspend judgment.

SECTION 5:

ESTABLISHING ISLAMIC SELF SCHEMA FOR MORAL EDUCATION: THE CHRISTIAN INVENTIONS VS. THE GHAZALIAN PARADIGM

If Rene Descartes deserves the title of being "father of modern philosophy," then this is due to his invention of a new human identity and his radical skeptical epistemology, which led to him conceiving a reductionist view of the world as being mechanical extensions in space[1] - that is, devoid of meaning, soul, sentience or any inherent worth. "Conceiving" is the word used in Cress' translation, and I deem it apt, because the world that Descartes conceived is just that: a conception. This is a subjective *inventionism*[2] and reimagining of the human self at the paradigmatic level - to naturally cascade into all subject matter and profoundly alter the character and course of education. This methodological subjectivism would become the standard among those leading Western philosophers who came after Descartes. Noteworthy in this regard are Leibniz' invention of a "monadic" worldview and Kant's invention of moral autonomy, i.e. morality grounded in an inner, human power of reason as opposed to revelation.[3] Intriguingly, this phenomena of inventing concepts is something that many scholars link

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[1] Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 61.

[2] The ostensible awkwardness of this word choice below is rooted in Kant's usage of the word, when he points to Leibniz as his inspiration in inventing concepts, "Leibniz thought up a simple substance, which had nothing but obscure representations, and called it a *slumbering monad*." This quote is taken from J.B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Moral Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3 - in which he references Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason A729 = B757*.

[3] J.B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Moral Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.

to Christianity - such as Carl Trueman who comments on, "the apostle Paul who offers his psychological account of the Christian's inner struggle in his first-century New Testament letters, which was then picked up and developed in a deeply personal and elaborate way by Augustine in his Confessions at the end of the fourth century, that we find the basic tools for conceptualizing humans as primarily psychological beings."[4] Truman cites this phenomena being a part of a greater "psychologizing" of the human self that reaches its current peak in modernity. This discourse reminds educators of the importance of accessing and maintaining a narrative on the human self that is indigenous to the Qur'anic worldview, because as the research indicates, the concept of the modern self is rooted in a distinctly Pauline, "original sin" narrative that presents a dualistic scheme of the fallen flesh needing a spiritual savior in Christ. This is a Christian psychological and cognitive frame - that eventually developed into a secular formation - which, no doubt, has immediate impacts upon how education is informed and what values it is instilling. Islam's *process theology*[5] - at a deep, metaphysical level - is designed to deconstruct such foreign self-concepts as a necessary step in equipping the soul to affirm the Reality, the One God, Allah Almighty.

Augustine, who Trueman cites as developing Paul's psychology further, develops the first "Christian Cogito" rooting human origin in "moral depravity."[6] Dr. Sugrue captures Augustine inventing the (Catholic) Christian self-concept embedded in a

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[4] Carl B. Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishing, 2020), 114 to 115.

[5] That is the process of Intellectual Negation, Affirmation and Synthesis.

[6] Michael Sugrue, "The Bible and Western Culture - Part 1 - Augustine and the Christian Self," YouTube video, 45:38, Aug. 19, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWcQM0YsKmQ

contrived worldview - functioning as a psychological matrix, "In the process of thinking about his own life, working out the implication of what it means to be a Christian in this world, working out a Christian conception of God, a conception of the Deity, a conception of the soul and a conception of the freewill, he manages to create a sort of matrix into which other Christians will pour their experience. They will find that what Augustine has formulated for them is not simply a narrative of his life, rather, he creates an algebraic formula for all Christian lives… think about the idea of beginning in sin… We will find that this (structure) is also characteristic feature of Christian autobiography: the Christian sense of the self begins with an understanding of our own depravity and then moves - with the grace of God - towards some turning point, some conversion experience in which the Christian decides to forsake this world… to pursue the kingdom of God."[7] Furthermore, Islamic scholarship would deem this Pauline narrative as an interruption of the Judaic concept of self, which has a self Schema similar to that of Islam - locating the heart as man's intellectual and moral center susceptible to the whisperings of Satan.

While thinking inside this psychological matrix during the epistemologically turbulent period of the Late Renaissance marked by a radical increase sense datum that the Western mind was unable to process,[8] Descartes would formulate what would

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[7] Sugrue, The Bible and Western Culture.

[8] Leslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 34. Newbigin cites Hannah Arrendt's *The Human Condition*, which identifies new instruments such as the telescope being "among the most fundamental causes of emergence of the modern mind because it showed that the world is not as it appears to be and thus led directly to Cartesian doubt and to the attempt to found all certainty upon the experience of the conscious self has of its own thinking processes."

become the definite statement of modern man, "I think therefore I am." Augustine's

Cogito is a prelude to the "Cartesian Cogito,"[9] and Descartes would acknowledge

Augustine as his intellectual progenitor.

Muslim educators ought to problematize this *inventionism*, correct the Islamic self

schema and make Islamic psycho-spiritual development the foundation of a *systematized*

curricular designed *grounded* in the Islamic worldview. As we attempt to further

problematize and contextualize self schema to the topic of Islamic education, we can

employ the statement of Phillip Cary, who comments in his preface to *Augustine's*

Invention of the Inner Self, "This is the story of the invention of something *new*, and like

all such stories it is not as straightforward as one could wish: one arrives at new things

only after exploring a great deal of other territory and poking into blind alleys."[10] We

must conclude that an effective rectification of Islamic education requires that the

dangerous concepts that come from these "other territories" and "blind alleys" be

accounted for; ignorance of them does not dull their profound impact on Islamic

education, Muslim identity and their psychological development. It is out of the scope of

this paper to give a full account of these "blind alleys," but it is the author's intention to

call attention to the current predicament that is nested in an "information age" that

exacerbates the problem. There is an increasing necessity to negate and deconstruct

concepts that compromise the structural integrity of Islamic education. These foreign,

invented concepts strike at a deep, paradigmatic level and effectively interrupt Islam's

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[9] Cartesian is the adjective derived from the Latin rendering of Descartes from his native French. His name in Latin is Renatus Cartesius.

[10] Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), vii.

ability to shape human identity in accordance with its own self-concept as nested within the Qur'anic worldview and as delineated by its vision and higher objectives.

Ironically, many scholars hold the view that Descartes inherited his skeptical method from a leading figure in Islamic scholarship: Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who, after undergoing a transitional period of doubt and methodological skepticism that triggered an identity crisis, would go on to develop an educational paradigm designed to edify the soul, imbue it with virtue and allow it achieve contentment and, ultimately, certainty. In comparing and contrasting these two figures, we can see two civilizations diverge in accordance with their differing self concepts. The Islamic concept of the fitra's primordial goodness stands in stark contrast to the Pauline conception of soul as inherently morally from primordiality.

This *Ghazalian* educational paradigm drew upon the work of Miskawayh and became the standardized method across the eleventh-century Seljuk Empire. It initiated the "Sunni Revival" and is credited with being the curriculum that informed the identity of the generation of Saladin - effectively empowering them to liberate Jerusalem. The Imam would level a frontal assault on a scholarly class that he derided as being corrupt, materialistic and unconcerned with the public welfare. Al-Ghazali's educational writings led to a spiritual revival and a restructuring in how religious content was taught in the central Muslim lands.[11]

The key to the Ghazali's method is that it focuses upon rectification of the human heart and rooting the human identity in a distinctly Qur'anic cosmology. The next section

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[11] Zawawi, *Al-Ghazali and Academic Excellence*, 7. Full footnote needed with new chapter.

will cover the fundamentals of this method and how it can directly inform Muslim identity as a necessary step in the restructuring of Islamic education in a post-modern world. The Quranic presentation of the cosmos - described above - became the ethico-moral principles of Islamic civilization, which it immediately embedded in its educational institutions. As Bradley J. Cook writes, "Strengthening spiritual faith and virtue is imperative in an education system which seeks to possess an Islamic character."[12] Such education institutions would methodologically teach men the proper understanding of themselves and the cosmos in distinctly ethico-moral terms that were undergirded by a particular worldview, cosmology and *Weltanschauung*. Undoubtedly, this morality reinforcing methodology was driven by the Qur'anic Arabic to become the basis of Islamic pedagogy throughout the Muslim world.

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[12] Bradley J. Cook, *Classical Foundations of Islamic Educational Thought* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2010), *xxxiii*.

SECTION 6:

THE KHALIFA CURRICULUM: PARADIGMS FOR PEDAGOGICAL

RENEWAL

The paradigms of Islamic education must be able to effectively deconstruct the modern secular worldview and also convey the substantive subject matter of Islamic Ethical Philosophy in a manner that is simplified yet true to both the Islamic texts and their civilizational contexts. In this regard, here is an overview of the fundamental paradigms. Some will take the form of shapes; others will be simple to conceive of without shapes:

1. The Heart of Islamic Identity, which contains:

    a. *Iman*: the six pillars of faith are the active regulatory agents of the intellect.

    b. Intentionality: The performance of any act seeking solely the pleasure of Allah; in this way, it can be regarded Islamically as the ethical initiation of action.

    c. *'Ilm*: Authoritative knowledge (in all religious subjects) that is acquired through verified chains of transmission that go back to the Prophet (peace be upon him)

    d. Intellect: Knowing context, studying it, identifying that which is beneficial and negating that which is a stumbling block to the intellect fully being in tune with the pillars of faith and the

Qur'anic ethic-religious concepts; this allows for the believer to be a state of equilibrium confident in his faith and having complete certainty that Islam is true, it has the answers to perennial questions, it is of spiritually healing and it captures reality as it actually is.

2. The Triangle of Islamic Epistemology

    a. At the top of the Isosceles triangle is Revelation, which sets the ethical tone for seeking knowledge and establishing sound epistemology.

    b. At the left bottom side is the Soul, which represents the sciences of rationality, deductive reasoning, first principles, mathematics and a priori knowledge

    c. At the bottom right is the World, which represents knowledge of quantity, measurement, sense datum and other forms of empiricism

3. The Circle of Rooting Knowledge

    a. This circle is split in half: the bottom half is Islam's theological substratum or fundations of the religion *[usul ad-din],* composed primarily of the Qur'anic worldview, cognitive frame, rational deduction, philosophical first principles, Islamic religious hermeneutics; in short, the bottom represents the Islamic civilizational *context*

b. The top half represents the branch sciences *[furu' ad-din]* both those deemed to be "religious," i.e. *text* based and those regarded as "secular" or, what would be referred to as "science" proper in the context of secular modernity.

4. The Rectangle of Hadith Jibril: the Dimensions of Din (listed in the order from bottom to top):

    a. Ihsan: The higher aim of worship: presence; worshiping with witnessing

    b. Iman: The regulation of the intellectual dimension

    c. Islam: The regulation of the physical dimension of man

    d. Ethics: A science of humanity, which can studied in the Humanities

5. The SDT Diagram:

    a. Delivering Islamic education through CAR: developing *competence*, fostering moral *autonomy*, i.e. accountability and personal agency, and designing curriculums that bring about social *relatedness*. This diagram is explained in the accompanying curriculum - after fully explaining the CAR concept.

6. The Four Aristotlian Causes as a means of stimulating higher cognitive function through consideration of the concepts of essence, identity and teleology:

a. Material Cause: identifying the physical material of a particular object

b. Efficient Cause: identifying the maker of a particular object

c. Formal Cause: identifying the objective, metaphysical essence of a thing

d. Final Cause: identifying the telos, i.e. ultimate purpose of a thing

7. The Rectangle of Reality: This is an ontological model of the cosmos that is meant to illustrate that it is embedded with meaning. This diagram is meant to inform the principle that "essence precedes physical existence," which means that essences are logically prior to physical existence. That is, Allah determines essence, i.e. the meaning of a thing, before He manifests its physical creation. Furthermore, essence is objective, metaphysical and independent of the subjective human mind. This meant to be a quick but effective refutation of existentialism.

a. Draw a horizontal rectangle. Draw two, equidistant vertical lines in the middle of it - which should effectively arrange the rectangle into three parts. In the part to the furthest left, write "Allah." In the center, write "essence," and below it write identity. In the section to the furthest right, write "physical existence." Then draw an arrow that points from "Allah" to "essence." And draw another arrow from "essence" to "physical existence." The arrows represent the proper view of reality. Existentialism - which is the

concept that, "existence precedes essence" and essence/meaning is determined by the human mind - is an inversion of reality, but it is a hallmark of modern philosophy since Descartes pronounced, "I think therefore, I am." It is a clear danger to Muslim identity development.

Rooting SDT in IWCF and the *Khalifa* Self-Concept

Contemporary educational discourse on human identity, language and worldview is a high-stakes affair in the quest to reinstate Islamic education to its historical character. From the need for a proper "post-colonial"[1] pushback against the Orientalist incursions on the Muslim collective consciousness and self-perception, to the implications for the revival of Islam and a vibrant Muslim culture in modernity, to the guiding principles for our youth and their internalization of the Islamic *adab* and being able to convey its ethico-moral principles to successive generations, to its ramifications for gender relations and feminine studies,[2] getting the Muslim identity correct - in a manner true to the Islamic intellectual heritage and relevant to modern contingencies - is of pivotal importance.

To effectively conceptualize the human self and chart a map for Islamic identity development, we must note that there are multiple dimensions to the human self and,

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[1] For more on the need for getting the post-colonialist discourse right, one may explore Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Publication city: Publisher, YEAR).

[2] This is meant to invoke Remaking Women; Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod.

therefore, multiple layers to human identity. This paper affirms that the human self is partially socially constructed - this affirmation is both the opinion of the author of this article and a logical entailment of accepting SDT and other empirically based psychological frameworks.

Correspondingly, we can conceptualize the self, as Rothman and Coyle do, by describing its lower dimensions and higher dimensions. The lower or "baser" aspects are affected by the vicissitudes of life *[dunya]* and can eventually come to cover up the higher aspects of the soul. These higher aspects or dimensions can aptly be called the *fitra*, which is innately pure, good in nature and pulls one towards God.[3] The Islamic religion, when analyzed in such a holistic sense, is a system of regulation and refinement *[ta'dib]* of the lower aspects of the self and its baser inclinations. Islam's aim is to bring the self into a reflective state through education *[ta'lim]* based in a sound approach to knowledge, i.e. Islamic orthodoxy, and spiritual regiments, i.e. Islamic orthopraxy,[4] that target and reform the flaws of the self. This struggle *[mujahada an-nafs]* leads to realignment with the *fitra*.[5]

The concept of the *fitra* is nested within the Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame, which is composed of Islam's concept of ontology, its approach to epistemology (briefly described below), its revelation-based anthropology, its teleology, its ethico-moral system *[adab]*, its substantive laws and its principles of aesthetics - which all

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[3] Abdullah Rothman and Adrian Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: An Islamic Model of the Soul," *Journal of Religion and Health* 57 (June, 2018): 12-13, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0651-x.

[4] This article emulates the mode of Rothman and Coyle in adapting the Ghazalian frameworks as the standards for both Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

[5] Rothman and Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology," 9.

culminate to instruct its economic and shape its politics. Furthermore, this worldview and its political and economic culminations represent a Divinely inspired mode of societal organization and civilizational building. The Islamic worldview carries much meaning, relevance and far-reaching ramifications for shaping a Muslim's self-perception, the self's value, its internal make-up and how one ought to conduct, educate and, effectively, refine, i.e. *ta'dib*, *themselves*.

The IWCF's epistemological system has three primary sources of knowledge:

1) Revelation (God's Word/Scripture)

2) Pure Reason (The Inner Worlds/Realm of the Soul)

3) Empirical Data (The Outer World/External Realms)[6]

Self Determination Theory then fits into Islam's epistemic system due to: (1) Islam's acceptance of empirical knowledge and (2) SDT being inspired by humanistic psychology,[7] which, upon investigation, has its roots in the Islamic tradition.[8] Indeed, throughout their works, Ryan and Deci point us to the *fitra* and many concepts that have a direct correspondence with the principles of the IWCF. In a remarkable example, they state, "Persons do not begin tabula rasa, but instead with what might be called a *nascent self* (emphasis mine), a set of rudimentary processes and characteristics that represent the starting point for ongoing psychological development."[9] In like manner and in-line with

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[6] It's worthy of note that within the IWCF paradigm, the physical human body would be considered a part of the "outside world." This is important to consider, because the prevalent materialistic self conceptions may give the sense that the self is fundamentally the physical body.

[7] Ryan and Deci, Self Determination Theory, 5.

[8] For more information on this, please see George Makdisi's The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West. Full citation needed.

[9] Ryan and Deci, *Self Determination Theory*, 8. This is the most efficient description of *fitra* that I have come across.

the IWCF, they describe human beings as having "inner and outer worlds" that SDT is designed to help them gain mastery of.[10]

The IWCF - in its intellectual regulatory functions - guides the intellect to process empirical data through the dictates and injunctions of Quranic revelation and then organize this data through rational mechanisms, such as logical categorization. So although, as a modern secular theory, Self Determination Theory does not directly take it into account the instructions and guidance of revelation, it still fits into the Islamic epistemic scheme, because it is a theory based on empirical data and the humanistic tradition, and empirical data is a source of knowledge in the Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame. Furthermore, when rooted in - and functionalized within - the IWCF, it becomes an important supplemental source of nurturing and regulating psychological needs. This is achieved through the framework of CAR. SDT's CAR allows for one to remain aligned with the *fitra* in relation to one's self by understanding the soul's intrinsic psychological needs and those of others - and is thus a source of nurturing interpersonal relationships.

Instilling *Adab* with SDT

The word *khalifa* is an Arabic word that means "a successor; a deputy; a vicar;" - these meanings set a groundwork for the IWCF's mode personality development; it

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[10] Ibid.

posits that one must pass through seven "personalities" or "selves" to fully achieve psycho-spiritual maturity.[11]

A complete discussion of these seven stages as God's *khalifa* are beyond the scope of this paper, but the significance of spiritual wayfaring and seeking out God's instructions is brought forth and given context throughout the Qur'an:

1) Allah outlines man's distinct identity as *khalifa* due to a special gift of knowledge: this knowledge is an essential part of his purpose on earth and his mode of interaction with existence. "Recollect when your Lord said to the angels, 'We will create upon earth a *khalifa.*' … He then instructed Adam in the Names of all things."[12]

2) Later in the Qur'an in Surah al-Araf, Allah captures a momentous exchange between Himself and His vicegerent *[khalifa]*: Musa (peace be upon him) supplicates, "Ordain for us that which is good in this life and the next! Indeed, we have repented to You! Allah responded, 'As far as My punishment, I smite with it whomever I choose. Yet, My mercy encompasses all things.'"[13]

3) Another verse states, "We will instruct them with Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear that it is the Truth."[14]

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[11]Abdul-Fattah R. Hamid, *Self Knowledge and Spiritual Yearning* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1982), 81. Please see this resource for a more robust discussion on the topic psycho-spiritual progression.

[12] Surah al-Baqarah, verse 30.

[13] Surah al-Araf, verse 156. This verse describes the interactions between Musa and the Lord after the Children of Israel had taken the calf as an idol; God describes how despite His majesty, chastisement and anger being manifest, His mercy, compassion, love and, ultimately, means of attaining knowledge of Him, are always present - even if ostensibly hidden or even if it seems that man is cut off from them.

[14] Surah al-Fussilat, verse 53. Please note that these three verses are not an exhaustive list of the Qur'anic exposition of the Khalifa Self-Concept.

These three verses highlight the point that, although it may not immediately appear to be the case, Allah's signs, His miracles, His mercy and His instructions are evidenced by all of existence - especially the dynamic makeup of the human self as Allah fashioned man as His *khalifa*. Furthermore, this reality sheds light upon the distinct opportunity for Muslims who have trained *themselves* in the Islamic worldview to utilize modern resources and empirical knowledge to formulate more robust theories across all fields of inquiry; Allah's signs, mercy and instruction can be found in all of the modern fields of inquiry despite said fields being reductionist in nature. This reductionism is an erroneous approach to knowledge that has created negative conditions within the *self* for a loss of *adab/ta'dib*. S.N. al-Attas describes this loss of *adab* two ways: (1) "the loss of discipline - the discipline of body, mind and soul, the discipline that assures the recognition and acknowledgment of one's proper place in relation to one's self, society and Community… one's proper place in relation to one's physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials."[15] And (2), its loss is the loss of the ability to produce good men.[16] Stated differently, the loss of *adab* is the most ultimate loss of humanity and the ability to self-regulate. This aim of producing good men corresponds with Organismic Integration Theory's focus upon the dynamics of internalizing regulations. Ryan and Deci describe this internalization of positive values, beliefs and behavior regulations[17] as "a

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[15] Al-Attas, Aims and Objectives, 2.
[16] Ibid, 1.
[17] These values, beliefs and behavioral regulations can aptly be described in Islamic contexts as the Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame (IWCF).

humanizing process (that) promotes not only individual growth but also the growth and coherence of culture."[18]

The process of investigating SDT (and other empirical-based theories) and rooting them in the IWCF is a grand opportunity to discover new breakthroughs in knowledge. Indeed, until the present time, the dominant theories in identity studies, psycho-sociology and modern pedagogy are rooted in an epistemology that almost exclusively limits itself to a single mode of God's instructions, i.e. the material realm. Modern research methods are fixated on empirical data and sense experience - while ignoring the spiritual dimensions, i.e. the unseen realm which God informs us of. As Rothman and Coyle conclude, this fundamental misalignment has led to a truly Islamic theoretical framework for psycho-social inquiries to yet be settled upon - much less taken seriously - in academic circles.[19]

These facts have proven to have far-reaching ramifications for how theories of the self are formed. These theories have only limited usefulness for Muslims and other peoples of faith, because their materialistic self-conceptions do not capture the higher, spiritual dimensions of the self nor can they capture the broad complexities of the human psyche. These materialistic theories are, therefore, inherently deficient.[20] This deficiency notwithstanding, empirical research has still been able to highlight the critically important point that the self-concept, i.e. how one cognitively views or constructs the self, is the most important psychological field in organizing and determining how one interprets the

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[18] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory,180. Article or book?
[19] Rothman and Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology," 1.
[20] Mostafa Al-Badawi, *Man and the Universe: An Islamic Perspective* (Milpitas California: Claritas Books, 2017), 29.

world and finds meaning from life experiences. Self-concept has also been indicated as a "significant regulator" of an individual's behavior.[21] So, from an Islamic perspective, both the Qur'an (God's scriptural instructions) and modern empirical research (God's cosmic instructions) corroborate the reality that man having a correct self-conception is pivotal in:

1) man understanding himself;

2) man interpreting the universe;

3) man making sense of life;

4) regulating man's interaction with the universe;

5) understanding man's interactions with the universe;

6) understanding man's interpersonal relationships and the formation of family systems;

7) and, most importantly, man coming to know his Lord.

If man's self-structure is the apparent gauge of all of the above, then it also follows that a materialistic (or atomistic) perspective leads not only to materialization/atomisation of the self but also the alienation of man, especially and exceedingly amongst the youth, from society, i.e. their surroundings. This alienation is inherent in both atomistic approaches to the self and mind-body based paradigms. This paper contends that returning a soul-based paradigm is indispensable if one aims to achieve the aims of *adab* and fulfillment of the Khalifa Self-Concept. Youth alienation is

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[21] Markus and Nurius, "Possible Selves," 955.

an unfortunate and dangerous phenomena - all too common, it runs in direct contradiction of both the IWCF and SDT's CAR paradigm of fostering relatedness.

Upon encountering SDT in varying academic articles, it stood out to me among the empirically based psychological theories as unique and mysteriously intriguing. It had a mystique; there was something different about it. I could not tell why it stood out so much, but after reading the opening lines of the authors' primary book, *Self Determination Theory*, I quickly figured it out. Ryan and Deci write, "Both as researchers and clinicians we felt there was a need for a Copernican turn in empirical approaches to human motivation and behavior change. The dominant approaches to these topics focused not on understanding how organisms naturally learn, develop, and self-organize actions, but on how they could be controlled to behave or change using external contingencies and cognitive manipulations. To us, this was a science pointing in the wrong direction."[22]

Some background: in the history of Western philosophy when one says "Copernican turn," one is referring to a radical shift in human thought on a fundamental level. Right at the beginning of their book they make it clear that they plan on thinking outside of the box and transforming the discourse on human motivation by focusing on the means of achieving psychological wellness and nurturing the innate needs of the self - instead of manipulation and control. Ryan and Deci lament the unfortunate state of empirical studies in psychology that have the primary intent of controlling people and manipulating behavior; in Islamic and SDT terms, such intentions are damaging for the

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[22] Ryan and. Deci, *Self Determination Theory*, vii.

human being's innate need to feel free, equipped to make informed decisions in one's life.

Ryan and Deci uncover, as many contemporary empirical researchers are discovering, that many modern empirical theories are misinformed and out of touch with the inner and innate psychological needs of human beings - especially in interpersonal relationships. We can also cite the conclusions of Sheldon Striker as he lamented the inability of empirical research to go beyond a materialistic conception of the self as "that which is an object to itself"[23] - further described as "an undifferentiated entity."[24] His research brings to light the inherent limitations beset by such atomistic conceptions, because they do not promote a deeper study of the self, nor its "symbolic interactions" with the world and its situation within the family structure. Although Stryker only strikes at the surface the need to rethink such conceptions, he provides an important insight when he states, "It is essential to treat the self as a complex differentiated unit rather than as an undifferentiated unity. Empirical work has also suffered from the failure to take seriously the idea that the self is an organized structure."[25]

To fulfill Islamic educational aims and objects, we must go further - than Ryan, Deci and Striker - to say that these theories, with the interesting exception of SDT, are predominantly reductionist and, thus, very much out of touch with the *fitra* and stand in opposition to it; unless rerooted in the Islamic Worldview and Cognitive Frame, these

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[23] This definition of the self is attributed to George Herbert Mead.
[24] Sheldon Striker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 30, no. 4 (November, 1968): 559.
[25] Sheldon Striker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance," 560.

theories only have a limited usefulness for Muslims who are seeking a deeper level of spiritual wellness, self-awareness and psychological functionality - on the individual and communal levels.

Yet, it is clear, Ryan, Deci Stryker are onto something: through their empirical research they have been able to conclude that something is not completely right with the direction of modern psychological paradigms. By pointing out the shortcomings of certain empirical methods, Ryan, Deci and Stryker point us toward the need of something beyond materialistic conceptions. Unbeknownst to them, they point toward *fitra*. Stryker's "symbolic interactionism" provides a window into the complex schemes the self produces to interpret the world.

Meanwhile, inspired by humanist philosophy, and through their desire to study how human beings are motivated from within, i.e studying how to equip people to be intrinsically motivated and their "organismic approach" to human wellness as a "life science,"[26] Ryan and Deci have pointed us to the inner life of the *fitra*, humanity's upliftment. Even more fortuitous is that Ryan and Deci had the good sense to utilize empirical methods and experimental paradigms without "accepting the mechanistic or efficient causal meta-theories that have typically been associated with those methods."[27] Rejection of those mechanistic meta-theories apparently allowed for a more organic view of how the human spirit flourishes in autonomy supportive environments while also capturing how this same human spirit and agency can be thwarted by negative

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[26] Ryan and Deci, Self Determination Theory, 5.

[27] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," *American Psychologist* (January 2000): 68.

environments. Synthesizing their findings into the IWCF is then a blessed endeavor. Their methods are designed not to manipulate others but to equip people to nurture psychological needs and create autonomy supportive environments to foster personality development and behavioral self-regulation.[28] They define SDT as an "empirically based, organismic theory of human behavior and personality development… and it differentiates motivation along a continuum from controlled to autonomous."[29]

Ryan and Deci advocate meeting these psychological needs through the CAR paradigm, which is meant to foster (C) competence in the self, (A) to provide a sense of autonomy or to equip it to make informed decision borne of one's own, God-given volition, and, finally, (R) relatedness which directs one to nurture the innate need to feel a sense of belonging, connection with other people and being comfortable in one's context so as to yield autonomous regulation.[30] The aims of CAR appeal to a universal drive within all human beings to be successful in their interpersonal relationships, and as Saafir and Umarji illustrate, these aims are very much in-line with the prophetic *adab* and mode of operation.[31]

On the point of how SDT fits into the IWCF paradigmatically, the most immediate task concerns the title (of SDT) itself. Ryan and Deci hold that the self is fundamentally socially constructed. This is to say that when empiricist scholars, such as

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[28] Ryan and Deci, "Self Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Intrinsic Motivation," 68.

[29] Ryan and Deci, "Self Determination Theory," 3.

[30] Ryan and Deci, "Self Determination Theory," 74.

[31] Saafir, Jihad and Umarji, Osman. "How to Raise Religious Teens: A Self-Determination Theory Approach," Yaqeen Institute, July 18, 2023, https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/how-to-raise-religious-teens-a-self-determination-theory-approach#ftnt34.

Ryan and Deci, say "self determination," they mean that man is solely in charge of determining who he is and that he determines his own self schemas in the ultimate sense. As we look to root SDT in the IWCF, we must note that the position mentioned above is only partially true in Islamic terms. This is to say that in the Islamic model of psychology, the self has multiple facets: among these facets is the higher, immutable identity as God's *khalifa* upon earth. Other facets include the lower dimensions of the self that are susceptible to change and vulnerable to the downward pull of the temporal world, which can effectively get between man and his higher purpose as *khalifa*. The parts of the self that modern empiricists focus on are those lower parts of the self that are more closely associated with temporality, i.e. a sort of flux that is contingent upon the vicissitudes of worldly life *[dunya]*. These vicissitudes cause the true nature of the soul to become misaligned to the *fitra*.[32] SDT, as an outstanding holistic and humanistic theory,[33] effectively allows for regulating these baser dimensions of the self to prevent it from becoming misaligned with the *fitra* and, thus, facilitates man's identity development as *khalifa*.

SDT's CAR and IWCF's Khalifa Self-Concept: An Exposition of Ethical Diagrams that are to be the Groundwork for Curriculum Development

Designing an Islamic curriculum that conveys the *Khalifa Self-Concept* that is both true to traditional Islamic metaphysics and relevant to the modern context is a high-

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[32] Rothman and Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology," 12.
[33] Ryan and Deci, Self Determination Theory, 5.

stakes endeavor. It requires us to think about how our self-perception is shaped by Western paradigms that are not aligned to traditional Islamic teaching. The following diagrams are designed to be true traditional Islamic conceptions of the self while also pushing back against modern, secular conceptions of the self. We single out here both purely materialistic/atomistic/Marxist conceptions and the Cartesian dualistic conception where mind affirmed yet it is completely divorced from body. These diagrams are designed to evoke Rothman and Coyle's usage of the Ghazalian of the heart being "the spiritual center of the human being" and "that the intellect and consciousness are located in this heart center rather than in the mind, as most psychological theories posit."[34]

The first diagram is called the "SDT Diagram," which is meant to be the master diagram that is to be the (CAR) or mode of delivering the subsequent, religious diagrams. The concept here being that CAR will be the mode of making sure that the students' psychological needs are nurtured to allow for more optimal outcomes when the students are instructed in the IWCF and the Khalifa Self-Concept. The SDT Diagram can be illustrated by drawing one big circle with three smaller, surrounding circles. The words "Motivation/Wellness"[35] should be written within the biggest circle. The words (1)"Competence," (2) "Autonomy" and (3) "Relatedness" should be written in the surrounding circles - one word to a circle, in the preceding numerical order to spell "CAR." Three lines should be then drawn connecting each circle to "Motivation/Wellness." This "three-wheeled" CAR must be envisioned as the vehicle,

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[34] Rothman and Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology," 13.

[35] This is intended to note that motivation is directly correlated to psychological well-being, and, further, that being intrinsically motivated about one's religious practice is a higher objective of Islam.

packaging and mode of delivery of all of Islamic teaching; it must gauge and inspire, as a

point of departure, all that an instructor is looking to convey so as to set the stage for

creating both an intellectual and social environment that satisfies psychology needs,

invites self-reflection, encourages self-volition and facilitates the development of

integrated self-regulation - i.e., in our context, the prophetic *adab*. In other words, CAR

must be utilized to allow students to take ownership for their religion. We present this as

the first diagram to also prevent Islamic teaching from becoming need-thwarting,

psychologically stagnating and fragmenting; in other words, the way Islam is taught must

be prevented from becoming an anti-Islamic contrivance that puts students on the

defensive rather than fostering intrinsic motivation within them and unity/social

integration amongst them. We further describe CAR in brief: Competence is man's basic

psychological need to feel effectance and mastery; Autonomy is a sense of voluntariness.

Regarding the concept of Relatedness, it is concerned with creating a feeling of social

connectivity, i.e. that one feels both valued by others and that one feels integral to social

organizations beyond oneself.[36]

The most important of the religious diagrams is the Diagram of the Islamic

Identity which can be illustrated as follows: draw or envision a heart and write four "I's"

within it. The four "I's" are Intellect, Iman *[faith]*, Intentions and 'Ilm *[knowledge]*. The

heart is meant to literally represent the spiritual locus of those critical aspects (the "I's")

of the Khalifa Self-Concept, i.e. the Muslim identity. It must be stressed to all teachers -

and teachers must convey to students - that the center of the self is the heart and not the

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[36] Ryan and Deci, *Self Determination Theory*, 10-11.

Western conception of "mind." Additionally, instructors must highlight that this heart is the center of human autonomy, i.e. willful and intentional action. It is the control center that issues self-endorsed behaviors that are congruent with one's authentic interest. The human heart is the key to authentic action - ideally, pure for the sake of God and furthering the best interests of human beings.

The second diagram is the Triangle of Islamic Epistemology, which has (one at each angle): 1) Revelation, 2) Soul and 3) World, i.e. experiential and empirical data, as its sources of knowledge. This epistemological diagram represents a balanced approach to knowledge that informs the intellectual processes and paradigms formulated about the self. Furthermore, the diagram is meant to refute the split between the secular, i.e. empirical and experiential, and the sacred, i.e. revelation. This split, which is rooted in Cartesianism and other Enlightenment-era philosophies, has ghastly effects upon Muslim thought and Muslim attempts at building curriculums, writing books and building institutions that are aligned with the *fitra*. These philosophies, packaged as Orientalism and delivered via colonialism,[37] must be counteracted. This diagram and the Diagram of the Islamic Identity are intended to achieve this. The "this" can also be effectively described as intellectual decolonization.

The third diagram is based upon the Hadith of Jibril. It's called the Diagram of Islam and it can be illustrated by drawing a vertical rectangle and drawing three, horizontal lines within it; in other words, the vertical rectangle should be split into three

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[37] Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism*, 129. Hallaq states, "Colonialism and its Orientalist handmaiden played the most critical role in this assault."

parts. The following categories should be written starting from the lowest to the highest level of the rectangle: (1) Universal Principles, (2) Islam, (3) Iman and (4) Ihsan. This rectangle represents the regulatory dimensions of the religion: (1) the bedrock of Islam is its *fitraic* ethical principles, which appeal to all of humanity; (2) the Islamic dimension represents the physical actions or pillars of the religion that regulate man's physiological and psychological states; (3) *Iman* represents the creedal dimensions of the religion, which regulate man's intellect; (4) the two preceding levels allow man to achieve *Ihsan*, or excellence, which is functionally synonymous with aims the *Khalifa* Self-Concept.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It must be recognized that the course of Islamic education in modernity was interrupted by colonialism and other power structures that are not in tune with the teleology of Islamic education. This intervention is something that must be accounted for when attempting to renew curriculum and revive the true spirit of Islamic education. The dangers of not accounting for these factors are too many to enumerate here, but the most salient among them is that when Islamic education is dislocated from its historical heritage, divorced from cultural context and its separated from the Qur'anic Worldview, Islamic education takes a character that it is distinctly not Islamic in the sense that this separation does not allow for the higher aims of Islamic education to be achieved. Another result is that Islam becomes an ideological tool that modern governments use to further geopolitical interests, racial injustice and economic inequality which leads to social strife – in a process that completely alters Islam as a way of life by disabling the liberating effects of its theology, stymying the healing effects of its spiritual and delimiting its ability to heal the human psyche. Islamic education can find its revival in grounding its curricula in the Qur'anic worldview and availing itself of modern psycho-social paradigms to foster healing and initiate methodological Islamic identity development.

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