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# GHAZALI'S PERSONALITY THEORY: A STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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ONAY SAYFASI

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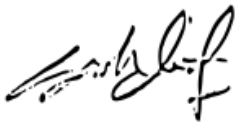

# ABSTRACT

## GHAZALI'S PERSONALITY THEORY: A STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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The raising of children has always been understood to be central to ensuring the preservation of human society, culture, and ultimately civilization. Children are the carriers of our collective knowledge, our history, and our traditions—they are the carriers of our way of being. For centuries, social theorists have accepted child-rearing within the context of a family as an irreplaceable factor in the successful socialization, stable personality development, and identity formation of the individual. However, today's children are born into a world that challenges and at times alienates them from what were once considered essential and traditional markers of the 'self' including links to personal, generational, and cultural histories as well as communal, tribal, and most significantly, familial relationships. To analyze this crisis of self, this study will analyze the work of 11th century Muslim thinker, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in order to distill a discernible theory of personality[1] with specific reference to the significance of humility in early childhood as a way to counter the challenges posed by Modernity in developing personality and a stable selfhood.



KEYWORDS**:** Ghazali; personality; self; humility; childhood; family; child-rearing


[1] Ghazali's personality theory will be defined using the criteria set in Hogan, R., & Smither, R. (2008). *Personality: Theories and applications* (2nd ed.) Tulsa, OK: Hogan Assessment Systems.

# ÖZ

## GAZALİ'NİN KİŞİLİK TEORİSİ: ERKEN YAŞTA ALÇAK GÖNÜLLÜĞÜNÜN ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Gazalinin Kisilik Teorisi: Erken Yasta Alcakgonullulugun Onemi Uzerine Bir Calisma Cocuklarin yetirtirilmesinin insan toplumunun, kulturunun ve nihayetinde uygarliginin korunmasinda merkezi rolu oldugu her zaman bilinmistir. Çocuklar, kollektif bilgimizin, tarihimizin ve geleneklerimizin taşıyıcılarıdır - onlar bizim varoluşumuzun taşıyıcılarıdır. Yuzyillardir sosyal teorisyenler, cocugun aile icinde yetistirilmesinin, başarılı bir sosyalleşme, istikrarlı kişilik gelişimi ve bireyin kimlik oluşumunda vazgeçilmez bir faktör olarak kabul etmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, bugünün çocukları, bir zamanlar kişisel, kuşaksal ve kültürel gecmisin ve komünal, kabile ve aile iliskilerininin, temel ve geleneksel benlik isaretlerinden uzak ve onlari zaman zaman yabacilastiran bir dünyaya doğarlar. Bu benlik krizini analiz etmek için, bu çalışma,11. yüzyıl Müslüman düşünürü Ebu Hamid el-Gazali'nin calismalarini, modernitenin kişilik ve istikrarlı bir benlik geliştirmedeki zorluklarına karsilik vermek icin erken yasta alcakgonullulugun ogretilmesinin onemine ozel vurgu yaparak ele alacaktir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Gazali; kişilik; özbenlik; alcakgonulluluk; çocukluk; aile; cocuk yetistirme

To my Ammara:

"I wish I could show you,
When you are lonely or in darkness,
The Astonishing Light Of your own Being."

*(Hafiz of Shiraz)*

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# INTRODUCTION

The last few centuries have witnessed unprecedented change in human life and society. Birthed through the scientific revolution, Reformation, Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and most recently internet and communication technologies, a new and globalized civilization has risen. Converting scientific advances into industrial, material gains, this period has been one of Western domination--intellectually, economically, and militarily. The 20th century saw the spread of a particularly Western modernity: materialistic, liberal (and notedly secular), and capitalist. However, with the rise of Modernity, Western society lost several main value bases. The pursuit of wealth and power became the driving force of human "progress"—a contradiction to the religious teachings of many faiths and in sharp contrast to ancient traditions around the world.

As modern bureaucracy replaces "tradition with rational decision-making procedures" and the separation of church and state reduce the role religion plays in "providing the criteria by which everyday choices are made," individuals face a "value gap"—an acute inability "to find meaningful ways to endow their lives with value and make choices that are right and good."[2] Consequently, an 'artificial coherence' has become the foundation of the Modern worldview. The new vision of reality and truth is understood vis-a-vis a gradual process of philosophical speculation and scientific discovery that is "left vague and open-ended for future change and alteration in line with paradigms that change in correspondence with changing circumstances."[3]

The modern worldview has been described by numerous scholars as incoherent, confusing, disenchanting, and problematic to say the least.[4] Zygmunt Bauman discusses the moral disengagement of the individual from society as the de facto consequence of Western civilization's worldview that with globalization has challenged and subdued cultural, political, and moral currents counter to its own. The norms of the new order are

[2] Baumeister, Roy F., and Mark Muraven. (1996). "Identity as Adaptation to Social, Cultural, and Historical Context." *Journal of Adolescence*, vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 409

[3] Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. (1995). *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization. P 4-5

[4] See: Al-Attas (1995); Demirci, (2017); Bauman (2000); Callan (1999); Hallaq (2013); Fukoyama (2000)

solid enough to morally and intellectually colonize the world once more. Melting "the fetters and manacles rightly or wrongly suspected of limiting the individual freedom to choose and to act," the liberalizing impetus of the new order "re-educat[es] and convert[s] to its ways the rest of social life" until it is able to "dominate the totality of human life."[5] The capacity to 'melt [the] solids' of other moral and ethical systems, —namely religious ethical systems as developed by figures like the Catholic Saint, Francis de Sales, and the Muslim Scholar, Abu Hamid Al Ghazali,—is the most distinct and dangerous feature of the neoliberal order. Dissolving social networks and bonds of co-ordination among individuals, ending the 'era of mutual engagement', and replacing it with a code of conformity based on rules of shifting freedom, the modern order has a remarkable capacity to infiltrate society at both the macro and micro levels—from "the 'system' to 'society', [and] from politics' to 'life-policies'" ultimately leaving even the most 'stable' societies morally confused.

The modern crisis has been called a major disruption in human history.[6] According to the census data, world map statistics, and other social research over the last few decades the trend around the world, but most notably in North America, Oceania, and Europe, has been toward smaller households, fewer family and married-couple households, declining birthrates and more people living alone, especially at older ages.[7][8][9] Moreover, with an increase in crime rates, and declining personal trust and confidence in social institutions, the modern individual operates without a set of shared norms of behavior, making social cooperation seemingly impossible.[10] Social atomization is consequently on the rise as "each person looks out for the interests of herself and her immediate social network"[11] without any reference to a wider collective. These patterns of increased isolation correspond to increased social and psychological

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[5] Bauman, Zygmunt. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. Print. p. 4-5
[6] Fukuyama, Francis. (2000). *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*. Profile Books.
[7] Jonathan Vespa, Jamie M. Lewis, and Rose M. Kreider, (2013). America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012, Current Population Reports, P20-570, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.
[8] World Family Map 2015. "Mapping Family Change and Child Well-being Outcomes." Child Trends and Social Trends Institute. Web.
[9] Eurostat. "Household Composition Statistics." *Household Composition Statistics*. Eurostat, Aug. 2016. Web.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Miller, David. (2000). *Citizenship and national identity*. Polity): Cambridge. P 447

pathologies linked to dissipating familial bonds, relationships, and anchors of social identity.

Ontologically insecure and existentially uncertain, modern society—with its shifting and unstable worldview —is contradictory and conflicted. Its conflict is defined by a distortion of life priorities as individuals deal with what appear to be contradictory needs in the social, political, economic, and spiritual spheres of life. It is a conflict characterized by anxiety and alienation, where individuals lose sense of boundaries and expectations, and where they feel abandoned in their empty relationships and insignificant in their roles. It is a conflict that despite illusions of freedom and choice, oppresses the mind leaving individuals depressed, unfulfilled, and alone in the monotonous loop of meaningless routine. It is a conflict that many have termed a 'crisis of self.'

The crisis of self is defined specifically as a sense of isolation and atomization, moral, social, and role confusion, and of uncertainty about one's place and purpose in life characteristic of contemporary experience. It is an identity crisis at its roots. It is evident in increased social and psychological pathologies as well as troubling social trends including rising rates of anxiety, depression, suicide, crime, and issues of self-esteem, security, and identity as well as declining personal trust as well as institutional trust.[12]

So where do we begin in addressing this crisis? The solution has been found to be as complicated as the problem. This study attempts to address part of the crisis by shifting from a macro level analysis of civilization to a more micro level study of individuals and families. At the most basic level, modern individuals still claim self and family as two of the most important values.[13] The potential conflict between them, however, is ever greater as that which "is best for the self is not necessarily what is best for the family." And so, individuals struggle as their "own needs for selfhood and their perception of what is demanded of them" is at odds.[14] Without a historical

[12] See: Barglow. (1994).; Bauman (2000); Baumeister & Exline (2002); Fukuyama (2000); Giddens (1991); Jung (1933); Lasch (2018); Eurostat. (2016); World Family Map 2015

[13] Baumeister, Roy F., and Mark Muraven. (1996). "Identity as Adaptation to Social, Cultural, and Historical Context." pp. 411–412

[14] Ibid.

consciousness and loyalty to a traditional moral order, the very meaning of family—from which historically a composite sense of self and identity develop—has changed.

Families have always been a crucial institution of society and civilization because of their role in socializing children—the future members of any society. It is through child-rearing that individuals adopt a worldview—i.e. the cultural norms, mores, and notions about the self and its relation to society. Children are habituated with structures and routines to build ontological security as well as social empathy. Many researchers even "believe that children's attachment to their parents, and then to others, is the beginning of morality"—that the sense of self and social awareness as a young child is instrumental in his future ability to be a harmonious member of a community. It is as a young child that humans learn prosocial behaviors—i.e. to "protect, cooperate, and even sacrifice for each other."[15]

As a logical result, child-rearing has always carried ideological weight. Disconnected from broader kinship and with diminishing trust of traditional knowledge, modern parents have lost confidence in themselves and their ability to raise healthy, stable, and moral children and increasingly seek advice from external 'professional' sources. However, political and economic ideologies have historically worked their way into child-rearing advice particularly in the West where, without a stable moral basis, advice has changed to reflect the most immediate issues and tensions experienced by a society.[16]

While child-rearing advice has changed dramatically in Western history and discourse, there seems to have been a relatively stable understanding of childhood and child-rearing in the non-West. However, the globalization of Western culture and its inherent epistemological bias have affected child-rearing philosophy and practices in the non-West as well. This epistemological bias was manifest since the advent of Orientalism when Western thinkers "consciously or unconsciously projected the experience of their own societies onto the non-Western world."[17] This epistemological

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[15] Berger, K.S.(2012).The developing person through childhood (8th edition). New York, NY:Worth Publishers. p296

[16] Fass, Paula S.(2004). *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: in History and Society*, Macmillan Reference USA

[17] Elmessiri, Abdelwahab M., and Alison Lake. (2013). Epistemological Bias in the Physical and Social Sciences. International Institute of Islamic Thought. p. 8

bias is strikingly evident in the field cognitive science, in which researchers "of culture, the mind, and human ideas have adopted two points of view: the enlightenment rational/ scientific point of view and the romantic rebellion point of view." This bias has been particularly inhibitive in psychology where knowledge about social facts and understanding of the self cannot be "imported and consumed like any other commodity."[18] While cross-cultural psychology has begun to acknowledge this reality to the extent of recognizing collectivist from individualistic cultures, personality psychology has lagged behind. In light of this void, this study frames Ghazali's ideas into a comparable theory of personality contributing to the broader discourse.

Abu Hamid Al Ghazali (*c.*1058–1111) is considered to be one of the most influential jurists, theologians, philosophers, and mystics in the history of Islamic thought. Commonly referred to as the Islamic revivalist or *mujaddid* of the 5th century, Ghazali is known for his invaluable contributions in the refutation of Greek philosophy, the systematization of what is often referred to as Islamic mysticism or Sufism, and for his comprehensive philosophy of social and individual ethics and spirituality.[19] Penned in the 11th century, his *magnum opus, The Revival of Islamic Sciences* (*Ihya Ulum al-Din)* has endured as one of the greatest and most groundbreaking works of Islamic history. In the *Ihya,* Ghazali includes a chapter on raising children (*Riyadatul Sibyan*). The advice on child-rearing that Ghazali outlines can be viewed as an analogy for the entire *Ihya*, which expounds the basic principles of individual spiritual growth and development. In *Riyadatul Sibyan,* Ghazali offers a number of basic principles that should form the foundation of a child's solid understanding of self in relation to constantly shifting world around him.

For the purpose of this study, I will use a comparative structure-oriented approach to unpack the modern 'crisis of self.' To determine the variables of comparison, I will first map Ghazali's personality theory using the six points of criteria set by Hogan and Smither (2008). This will allow me to comparatively discuss the historical, social, and psychological underpinning of child-rearing in the Modern West

[18] Ibid. p. 10
[19] Al-Musleh, Mohamed Abu-Bakr A. *Ghazali: the Islamic Reformer.* Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2012.

and Ghazalian thought with specific reference to the significance of humility in early childhood personality development. Part I provides a literature review of three pertinent areas to this study, the first two are contextual and the last provides a landscape for comparative analysis. They include: (1) The Evolution of 'Family' in modern Western history illustrating the breakdown of the initial environment for personality development, (2) Conceptions of Childhood that historically portray a long-standing inability of modern Western society to understand themselves and children, and (3) Personality & the Self in Western Psychology that for centuries has tried to address the growing ontological crisis by defining and redefining the 'self.' Part II applies Hogan and Smither's personality theory framework to Ghazali's thought in contribution to the discourse on personality psychology and the crisis of self. Part III summarizes Ghazali's principles of child-rearing and discusses the importance of humility in Ghazali's theory of early childhood personality development.

This study is significant to many fields, but specifically cultural and cross-cultural psychology in which understanding of personality generally assumes a stable, uniform influence of a homogenous culture.[20] But as has been made evident, rapid globalization, erasure of human and ideologic bonds, mass migration, and resulting demographic shifts have resulted in a growing number of individuals who identify with and live in more than one culture. This motley cultural backdrop and prevailing epistemological bias complicates traditional patterns of personality research and (more pressingly) the actual development of personality in modernity.

## PART I: LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The Evolution of 'Family'*

In context of the crisis of self, this study looks first at the dramatic changes to the structure and functionality of family' in modern Western history and the initial environment for personality development. In *Social Structure* (1949), George Murdock examined a total of 250 societies to trace the structural patterns of family, which he considered to be the most basic institution of social organization. Murdock defined family as a "social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation,

[20] Benet-Martínez, Verónica. (2006). "Cross-Cultural Personality Research: Conceptual and Methodological Issues." *Handbook of Research Methods in Personality Psychology*. Gilford Press.

and reproduction includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults."[21] Over the years, sociologists have determined five basic social functions of the family: 1) sexual regulation, 2) reproduction, 3) economic cooperation, 4) socialization/education, and 5) the provision of affection, protection and emotional support. It was noted that in the absence of these crucial psychological needs many malfunctions in the conduct of a person in society can manifest**.**[22]

Talcott Parsons focuses on two "irreducible functions" of the family as a social institution: first of which is "the primary socialization of children so that they can truly become members of the society into which they have been born;" and the second is "the stabilization of the adult personalities of the population of the society." He expands this concept of socialization by underlining how the family incubates a child's "internalization of the culture of the society into which they have been born" and "the patterns of value which in another aspect constitute the institutionalized patterns of the society."[23] These functions are complicated by increased globalization and the rise of multicultural nations and families in which immigrant and first or second-generation individuals may harbor two or more conflicting value systems, and the socialization of children occurs under hybrid and not always stable conditions**.**

When examining the history of family and child-rearing in the West, perhaps the most well-known work is that of Philippe Aries. In *Centuries of Childhood* (1965), Aries studies the evolution of parental investment in French families from the 16th to 19th centuries. One of Aries' central claims is that "parental investment" varies over time and space, and that the actual behavior of parents is dependent on the way they themselves have been socialized in their cultures. Aries' suggestion that cultural influence determines the meaning for ideas like childhood, parental responsibility, abuse, and neglect.[24] Relatedly, modern cultural changes have influenced the very

[21] Murdock, G.P., (1949), Social structure. The MacMillan Company, New York.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Parsons, Talcott, and Robert Freed Bales. (2007). *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*. Routledge, p. 16
[24] Philippe Aries, (1962). Centuries of Childhood, Robert Baldick, trans. (London), p. 39

notion of 'family' in the West. So much so that, Steven Mintz argues that the concept of the 'modern traditional' family is not more than 150 years old.

Not until the 19th century did 'traditional' nuclear family patterns emerge when Victorian era middle class women actively took up the vocations of motherhood and house-making. But even what constitutes the categories of 'traditional' and 'normal' have changed with time and place. After the influence of Victorian women, the industrial revolution dramatically altered these notions in relation to the family. Industrial production had two significant impacts on the family: (1) it took the father out of the home for work and diminished his role and presence in the life of a child, and (2) it forced the mother—in an attempt to make up for the father's absence, but without extended family support and their childrearing advice—to rely on outside experts in dealing with the fact that she "fe[lt] at a loss to understand what the child needs," but her "attentions fail[ed] to provide the child with a sense of security."[25] Christopher Lasch in his study of the erosion of American families, suggests that "the psychological patterns associated with pathological narcissism, which in less exaggerated form manifest themselves in so many patterns of American culture—in the fascination with fame and celebrity, the fear of competition, the inability to suspend disbelief, the shallowness and transitory quality of personal relations, the horror of death"—-originate in the peculiar structure of the American family resulting from these modes of production.[26]

During the 1920s and 30s when behaviorism was highly influential, and the Great Depression overshadowed American culture. It was a time when self-help books became all the rage as American confidence was at a catastrophic low. There was also a trend of mothers' abandoning historic forms of 'maternal instinct' as doctors, psychiatrists, and other authorities meticulously regulated child-parent contact condemning "maternal overprotection" and urging "parents of respect the child's emotional independence."[27] A major consequence of experts taking child-rearing out of the hands of parents is the interference with traditional stages of attachment, especially to the mother. Lasch goes as far as to regard this era as the beginning of the

[25]Lasch, Christopher. (2018). *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* p*176*
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Ibid. p 161

"socialization of reproduction and the collapse of parental authority" in America. His study surveys how the functions of the family in regard to child-rearing have been gradually appropriated by the state and society at large. This gradual and exponential change is underlined by the idea that families themselves were increasingly viewed as not fit to educate, 'civilize,' and provide for their own needs. Citing the argument of Ellen Richards, founder of the modern profession of social work, Lasch highlights how "in the social republic, the child as a future citizen is an asset of the state, not the property of its parents." He traces how simultaneously public discourse made parents feel incompetent and public policy attempted to 'improve' the home by bypassing or replacing it completely. The idea that the failing family could only be saved by outside influence only further undermined the education and socialization process that occurs naturally in the home.

Two decades later, the 1950s saw a backlash to the earlier hands-off parenting resulting in a new level of permissiveness in American parenting refocused for the last time on patriarchal family roles and encouraging parents to make children feel loved and accepted every moment of their life. Then amidst the 1960s and 70s backdrop of social movements advocating the rights of African Americans and women, there was a renewed insistence on "restoring the rights of the parent in the face of an exaggerated concern for the rights of the child" which led to the philosophy that parents "should not be held responsible for the faults of their children" and the idea that culture—not parenting (or lack thereof)—is the deepest roots of a child's problems.

The pendulum of parenting dogma continued to swing back and forth and Western parents have been caught in a state of "superimposed anxiety," bombarded with conflicting and contradictory 'expert' advice— or "psychiatric imperialism" as Hilde Brusch calls it in her famous book *Don't be Afraid of Your Child.*[28] In reaction to behavioral and progressive prescriptions that focused on the "parent's power to deform the child," society unburdened parents of the responsibility in what Lasch terms the ultimate collapse of parental guidance. The underlying conception of emotional

[28] Ibid. p 163

intelligence was not fully developed and suggested that it is "important for a child to know what he feels rather than why he feels it."[29]

Gradually, parents—themselves facing a crisis of self—were convinced to almost completely relinquish their roles as caregivers and in child-rearing. They outsourced this role largely to the state and private institutions as Mark Gerzon notes: "obstetricians take charge at birth; pediatricians are responsible for child's ailments and cures; the teacher for his intelligence;…the supermarket and food industry for his food; television for his myths."[30] Lasch notes the "invasion of the family by industry, the mass media, and the agencies of socialized parenthood," has "altered the quality of parent-child connection" and led to a collapse in parental authority and confidence. Jules Henry views "the collapse of parental authority [as a reflection of] the collapse of ancient impulse controls" and the shift "from a society in which Super-Ego values (the values of self-restraint) were ascendant, to one in which more and more recognition was being given to the values of the id (the values of self-indulgence.)"[31]

Ultimately, with the rise of the nuclear family and the continual reduction of the extended family alongside the shifting ideas on parenting, a "new and anomic psycho-social order" premised on ideas of individualism has emerged.[32] In *The Hour of Our Death*, Aries' claims that in the second half of the 20th century, the spread of potent individualism and the cultural priority given to individual self-fulfillment made individuals increasingly reluctant to form "altruistic families in which the welfare of costly, time-intensive children were supposed to take precedence over their own."[33] As a result, parents became less concerned about the welfare of their own children while others wrote off all together the need to marry and have a family of their own.

It is in this context that Western sociologists have put forth the concept of the 'postmodern family. The 'post-modern family' is broad enough to encompass a multitude of forms in which the family can occur, and also the idea that "new or altered family forms continue to emerge and develop." One of the biggest impacts on the post-

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[29] *Ibid.* p. 167
[30] *Ibid.* p. 168
[31] Ibid. p 177
[32] Mintz, Steven. (2006). *Huck's Raft: a History of American Childhood*. Belknap Press of Harward University Press.
[33] Aries, Philippe. (1981). *The Hour of Our Death*. Knopf.

modern family, Manuel Castells argues, is the undoing of the historic patriarchal family. Castells asserts that this will crumble the entire social system of patriarchy that the modern world was built on and will transform society as we know it. He argues that the single most representative process of this shift is "the transformation of women's consciousness, and of societal values in most societies, [which] in three decades, [has been] staggering, and it yields fundamental consequences for the entire human experience, from political power to the structure of personality."[34]

Castells' definition of the patriarchal family is what earlier sociologist would have called the traditional nuclear family with a two parent, heterosexual household predominately run by the father. Castells substantiates the crisis of the traditional patriarchal family with four trends that he argues "point to the end of the family as we have known it until now. Not just the nuclear family (a modern artifact), but the family based on patriarchal domination that has been the rule for millennia." The four trends include: 1) "The dissolution of households of married couples, by divorce or separation, is a first indicator of disaffection with a model of family that relied on the long-term commitment of family members;" 2) "the increasing frequency of marital crises, and the growing difficulty of making marriage, work, and life compatible, seem to be associated with two other powerful trends: delaying coupling; and setting up partnerships without marriage;" 3) "As a result of these different tendencies, together with demographic factors, such as the aging of the population, and the difference in mortality rates between sexes, an increasing variety of household structures emerges, thus diluting the prevalence of the classic nuclear family model (first time married couples and their children), and undermining its social reproduction;" and 4) "under the conditions of family instability, and with the increasing autonomy of women in their reproductive behavior, the crisis of the patriarchal family extends into the crisis of social patterns of population replacement."[35]

Despite the changes in size, make-up, roles, and interpersonal relationships of families, studies maintain that broader social "cohesion and solidarity is manifested primarily in the family" and that "individuals define themselves in relation to the family

[34] Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Print. p195
[35] *Ibid.* p 197

they belong; the sense of belonging plays an important role in terms of assuming various roles within the family" and later in society.[36] However, the changing patterns of 'family' in Western history illustrate the slow breakdown of society at a number of levels, but pertinent to this study is their effect on young children whose personality and sense of self has traditionally depended on a stable family and home environment.

***Conceptions of Childhood***

The changes affecting the structure of family correlate to shifting conceptions of childhood in Western history. According to Hugh Cunningham, the history of childhood, more than any other branch of history "has been shaped by the concerns of the world in which historians live in." It is the anxiety about how children are raised, "about the nature of children (angels or monsters?), about the forces, primarily commercialism, impinging on them, and about the rights and responsibilities that should be accorded to them" that have preoccupied the Western world for the last few centuries.[37] While contemporary discussions on childhood often veer into liberal discussions on the agency, rights, and freedom of children, historically discussions of childhood have been heavily influenced by the Platonic doctrine that learning is a recollection of previously known Forms, and Aristotelian thought which held child-rearing to be moral development.

Both Plato and Aristotle consciously abandoned "the prevailing idea of childhood in Greek antiquity in which children were perceived as miniature adults and schooled in adult literature as if their minds were able to function like those of adults." While Plato "devotes much attention to the education of the child as a future citizen,"[38] Aristotle expands this understanding beyond the ideal state and discusses the child—while distinct from an adult—as still part of the broader human community. Childhood was an interrelated part of a whole: "because human beings are by nature political [by what we mean as *social* today] animals, one cannot become happy apart from a community" and all people, including children, "become individuals as participating members of a social context by sharing certain ends with others and

[36] Parsons, Talcott, and Robert Freed Bales. (2007). *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*
[37] Cunningham, Hugh. (1998). "Histories of Childhood." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 103, no. 4, p. 1195
[38] Fass, Paula S. (2004). "Plato (427-348 B.C.E.)"*Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood"*

working with them to realize those ends."[39] The highest good, happiness, however, was perceived as the harmonious city-state.

The civic nature of both Aristotle's and Plato's conception of childhood reinforces the importance of child-rearing to society and civilization. Moreover, both philosophers argued how the civilizing process is married to the education process. Education, as they conceive it, begins in early childhood with the requirement of the family to "care [for] the soul and body of the child." Plato argues in the *Republic* that proper education leads a child to have "a nature in which goodness of character has been well and truly established" so as to breed a familiarity with reason which he believes is man's true nature.[40] Similarly, Aristotle's ideas on child-rearing and education aim at training a child "in the direction of virtuous conduct" which can only be achieved when "their intellects develop in such manner that they can determine which means to employ in the pursuit of moral and social ends."[41] The socialization of children in both Platonic and Aristotelian thought requires a focus on a particular moral development that habituates a child to become a harmonious member of the social community which as we will see is not unlike what Ghazali believes.

Cunningham acknowledges that after Plato and Aristotle, childhood theory was significant impacted by Aries and his most infamous notion—that "in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist"—which was, in fact, a product of mistranslation. The word "idea" was a translation of the French *sentiment*, conveys a very different meaning.[42] Aries asserts that Medieval European civilization did not differentiate between child and adult and saw the former as a smaller, undeveloped version of the latter. He argues that it wasn't until the rise of modernity that education paired with religious reform altered the concept and approach to childhood and childrearing to something more akin to what we would recognize today.

Mintz in his study on American childhood, focuses on how "every aspect of childhood—including children's household responsibilities, play, schooling,

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[39] Fass, Paula S. (2004). "Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.)."*Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood"*
[40] Plato. 1941 [385 B.C.E.]. *The Republic of Plato.* Trans. Francis Macdonald Cornford. New York: Oxford University Press. bk. 3, 398-401
[41] Fass, Paula S. (2004). "Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.)."*Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood:"*
[42] Philippe Aries, (1962). Centuries of Childhood, p. 125.

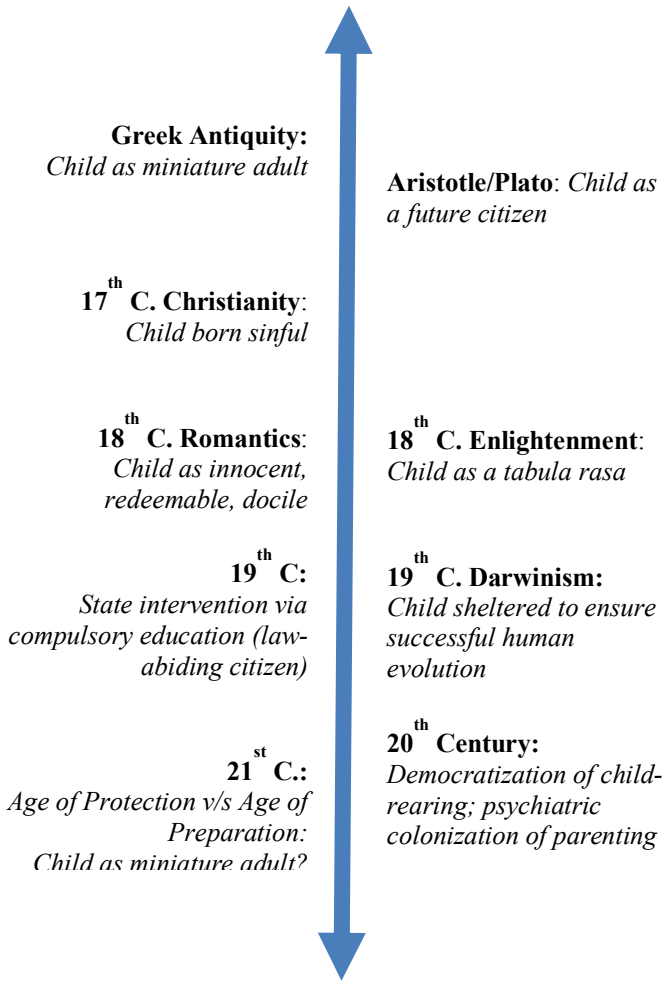


***Figure 1: Changing Conceptions of the 'Child' in the West***

relationships with parents and peers, and paths to adulthood—has been transformed over the past four centuries." He categorizes the changes of childhood in the last four hundred years in three broad categories: First, the shift in timing, sequence, and stages of growing up has culminated in a highly age segregated society in which there is an increasing effort to regularize and systematize childhood experiences. This is evidenced by the rise of prescribed curricula and age-graded institutions. The second force of change is demographic. The dramatic drop in birth rate "substantially reduced the proportion of children in the general population, from half the population in the mid-19th century to a third by 1900."[43] This change in demography facilitated the further division of society based on age and generations. The third force of change is in attitudes towards children mirroring ideological shifts in society.[44]

Chronologically speaking, the concept of 'modern' childhood emerged in the middle of the 18th century with a set of new attitudes that saw it as a distinct stage of life

[43] Mintz, Steven. (2009) "The Social and Cultural Construction of American Childhood." *Handbook of Contemporary Families Considering the Past, Contemplating the Future*, edited by Marilyn Coleman and Lawrence H. Ganong, Sage Publications. P 45
[44] Mintz, Steven. (2009) "The Social and Cultural Construction of American Childhood.". P 37

requiring special care and institutions to protect it. The Enlightenment had a pivotal impact on the conceptualization of child during this era "with its emphasis on reconstructing humanity and creating a reasonable citizen, also encouraged advice-giving and -seeking in child-rearing matters." Many intellectuals followed suit with John Locke in breaking with the traditional Christian idea of original sin, instead perceiving the new-born infant as a *tabula rasa* whose development into a socialized adult depended on the environment of his upbringing.[45] Experts writing advice manuals in the 18th century "tended to see the family as a microcosm of society, so what children learned of human relationships in the family was important to their future interactions as adults in a society increasingly moving from a rural social organization and agrarian values to more mobile, urban, commercial patterns." While in America, Protestant influence encouraged the view that young children were "capable of being gently molded toward the good and not innately sinful," the more common view in the West was that of the Calvinists who believed "that rearing a child was a battle of wills between the inherently sinful infant or child and the parent."[46]

In the 19th century, industrialization and urbanization of life contributed to the separation of life into two spheres, the public and the private. There was a growing acceptance of the concept of sheltered childhood "evident in the prolonged residence of young people in the parental home, longer periods of formal schooling, and an increasing consciousness about the stages of young people's development, culminating in the "discovery" (or, more accurately, the invention) of adolescence around the turn of the twentieth century."

With Darwin's 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species,* it became popular to perceive "the development of the individual child mirror[ing] the history of the human race in its rise from primitive simian beginnings to the heights of Western civilization."[47] It was during this time that child-rearing began to be seen as 'a hazardous activity' where one mistake could result in the failure of a child to evolve into

[45] Gill, Natasha. ( 2010). Educational Philosophy in the French Enlightenment: From Nature to Second Nature. Farnham: Ashgate.
[46] Fass, Paula S. (2004). "Child-Rearing Advice Literature." *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood"*
[47] Fortna, Benjamin C. (2016). *Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After*. Boston. p. 3

a mature adult. Essentially, successful parenting—in the hyper-rational fashion of the day—became a science and "it was next to impossible without expert external advice."[48]

The 19th century— known as the Age of New Imperialism—also saw the rise of "new compulsory systems of education set up in Europe and North America" which were not concerned with the Romantic ideal of a happy-go-lucky child. Instead, "their principal aim was to create literate, useful and law-abiding citizens who would love their native land and be ready to die for its sake."[49] This trend of state intervention only increased, as Western societies saw parental influence as a potential corrupting force on future generations. As a result, formal state education with the introduction of early childhood education programs like preschool, nursery school, day care, pre-primary, and Montessori began to take children out of the home at an increasingly earlier age. Today, many if not most 3- to 5-year-olds are already in school subject to a socialization process that has almost entirely replaced the role of the family and parents in early childhood development.[50]

Not until the 1950s, did "the norms of modern childhood define the modal experience of young people in the United States," however social and cultural developments were already under way threatening to undermine modern childhood and replace it with something quite different: postmodern childhood.[51] Furthermore, in contrast to the 17th century Puritan parents who believed "they were responsible for their children's spiritual upbringing, contemporary parents hold themselves responsible not only for children's physical well-being, but also for their psychological adjustment, personal happiness, and future success."[52] With this increasing responsibility came the increasing anxiety—panic as Mintz calls it—around 'successful' and 'proper' parenting.

A pattern "of recurrent moral panics over children's wellbeing" developed beginning with the Pilgrims who were fearful that "their posterity would be in danger to degenerate and be corrupted" in the Old World. While some of the panic was justified and a response to illnesses like polio in the 1950s, Mintz suggests that the panics were

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[48] Hall, G. Stanley. (1904).Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime and Religion (New York: D. Appleton and Company).
[49] Fortna, Benjamin C. (2016). *Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After*. p. 6
[50] Berger, K.S. (2012). The developing person through childhood.
[51] Mintz, Steven. (2006). *Huck's Raft: a History of American Childhood*. p3-4.
[52] Ibid. p. ix

"more metaphorical than representational"[53] and children have been used "as a lightning rod for America's anxieties about society as a whole."[54] Society projects its "fears and anxieties onto the young and [has repeatedly] instituted desperate measures to protect them from exaggerated menaces."[55]

Marie Winn cites the "great social upheavals of the late 1960's and early 1970's – the so-called sexual revolution, the drug epidemic, the women's movement, the breakdown of the conventional two-parent family, the spread of psychoanalytic thinking and the proliferation of television" – as a significant period in which the changes in adult life prompted new ways of dealing with children. She specifically cites the women's liberation movement. During this time, women rejected "their roles as child-women and objected to being protected and treated" as such. This consciousness made them rethink their relationship with their own children. In projecting their own desire to be emotionally independent from their husbands, women began, "perhaps unconsciously at first, to encourage their children to be independent and assertive."[56] In this way, the child was gradually "enlisted as an accomplice in his own upbringing" and childrearing transformed from "the benevolent despotism it had been for centuries" into "a more perilous, more collaborative, more democratic process, one that [parents] felt instinctively was beyond their powers to pull off successfully."[57]

Cultural anxieties are often displaced on the young because increasingly adults are "unable to control the world around them" so they "shift their attention to that which they think they can control: the next generation."[58] Unfortunately, there is no way to predict what new anxieties and crises the world and children will face. The risk-filled world requires a level of knowledge and preparation that can be imparted to children. Insulating and protecting children from pressure and responsibility only makes them more vulnerable. This line of thinking underlines one of the most recent debates on

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[53] *Ibid.* p3
[54] *Ibid.* p. 340
[55] Ibid. p 3
[56] Winn, Marie. (1983). "The Loss Of Childhood. *"The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/1983/05/08/magazine/the-loss-of-childhood.html
[57] Ibid.
[58] Mintz, Steven. (2006). *Huck's Raft: a History of American Childhood*. p. 345

childhood: the "culture war-pitting advocates of a "protected" childhood, seeking to shield children from adult realities, against proponents of a "prepared" childhood."[59]

Winn ways into this debate arguing that the 'Age of Protection' has already ended giving way to the 'Age of Preparation.' She further says that "where parents once felt obliged to shelter their children from life's vicissitudes, today, great numbers of them have come to operate according to a new belief: that children must be exposed early to adult experience in order to survive in an increasingly uncontrollable world." Winn sees this trend as an injustice to children who "are integrated at a young age into the adult world" and "in every way their lives have become more difficult, more confusing - in short, more like adult lives."[60]

Moreover, scholars argue that integration into the adult world also entails integration into adult culture. They believe "contemporary children mature faster physiologically than those in the past," and note how children—thanks to the internet, social media, and television— "are more knowledgeable about sexuality, drugs, and other adult realities." Thus, parental anxiety about children's well-being is dramatically different than what it was even a century ago when "parents were primarily concerned about their children's health, religious piety, and moral development." With changes to family structure and roles, the increased age segregation, and outsource of parenting to professionals there comes a new set of modern anxieties related to "children's personality development, gender identity, and their ability to interact with peers. Today, much more than in the past, guilt-ridden, uncertain parents worry that their children not suffer from boredom, low self-esteem, or excessive school pressures."[61]

When it comes to understanding the significance of *early* childhood, Western scholarship *has* changed over the last three centuries. In the mid-18th century, there was very little interest in early childhood which was often dismissed as irrelevant. Today, there is a general consensus "that children's experiences during the first two or three years of life mold their personality, lay the foundation for future cognitive and psychological development, and leave a lasting imprint on their emotional life."

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[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Winn, Marie. (1983). "The Loss Of Childhood."
[61] Peter N. Stearns, *Anxious Parents: A History of Modern Childrearing in America.* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

Furthermore, due to the influence of Freud, Piaget, and Erikson there is an assumption "that children's development proceeds through a series of physiological psychological, social, and cognitive stages; that even very young children have a capacity to learn; that play serves valuable developmental functions; and that growing up requires children to separate emotionally and psychologically from their parents."[62] However, Western psychology still maintains that personality and identity specifically are inconsequential in early childhood and only emerge in adolescence—an idea that is contrary to Ghazali's theory.

Western scholars continue to debate whether it is better to view childhood as distinct phase of life necessitating parental protection, or to prepare children to deal with the inevitable world of smartphones and social media where parental supervision is limited if at all possible. In other words, Western scholarship is still arrested in defining childhood. The turbulent history of childhood portrays a long-standing inability of modern Western society to understand themselves and children. As we will see, Ghazali's perception of childhood and child-rearing not only addresses the contemporary protection-versus-preparation debate, but also provides a more stable conception of childhood.

***Personality & The Self in Western Psychology***

Historians study and attempt "to reconstruct the child-rearing practices of a society or of a segment of a society in order to understand what sorts of adult men and women that rearing would be likely to create–or at least the kinds a society would like to create." The child, thus, is a crucial, but often neglected topic in the macro approach to studying civilization. Embedded in the philosophy of child-rearing is the identity, morality, and consciousness of civilization. It is only through children and their capacity to carry a cohesive worldview that a civilization can survive. This capacity and worldview, however, depend on the development of healthy personality.

The focus on personality and specifically the understanding of self has been an essential part of philosophical, political and psychological discourse since Greek antiquity. According to the *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, personality "refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. The

[62] Fass, Paula S. (2004). "Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: in History and Society." .p 648

study of personality focuses on two areas: One is understanding individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. The other is understanding how the various parts of a person come together as a whole."[63]

McAdams surveys the history of personality psychology, which began formally in the 1930s despite theorists like Freud, Jung, and Adler who had been writing for over thirty years on the topic. In the next thirty years, more than twenty rival systems for understanding the individual sprang up. Broadly speaking, Western personality psychology can be split into four perspectives: (1) the psychoanalytic perspective of personality that includes major theorists like Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler whose theories emphasize the importance of early childhood experiences and the unconscious mind; (2) the humanistic perspective of personality that includes major theorists like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow whose theories focus on psychological growth, free will, personal awareness, and self-actualization; (3) the trait perspective of personality which includes theorists like Hans Eysenck Raymond Cattell, Robert McCrae, and Paul Costa whose theories are centered on identifying, describing, and measuring the specific traits that make up human personality and individual difference; (4) the social cognitive perspective of personality that includes theorists like Albert Bandura who emphasized the importance of observational learning, self-efficacy, situational influences and cognitive processes.[64]

| Perspective | Major Theorists | Claim |
|---|---|---|
| Psycho-analytic | Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler | emphasize the importance of early childhood experiences and the unconscious mind |
| Humanistic | Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow | focus on psychological growth, free will, personal awareness, and self-actualization |
| Trait | Hans Eysenck Raymond Cattell, Robert McCrae, and Paul Costa | centered on identifying, describing, and measuring the specific traits that make up human personality and individual difference |
| Social Cognitive | Albert Bandura | importance of observational learning, self-efficacy, situational influences and cognitive processes |

***Figure 2: Perspectives of Western Personality Psychology***

[63] Kazdin, Alan E. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*. American Psychological Association, 2000.
[64] Cherry, Kendra. *The Everything Psychology Book, 2nd Edition: Explore the Human Psyche and Understand Why We Do the Things We Do*. F W Media, 2010.

Despite over a century of research on motives, traits, and schemas, Western personality psychology has "a rich but rather confusing conceptual yield." By and large, efforts to "bring the balkanized research programs into a centralized conceptual system have been few and disappointing." According to McAdams, "even the recent emergence of the Big Five as a dominant trait taxonomy has failed to provide a framework that is comprehensive enough to account for the many facets of personality and contemporary enough to make sense of the problems of modern selfhood."[65] The concept of self is the cornerstone of any personality theory and it is the primary focus of this study.

The "self has many domains in conventional personality theories. It can reveal the origin of transpersonal knowledge (Jung, 1933), a regulatory system for personality interaction (Sullivan, 1953), motivation for psychological development (Maslow, 1954), and the development of positive virtues (Baumeister & Exline, 1999)."[66] McAdams' explains "the characteristic mindset of modernity, within which individuals are expected to create selves that develop over time and that define who they are as similar to and different from others as individuals whose lives manifest some degree of unity and purpose." Over the last two centuries—amid the "constant change and wild multiplicity—or what Gergen called *multiphrenia*—of postmodern life"—the problem of postmodern identity was created. It is a "problem of overall unity and purpose in human lives"[67] and what Langbaum describes as "the spiritual problem of our time."[68] It is a problem of ontological insecurity that stems from the erosion of a stable moral order.

The self, according to McAdams, "is viewed as a reflexive project that the individual 'works on,'" but as Sampson argues, "because postmodern life is so indeterminate and fluid and because technology and the global economy now link people together from all over the word, it no longer makes sense to think of persons as individuals who author self-defining projects." He instead views persons "like

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[65] Mcadams, Dan P. (1996). "Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self: A Contemporary Framework for Studying Persons." *Psychological Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 4. p. 315

[66] Tekke, Mustafa, and Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail. "Discovering the Self in Islam: Self-Striving, Self-Regard, and Self-Neglect." *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2016. doi:10.12928/jehcp.v5i1.4270.

[67] McAdams, D. P. (1985). Power, intimacy, and the life story. New York: Guilford; (Baumeister, 1986)

[68] Mcadams, Dan P. (1996). "Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self." p. 352

'locations' of intersecting forces and interacting voices situated within a particular social community and linked in the postmodern era to many other communities around the globe."[69] However, it is this very temporal incoherence characteristic of postmodern life that "underscores the difficulty contemporary adults are likely to experience in crafting the reflexive project of the self." With the adoption of secular and liberal thought, "modernity has erased the structure of self provided in religion and other traditional thought" and with the hyper-capitalistic and individualistic society, the growing trends of anomie and alienation have increased "the burden of constructing one's own disconnected story" because an individual must now "define for himself every interaction, relation, and his existence at all moments of time." The sense of a unified narrative and comprehensive worldview has disappeared. Thus, the ability for individuals to arrange the "elements of Me into a self-story that is linear and provides an individual purpose and unity" has been deeply impaired.[70]

Giddens summarizes the contemporary dilemmas of the self into four primary conflicts: (1) *Unification versus fragmentation*: the reflexive project of the self incorporates numerous contextual happenings and forms of mediated experience, through which a course must be charted; (2) *Powerlessness versus appropriation*: the lifestyle options made available by modernity offer many opportunities for appropriation, but also generate feelings of powerlessness; (3) *Authority versus uncertainty*: in circumstances in which there are no final authorities, the reflexive project of the self must steer a way between commitment and uncertainty; and (4) *Personalized versus commodified experience*: the narrative of the self must be constructed in circumstances in which personal appropriation is influenced by standardized influences on consumption.[71]

In Western psychology, influential theorists including Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Max Weber advanced personality theories by first addressing the prevailing relationship between religion and personality. Freud adopted a secular rational perspective in analyzing "how religious belief negatively affects both scientific

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[69] Ibid. p. 298
[70] *Ibid.* p.306-309
[71] Giddens, Anthony. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. pp. 187-201.

advancement and personal development" by symbolically recreating the Oedipal Conflict, in which a powerful father [in this case God] "both provides for, and demands obedience from, those under his care." Jung provides a more balanced approach, discussing the possible negative effects of religion on psychological health as well as the positive effects including the ability for an individual to access "the contents of the collective unconscious" which he believed to be "the key to individuation and finding a meaning for a person's life."[72] Weber's famous *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* analyzes how Protestant parents instill particular values, ethics, and a worldview that encourage hard work, thrift, sexual and worldly asceticism, and conscientiousness in their children, which enables them to have worldly success.

Only recently have researchers revived an interest in studying the links between religion and psychology. Even then, most studies are done in relation to Western Christianity. Part of the reluctance to reopen this discourse between religion and psychology is a prevailing epistemological bias in the physical and social sciences that privileges philosophical positivism, and the "near total adoption as well as unquestioned acceptance of [Western] paradigms, terminologies, and research models."[73] Psychology of Islam and specifically the self in Islam are relatively new endeavors with only a handful of scholars having studied them (e.g., Abu-Raiya, 2012; Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K.I., 2011; Ali, Abbas Husein., 1995; Ansari, 2002; Briki, Walid, and Mahfoud, 2017; Haque 2004; Inayat, Q., 2005; Skinner, 2010; Smither & Khorsandi, 2009; Tekke, Mustafa, and Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail, 2016). For the most part, these studies develop a psychological framework from the Quran and some draw on the work of Ghazali. However, very few even mention children and almost none speak of humility as a defining characteristic, adding to this study's significance.

The self in Islamic thought originates in the work of early Muslim thinkers, such as Ibn Miskawayh [d.1030], Ibn Sina (or Avicenna) [d.1037], Al-Ghazali [d.1111], Al

[72] Smither, Robert, and Alireza Khorsandi. (2009). "The Implicit Personality Theory of Islam." *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol. 1, no. 2. pp. 81–96., doi:10.1037/a0015737.
[73] Elmessiri, Abdelwahab M., and Alison Lake. (2013). *Epistemological Bias in the Physical and Social Sciences*. International Institute of Islamic Thought.

Razi [d.1209], Ibn Arabi [d.1240], and Ibn al-Qayyim [d. 1350].[74] Briki and Mahfoud trace the perspectives of the self in Islamic history and suggest that "based on Holy texts and early Muslim thinkers, the [perspective of the Islamic self] formulates three major propositions. Firstly, [the Ghazalian concept of the *qalb* or spiritual heart] encompasses the structure and dynamics of the Islamic self, which is continually driven by a mental tension inciting to develop Islamic virtues. Secondly, the structure of [the spiritual heart] is made of three compartments: The desire-ego, reproachful ego, and *fitra* [the innate disposition of man]. Thirdly, the dynamics of [the spiritual heart] reflects the process by which the interactions between the elements constitutive of [spiritual heart] precipitate the emergence of positive or negative health-related outcomes."[75]

Without a firm (and unchanging) psychological understanding of human nature, it is arguably impossible to have a sound ethical system. Consequently, studies on personality in Western psychology have for centuries tried to address the growing moral apathy and ontological crisis of Modernity by defining and redefining the 'self.' Hogan and Smither argued that, at the most basic level, "a meaningful personality theory must address at least six topics: human motivation, personality development, the self, the unconscious, psychological adjustment, and the relationship of the individual to society." Based on Hogan and Smither's criteria, the following section will put forth a theory of personality based on Ghazali's work and explore how Ghazali's notion of humility in early childhood contributes to the broader discourse on personality psychology as well as the crisis of self.[76]

## PART II: GHAZALI'S PERSONALITY THEORY

### *Ghazali's Historical Context*

Time and time again proves faith and wealth to be two of the most powerful engines of history. The opposing charges of these two forces have set the stage for social, political, and moral strife in Islamic Civilization and in the West. However, it is the

[74] Briki, Walid, and Mahfoud Amara. (2017)."Perspective of Islamic Self: Rethinking Ibn Al-Qayyim's Three-Heart Model from the Scope of Dynamical Social Psychology." *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 836–848., doi: https. p837
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] Hogan, R., & Smither, R. (2008). *Personality: Theories and applications*

cyclical nature of history and what Ghazali understood to be the true nature of man that has made his work timeless and relevant to many generations. In the 11th century, during a period of violent internal fragmentation among Muslims and under the extraordinarily successful vizier of the Seljuk Caliphate, Nizam al-Mulk, Ghazali (b. 1058) rose to prominence. He was of the opinion that "without the discipline that comes with faith, wealth leads to greed and destroys all that builds a civilization."[77] Thus, his intellectual, social, and spiritual leadership became instrumental in unifying and reforming much of the fraying Muslim society and leading them into a golden age.

Ghazali worked primarily from the premier city of scholarship, Baghdad, that housed the famous *House of Wisdom*. He penned more than seventy books on the sciences, Islamic philosophy, and Sufism. The unifying capacity of Ghazali's work is one of the main reasons it stands apart. His refutation of famous Muslim neo-Platonic philosophers like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) ended a period of confusion in the Sunni Muslim community on certain key philosophical issues once thought at odds with Islamic theology and provided Islam with a healthy balance between rational thought and religion. Ghazali's illumination of religious practice and masterful integration of logic into Islamic theology had an impact similar to that of the Reformation in Christianity: reinvigorating Muslim faith and catapulting Islamic civilization to some of its greatest heights.

During a ten-year spiritual crisis, Ghazali abandoned his prestigious career in Nizam al-Mulk's court. Ghazali's decision was as shocking as it was sudden. The reasons for his departure, according to Frank Griffel, were that upholding the "ethics and standards of a virtuous religious life while being in service of sultans, viziers, and caliphs" became an increasingly heavy burden particularly since Ghazali "took the position that benefiting from the riches of the military and political elite implies complicity in their corrupt and oppressive rule and will jeopardize one's prospect of redemption in the afterlife."[78]

In his pursuit to find certain truth, he battled his own epistemological skepticism until he found answers in Sufism. Using his own personal experiences, Ghazali wrote to cure the social and political diseases afflicting the Muslim community that was splintering into rival caliphates and normalizing a schism between Sunnis and Shias. Towards the

[77] Ahmed, Nazeer. (2017)."The Civil Wars." *History of Islam: An Encyclopedia of Islamic History*.
[78] Griffel, Frank. (2009). *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology*. Oxford University Press.

latter portion of his life, he focused extensively on the nature of the self and the ethics, morals, and character that Muslims should have in order to achieve the greatest common good in this life and in the hereafter. His influence in Islamic thought garnered him countless titles including *Sharaf-ul-Aʾimma* (The Most Noble of Imams), *Zayn-ud-dīn* (The Ornament of Islam), and *Ḥujjat-ul-Islam* (The Proof of Islam). Many even argue that after the Prophet Muhammad, Ghazali is the greatest authority in Islam.[79]

However, Ghazali and his work have not been above reproach from both outside and inside the Muslim community. Some have critiqued Ghazali's use of weak or inauthentic narrations (*hadith*) including most famously Ibn al- Jawzi (d. 1201) and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328). Others question his role in the institutionalization of Islamic education in the Nizamiyah madrasa system which has been linked to the intellectual stagnation of the Muslim world (see Fazlur Rahman, 1966), and there are others who question why Ghazali chose to write about the spiritual needs of his community considering his prominent role in and potential influence on the ever-present social and political issues of his time (ignoring his nearly two hundred other works on theory of government, Sacred Law (Sharia), refutations of philosophers, pillars of faith, Sufism, Quranic exegesis, scholastic theology, and bases of Islamic jurisprudence.) More recently, a critical gaze has been shed on Ghazali's ideas on women applying the norms and standards of today anachronistically to him. Suffice to say, there have been ongoing debates and rebuttals to each of these critiques and to the others that are not listed here. This study does not present Ghazali's work as a perfect source of knowledge but recognizes the limitations and potential weaknesses or the unrelatable instances of his social reality to today. However, I argue that this does not preclude the good and beneficial knowledge that can be extracted from Ghazali's monumental work and that which can be applied or at the very least used as a comparison to our world today—albeit with the necessary social, temporal, and cultural modifications and adjustments.

Nearly a millennium after his death, Ghazali is still regarded as one of the greatest philosophers Islam has ever produced. Consequently, his numerous works have consistently been revisited producing countless commentaries as time progressed and

[79] Quasem, Muhammad Abul. (1975).*The Ethics of Al-Ghazali: A Composite Ethics in Islam.* Petaling Jaya: Quasem,. Print. P 11

even still today. His famous *The Revival of Islamic Sciences* (*Ihya Ulum al-Din)* remains one of the most widely cited Islamic texts in the Muslim world.[80] Thus, for the purpose of this study, the *Ihya* will be the primary text I will use not only due to its monumental impact on Islamic thought and civilization, but also because of its enduring relevance to the contemporary world. The *Ihya* explores how to practically tame the ego and inculcate good character. It contains forty books arranged in four volumes: (1) The Acts of worship (*Rubʿ al-ʿibadāt*), (2) The Norms (Etiquette) of Daily Life (*Rubʿ al-ʿadat*), (3) The Ways to Perdition *(Rub' al-muhlikat),* and (4) The Paths to Salvation *(Rub' al-munjiyat*). From within this collection, I will analyze specifically the book on Disciplining the Soul (*Riyadatul Nafs)* and from within this book, the chapter on child-rearing (*Riyadatul Sibyan)*. However, my focus on humility in Ghazali's philosophy will require a further consideration of his book on the Condemnation of Pride and Conceit (*Kitāb dhamm al-kibr wa'l-ʿujb)* and citations from other sections of the *Ihya* and Ghazali's other works.

***Ghazali's Personality Theory***

***Ghazali's Theory of Human Nature***

Many scholars have taken up the task of unpacking different aspects of Ghazali's comprehensive philosophy and thought with varying levels of success. This study shall summarize his philosophy pertaining particularly to human nature to derive his terms of personality development. To understand Ghazali's philosophy of human nature is to also understand his worldview and the system of ethics. He maintains a primarily deterministic view of the universe and his philosophy "begins with God, a recognition of the nature of the soul, its origin, its purpose, its return after death, and its ultimate destination in either eternal happiness or damnation in the afterlife."[81] According to Ghazali, the ultimate goal and purpose of humanity is to live in harmony with the will of God and his creation. To achieve this harmony and ultimate goal requires man to know, act, and believe in a measured way. This involves rigorous inward character development coupled with outward acts of pious devotion and social duty.[82]

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[80] Hunt Janin, The Pursuit of Learning in the Islamic World 610-2003, p 83. ISBN 0786429046

[81] Quasem, Muhammad Abul. *The Ethics of Al-Ghazali: A Composite Ethics in Islam.* p. 43

[82] Hourani, G.F. (1985) "Ghazali on the Ethics of Action," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1976. 96: 69–88. Reprinted in Hourani. pp. 166

Contrary to Modernity's secular worldview, Ghazali's philosophy is God-centered and anchored in divine revelation. While Ghazali does not negate independent moral reasoning, he echoes the wariness in discussions of modernity's conditional goods. Instead, he believes that "human rationality is mute with regard to normative judgments about human actions" because man has a "tendency to confuse moral value with benefit."[83] Instead, Ghazali uses the Quran and the Sunnah (prophetic tradition) to understand Sharia (Divine Law) and its main principles (*maqasid)* in achieving the ultimate "public benefit" (*maslaha*). The public benefit is not achieved at the cost of individual benefit, but it is in harmony with it. Ghazali identifies five essential aspects to achieve the public benefit: religion (*din)*, life (*nafs)*, intellect (*aql)*, offspring (*Nasab* and *Nasl*), and property (*maal)*. His ethical philosophy argues that whatever "protects these 'five necessities' (*al-darûriyyât al-khamsa*) is considered public benefit and should be advanced, while whatever harms them should be avoided."[84]

While the objective to preserve offspring (*Nasl*) and genealogy (*Nasab*) is obviously important to our discussion on child-rearing, so too are the objectives to preserve the body (via protecting *nafs*) and soul (via protecting *aql*). Children are inherently vital to the longevity of civilization. They are the vessels of civilization: the carriers of culture, religion, and a worldview, but they are perhaps also the most vulnerable to social change. It is, therefore, not only important to protect them physically, but as Ghazali argues, even more important to protect them psychologically and spiritually. This requires the preservation of the *nafs* or life by providing individuals with the basic necessities that allow one to live with safety, security and dignity (i.e. preserving a social context that facilitates access to food, water, housing, law, healthcare, etc.). In terms of preservation of *aql* or intellect, this requires the protection of the rights to, access to, and quality of knowledge and education. Combined, these two objectives protect the soul from being killed or wasted, but also establish a set of rules to ensure an individual's welfare spiritually and humanly. Preserving offspring and genealogy necessitates the preservation of relationships and individual duties integral to

[83] Ibid. 135–66.
[84] Opwis, F., 2007, "Islamic Law and Legal Change: The Concept of *Maslaha* in Classical and Contemporary Legal Theory", in *Shari'a: Islamic Law in the Contemporary Context*, A. Amanat and F. Griffel (eds.), Stanford (Calif.): Stanford University Press, pp. 62–82, 203–07

maintaining a healthy society by honoring and preserving marriage and family which provide the first environment for socializing children. As we will see, the very principles of *Maqasid* encapsulate Ghazali's personality theory.

With a general understanding of Ghazali's philosophy, we turn to his concept of human nature to derive a personality theory. Personality theories have varied throughout history and civilization, but recall that Hogan and Smither argued that, "at the most basic level, a meaningful personality theory must address at least six topics: human motivation, personality development, the self, the unconscious, psychological adjustment, and the relationship of the individual to society."[8586]

***Human Motivation in Ghazalian Thought***

For Ghazali, human motivation or the most basic reason for a person's actions is not entirely deterministic. While he does ascribe to the normative Islamic belief of predestination in which people are born with their destinies already determined by God, he does not believe this absolves an individual from personal responsibility and accountability.[87] In fact, the general understanding in Islam is that the ability of man to reason is what sets him apart from other animals and his will to choose right from wrong sets him apart from angels. It is for this reason that Ghazali's conception of human motivation does not accept modern theories that suggest human behavior is a product of just instincts, conditioning, or genetics. Moreover, the ability to reason and capacity for will can be directed for both good and bad. For Ghazali, the purpose of mankind and ultimate motivation is the attainment of happiness, but happiness is to be found overwhelmingly in the next life. Accordingly, Ghazali details two primary means of attaining this happiness: (1) external acts of obedience to the rules revealed in divine scripture and the cultivation of virtues, and (2) acquisition of the knowledge that guides and motivates such behavior (both of which are further discussed under *Psychological Adjustment in Ghazali's Personality Theory*).

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[85] Smither, Robert, and Alireza Khorsandi.(2009). "The Implicit Personality Theory of Islam. *"Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 81–96., doi:10.1037/a0015737. P 85
[86]Hogan, R., & Smither, R. (2008). *Personality: Theories and applications*
[87] *Ibid.* p 85

### *The Self & Unconscious in Ghazalian Thought*

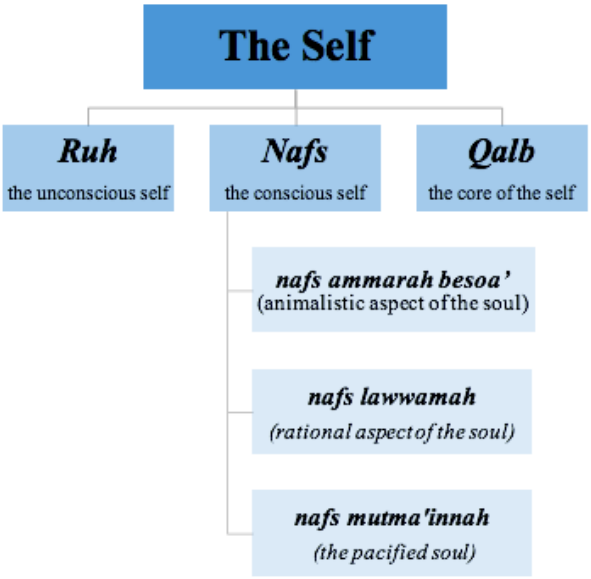


***Figure 3 Ghazali's Concept of the 'Self'***

The concept of self in modern psychology refers to "the shared—and embodied—moral understandings of a particular historical era or culture about what it means to be properly human.'' The self reflects the way a particular cultural group defines the concept of individual, encompassing thus the way the culture defines ''humankind's place in the cosmos: its limits, talents, expectations, and prohibitions."[88] According to Ghazali, personality "includes an outward form (physical) and an inward self (spiritual)."[89] In general, the human being is understood through the interconnection between the body, the soul, and God.[90]

In terms of terminology, the term *nafs* in Arabic is most commonly used in reference to the soul, psyche, spirit, mind, identity, or the self.[91] It comes from the same word for breath and is often linked to the Islamic notion of God breathing life into human beings therefore making the soul— (*ruh* in Arabic)—divine in origin. It is this divine origin that underlines man's yearning to return to God and his most natural state.[92] The *ruh* is considered another aspect of the self with a "special capacity for acquiring knowledge" and is attuned—due to its divine nature—to knowing God and understanding justice and balance intuitively.[93] It is connected etymologically in Arabic

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[88] Cushman, P. (1990). Why the self is empty. Toward a historically situated psychology. American Psychologist, 45(5), 599

[89] Ali, Abbas Husein. (1995)."The Nature of Human Disposition: Al-Ghazali's Contribution to an, Islamic Concept of Personality." *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 3, no. 1,p. 59 quoting *Ihya* Ch. 3:2

[90] Briki, Walid, and Mahfoud Amara. (2017)."Perspective of Islamic Self: Rethinking Ibn Al-Qayyim's Three-Heart Model from the Scope of Dynamical Social Psychology." *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 57, no. 3, May 2017, pp. 836–848., doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-017-0414-0.

[91] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan. (1979)."نفس ." *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic: (Arabic — English)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 1155.

[92] See commentary on Quran 2:156, *inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un* (إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّـا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ) which translates to "We belong to God and to Him we shall return."[

[93] Ansari, Z. A., editor. (2010). *Quranic Concepts of Human Psyche*. Al Ittehad Publications. P 5

to the term for 'freedom' (حرية or *houria*) which scholars suggest connects to the first quality of the essentially dualistic nature of man. This quality refers to the distinguishing characteristic of the human soul being sovereign, independent, and autonomous which makes it unique and contributes to its quality of 'oneness.' The second quality refers to man's soul as a filial being yearning for communal union (contributing to as its *jama'iy* or *ummatic*[94] inclinations.)[95] This in turn reflects the basic struggle of the self between his ego and baser qualities of the self and tendencies towards arrogance and pride with the humility and gentler qualities of the self which make man more receptive to filial bonds of society.[96] The *ruh* has also been described as that "which resides in the collective unconscious, possibly means the energy of life, or The Truth, and serves as the source of revelation, creation and inspiration."[97]

The essence of man—his *dat* (ذات)[98]—is complex and comprised of multiple elements including the *ruh,* the *nafs,* and the *qalb* or heart which Ghazali refers to as the truth of man or the part of man which perceives and knows. Generally in Islamic thought, the *qalb* is sometimes referred to as the spiritual heart[99] and the part of the human psyche "which transforms spiritual potentiality into actuality" by enabling man "to know and understand the reality of things, make evaluative judgements, and sift the right from the wrong."[100] According to Ghazali, "the healthy/unhealthy development of the self depends only upon the closeness to God, in such a way that the greater the spiritual proximity to God," the healthier the condition of the *qalb*.[101] The *qalb* which linguistically comes from the Arabic word *''qalaba''* meaning being subject to rapid and frequent changes is inherently fluctuating trying to maintain control of his desires. It is considered a sensory organ like the eyes or ears, but functions at a superior level than man's basic five senses.

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[94] For more, see section on *The Relationship of the Individual to Society in Ghazali's Personality Theory*
[95] Adhami, Shaykh Abdullah. (2007). *Family And Society* [Audio Part 1]. Retrieved from: http://www.sakeenah.org/lr_lectures.php
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] Abu-Raiya, Hisham. (2012). "Towards a Systematic Quranic Theory of Personality." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol. 15, no. 3. pp. 217–233., doi:10.1080/13674676.2011.640622. p230
[98] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan.(1979). "ذو ." *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic."* p. 363.
[99] Inayat, Q. (2005). The Islamic concept of the self. *British Counselling Review, 20,* 2–10.
[100] Ansari, Z. A., editor. (2010). *Qur'anic Concepts of Human Psyche.* p.6
[101] Briki, Walid, and Mahfoud Amara. "Perspective of Islamic Self: Rethinking Ibn Al-Qayyim's Three-Heart Model from the Scope of Dynamical Social Psychology." *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 57, no. 3, May 2017, pp. 836–848., doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-017-0414-0. p843

It is through the *qalb* that man is connected to God and fulfills Divine unity (*Tawhid*), the devotion aspect of Islam. The divine element is guided by man's intellect (*'aql*). However, the *qalb* provides man "with a more profound level of understanding of the world" than simple rational intelligence.[102] The *qalb* is the ''heart of *nafs''* or ''the totality of *nafs*'' because it processes, governs, and integrates information from all other structures of the *nafs* and consequently it "determines the fate of *nafs*."[103] For this reason, Ghazali calls the *qalb* the "core of *nafs"* or self "and attributes to it much more significance than he did to other psychological-spiritual structures."[104]

The *nafs* is the third element of the self. It is sometimes regarded as the conscious self or mind. It is split into three states: (1) the impulsive mind (*nafs ammarah* which literally means the commanding soul and is sometimes referred to as *nafs ammarah besoa'* or the soul that commands to evil), it houses man's physical appetites, it is found in all animals, and it is similar to the primitive, animalistic, instinctual element of the Id in the Freudian tripartite model of mind; (2) the rational, conscientious, or morally conscious mind (*nafs lawwamah* which literally means the blaming soul) functions like a super-ego struggling between good and evil; and (3) the mind perfectly in tune with the divine will, the mind in peace (*nafs mutma'innah* which literally means the pacified soul).[105][106] *Nafs mutma'innah* is the highest stage of psycho-spiritual development" and "is a psychological state that every human-being should strive for with the knowledge that it can be rarely attained."[107]

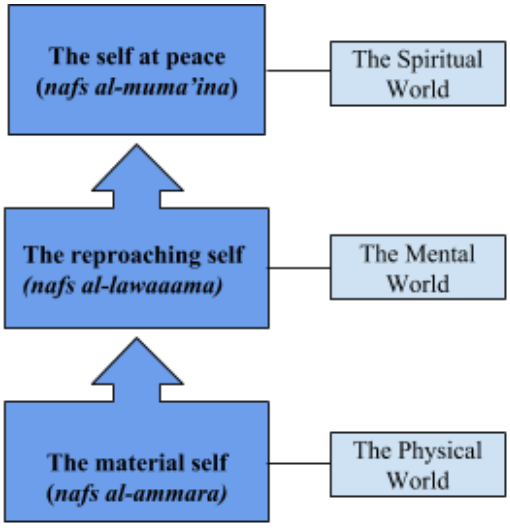


***Figure 4 Self Development through Spiritual Progression***

[102] Smither, Robert, and Alireza Khorsandi. (2009)."The Implicit Personality Theory of Islam. *"Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 81–96., doi:10.1037/a0015737.
[103] Abu-Raiya, Hisham. (2012). "Towards a Systematic Quranic Theory of Personality." p 230
[104] Ibid. P 222
[105] Sharif, Mian Mohammad. (2004). *A History of Muslim Philosophy: with Short Accounts of Other Disciplines and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*. Low Price Publications.
[106] Smither, Robert, and Alireza Khorsandi. (2009). "The Implicit Personality Theory of Islam."
[107] Abu-Raiya, Hisham. (2012). "Towards a Systematic Quranic Theory of Personality." p 225

The individual is born free with the exception of constraints due to his ignorance or dependency on his own physical nature. However, a person can attain freedom and happiness through a spiritual progression or through development of the self in which he progresses from the constraints of the material self (*nafs ammarah)*, to balancing the reproaching self *(nafs lawwamah)*, and then to the self at peace (*nafs mutma'innah*). Each state of the self addresses a different aspect of the world: the physical world, the mental world, and the spiritual world, respectively.[108] The science of spiritual progression or purification of the self and soul is called *Tasawwuf.* In the Quran 87:14, it says that "Indeed that person has brought himself into happiness and success (*falah*) who purifies himself (*tazakka*)." *Tazkiya* or inner purification is a significant benchmark of success and felicity for a Muslim and the goal of *Tasawwuf*.

Throughout the *Ihya,* Ghazali borrows heavily from the work of Abu Ali Miskawayh (d.1030) as well as many Greek philosophers including Aristotle and the first century philosopher, Bryson.[109] Ghazali builds off of many of their ideas including Miskawayh's idea of the divine natural order (*al-nizam al-tabi'i)* that describes the inner development of the *nafs:*

> "(i) the first faculty formed since birth is the faculty of desire *(quwwat al-shahwah*) particularly the appetite for food, which is common to all animals and plants, (ii) it is followed by the faculty of anger (*quwwat al- ghadab)*, (iii) finally the faculty of intellect or knowledge *(quwwat al- 'ilm)* through which knowledge and sciences are acquired and experienced."[110]

While appetite (*shahwa*), anger or self-assertion (*ghadab*), and apprehension are common to man and all animals, man is distinguished because of wisdom (*hikma*) or the ability to reason through *'Aql* (intellect) and *Irada* (will). The intellect is his fundamental rational faculty and the basis of *ilm* (knowledge).[111] Abu-Raiya notes that scholars using a Freudian logic view "the main purpose of *aql* [as] disciplining *nafs ammarah besoa'*, so the devilish nature of the latter can be tamed."[112]

Together, the *ruh, nafs, and qalb* refer to the "incorporeal or spiritual component of man" and so the Islamic notion of man, as Absar Ahmed suggests, "merge[s] the

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[108] Leaman, Oliver. (2016). *The Quran: a Philosophical Guide*. Bloomsbury Academic. P 49
[109] Giladi, Avner. (1992).Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Umaruddin, (1996). M. *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzali.* Adam Pub.p93
[112] Abu-Raiya, Hisham. (2012)."Towards a Systematic Quranic Theory of Personality." p 228

psychologically subjective intimacy of 'I' with the rather impersonal but profoundly metaphysical ego or soul." As a result, the image of the human psyche offered is of *Homo cum Deo*.[113] The concept of *Homo cum Deo* is relevant to this study as it underlines the idea that the natural world and man himself "contain the *vestigia Dei* which inform man of the Divine attributes and suggest a proper response." In the following passage, Ghazali explains this concept and its relevance to the man's sense of self:

> "No one can understand a king but a king; therefore, God has made each of us a king in miniature, so to speak, over a kingdom which is an infinitely reduced copy of His own. In the kingdom of man God's "throne" is represented by the soul; the Archangel by the heart, "the chair" by the brain, the "tablet" by the treasure chamber of thought. The soul, itself, unlocated and indivisible, governs the body as God governs the universe. In short each of us is entrusted with a little kingdom and charged not to be careless in the administration of it."[114]

Man is only able to recognize these attributes and achieve perfection and happiness when he acknowledges the nature of himself and cultivates theses divine attributes within himself. Furthermore, every one of the ninety-nine divine traits, Ghazali argues, are innate in man and his primordial disposition or *fitra* and each child is born with a perfectly balanced *fitra*. This disposition in children underlines their purity and their "innate potentiality to know and believe in the Lordship of God."[115]

However, it is also human nature to forget as the lower aspects of the soul or *nafs* periodically overcome him and so with time this innate belief is forgotten. This reality of the human self is reflected in the Arabic term for human, *insan* (انسان), which according to many Arabic scholars is derived from *nasiya (*نسي*)* meaning "to forget."[116] Accordingly, Ghazali suggests that learning and education must be "a process of recollection (*al-tadhakkur)* of [man's] own primordial identity."[117] Thus, one of the primary aims of education is to maintain and develop the harmonious equilibrium amongst these three

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[113] Ahmad, Absar. *Qur'anic Concepts of Human Psyche*. Edited by Z. A. Ansari, Al Ittehad Publications, 2010. p36

[114] Al-Ghazali, The Alchemy of Happiness by al-Ghazali, tran. E. L. Daniel London: Octagon Press (for the Sufi Trust), 1980, pp. p19

[115] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." *Psychology of Education*. pp.70

[116] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan.(1979). "نسي ." *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic"*

[117] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." pp.70

faculties through discipline (*riyadah*). For young children, it is essential to try to preserve the balanced condition in which they were born.

***Personality Development in Ghazalian Thought***

Modern personality theories argue that man experiences a number of psychological stages before reaching maturity in personality. Ghazali's theory similarly reflects a gradual developmental process (see *Figure 2*). However, while most Western theories suggest that personality—in terms of identity—are not present in early childhood (see Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development), Ghazali believes that personality development begins not when a child is born, but when its parents choose each other as spouses and from there plan their family and the context in which to raise their children. Every subsequent stage from childhood to adult life impacts the understanding of self and, therefore, the development of personality.

In practical terms, Ghazali views personality development as the education of the self. In this, he highlights the prophetic instruction pertaining to child education that "stems from its underlying conception of children as a trust (*al-amanah*) and parents as the trustees of God."[118] Children are entrusted to parents who are tasked with their education and in that the initial development of personality. Ghazali encourages the development of personality using roughly what modern learning theorists refer to as classical conditioning (Ivan Pavlov's learning by association), operant conditioning (B. F. Skinner's learning by reinforcement and punishment), and observational learning (Albert Bandura's learning by imitation).

Ghazali understands man's life to follow three periods of life—weakness, strength, and infirmity—outlined in the Quran (30:54). Moreover, the period of education that falls within the purview of parental responsibility is encased in the first twenty-one years of a child's life and roughly split into three stages. The first seven years are considered the first stage of childhood and this is a time of weakness also known as the stage of the development of the senses ('the stage of desiring') during which parents are tasked with the "physical care of their children and modeling spiritual practice to promote moral development."

[118] Ibid. pp.55-6

Modern developmental research (see moral development theories of Kohlberg (1958) or Piaget (1932)) recognizes early childhood as important in child's reasoning and moral capacity since they determine right from wrong only through external feedback. Ghazali argues children are born with *fitra*—an innate sense of right and wrong—but he does not believe this precludes them from 'un-learning.'

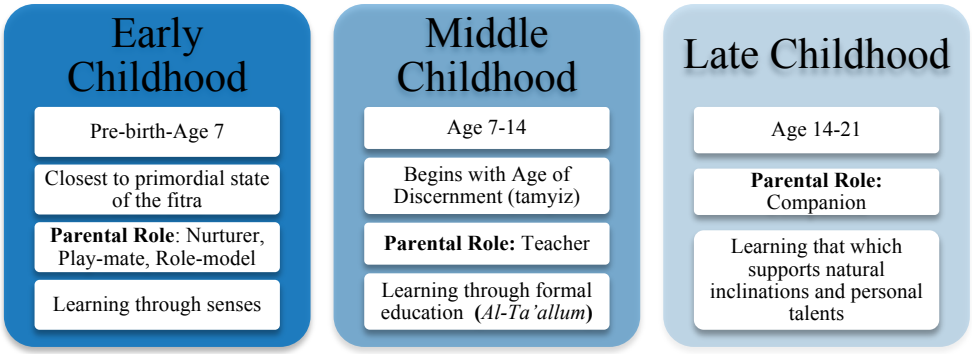


***Figure 5 Stages of Childhood in Ghazalian Thought***

Every person is born with the "faculty of desire (*al-shahwah*)" which is "indispensable for the purpose of his survival in this world."[119] At birth, the faculty of desire manifests first in the appetite for food evident in infants with the natural instinct to suckle. Desire is considered "the first and the oldest faculty existing in man, it becomes the most difficult to restrain and the least susceptible to discipline." Moreover, Ghazali assert that greed for food is also the first trait to imbalance man and take control of his *nafs*.[120] Ghazali's method of character training and the fostering of proper conduct or *adab* are intended "to engender practices that should in due course impress good qualities on the child's soul, especially practices counterbalancing the forces of anger and desire that hold sway over his soul." To counteract man's earliest desire—to eat—Ghazali suggests beginning moral education of children by gradually teaching proper eating habits based on restraint, moderation, and general *adab* related to food etiquette.[121]

Ghazali maps the cognitive and intellectual development of infants further by suggesting that a nursing infant initially apprehends through the sensible aspect of the spirit (*al-ruh al-hassas*) that functions via his five external senses (*hassat al- khams)*: (1)

[119] Al-Ghazali□. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires*
[120] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." P. 58
[121] Giladi, Avner. (1992). Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society, p57

the sense of touch *(hassat al-lams),* (2) the sense of smell *(hassat al-shamm*), (3) the sense of taste *(hassat al-dhauq), (*4) the sense of sight (*hassat al-basar),* and (5) the sense of hearing *(hassat al-sam')*.[122] After receiving the information from the senses, the next stage in learning is through the imaginative aspect of the spirit *(al- ruh al-khayali),* "which is responsible for storing the sensible and presenting them to the intellect whenever required."

The second stage of childhood requires parents to actively teach their children the rules of God and society. It begins at age 7 and ends approximately at 14. It is at 7—or as soon as a child's faculty of discernment (*tamyiz*) begins to emerge—that he should gradually move away from games and play and begin formal education or learning **(***Al-Ta'allum***).** The faculty of anger (*al-ghadhab*) is the 'gateway' faculty for a child entering the age of discernment. Anger, Ghazali explains, is "an indispensable need for man particularly to protect himself from any element that threatens his life and property." Subsequently, a child's logical aptitude appears, and he begins to distinguish good and bad—an ability which Ghazali refers to as the light of the intellect (*nur al- 'aql)*.[123]

Another sign of discernment is the presence of modesty *(al-haya')* in a child, "by which he starts to feel diffident and ashamed of doing certain things."[124] The presence of modesty and in turn shame have also been identified in modern psychology as a significant stage of human development and one which must be carefully addressed in young children by parents. In Erikson's comprehensive psychoanalytic theory, he identifies eight stages in which a healthy developing individual should pass through from infancy to late adulthood. Within each stage, a psychosocial crisis must be overcome to prevent it becoming a problem for the individual in the future. In the second stage, Erikson identifies the role of shame in the psychosocial crises faced in early childhood (2–4 years old). Erikson situates shame with the other extreme of autonomy in this psychosocial crisis and once resolved, he suggests 'will' is the virtue to be attained.[125]

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[122] Al-Ghazali,,. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires*

[123] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." P59

[124] Ibid. p 60

[125] Crain, William (2011). *Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN 978-0-205-81046-8.

In some regards, Erikson's theory is similar to that of Ghazali. Firstly, Erikson believed all the stages were "present at birth, but only begin to unfold according to both a natural scheme and one's ecological and cultural upbringing."[126] This in some ways resembles Ghazali's beliefs about man's innate *fitra* disposition. Secondly, Erikson's characterization of the psychosocial crises where a reconciliation between two conflicting forces results in the inculcation of a certain virtue is similar to Ghazali's 'Doctrine of the Mean.' Ghazali's doctrine suggests that good virtue "is the middle way between the two opposite character traits, each of which is an extreme."[127] This middles position is the furthest point from both extremes. But Ghazali considers, the middle way, a "relative mean" dependent on states and circumstances of the individual. Ghazali's theory, however, conceptualizes shame in personality development very differently than Erikson and other Western scholars.

The final stage of childhood is roughly from 14 to 21. This is the beginning of 'strength' in a child signaling a shift in the parents' role from teacher to companion. A child's education in this stage should support his natural inclinations and talents. According to the *Qur'an*, individuals achieve their fullest physical and mental capacities around the age of 40 (46:15), referred to properly as the time of strength. The time of infirmity is old age characterized by individuals who "forget what they knew, having known it once" (22:5).[128]

Education and knowledge shepherd the development of personality in most theories including Ghazali's. For Ghazali, recall that the aim of education is to facilitate man's understanding of himself and God. However, if man's baser self is overpowering the soul then man's personality is in a state of imbalance and instability. Education to achieve balance in this regard and man's ultimate potentiality can be achieved by the comprehensive educational process of *Ta'dib*:

(a) transmission of knowledge (*ta'lim*)

(b) good breeding (*tarbiyya*)

(c) self-discipline (*riyadah*)

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Sherif, Mohamed Ahmed. *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*. State University of New York Press, 1975.p34-35

[128] Smither, Robert, and Alireza Khorsandi. "The Implicit Personality Theory of Islam. p86

(d) purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*)

(e) refinement of character (*tahdhib al-akhlaq*).[129]

The process of *ta'dib* is a gradual process of disciplining the physical and spiritual self by transforming the soul with knowledge to "possess good character *(husn al-khuluq)*, i.e., the condition of the soul that conforms to the Intellect and Religious Law (*'aql wa Shar'*)."[130]

***Psychological Adjustment in Ghazalian Thought***

Psychological adjustment refers to the behavior process used to balance conflicting needs and cope with demands of the environmental context. In modern psychological research, indicators of psychological adjustment usually include self-esteem, or the absence of distress, anxiety or depression.[131] The process of transforming the soul essentially encapsulates Ghazali's ideas on psychological adjustment. In other words, by disciplining the *nafs* man adjusts to challenges in life.

A healthy understanding of self, as Ghazali understands it, would facilitate "the successful blending of the issues of everyday life with the requirements of Islam."[132] Whereas, psychological distress would indicate an individual's *nafs* is imbalanced and he is overcome by desire and has lost contact with *tawhid* or Divine unity. Modernity—particularly with the dissolution of moral order and rise of destructive individualism—has created a profound and systemic source of psychological distress for individuals. To address this crisis, like any other source of psychological distress, Ghazali urges man to return his *nafs* to a sense of equilibrium.

Recall that the ideal state of man is found in *nafs mutma'innah* when the soul is at peace and his sense of self balanced. This balanced condition "refers to a stable condition of the mean *(wast al-'umur)* which leads to justice (*al-'adl*) in character."[133] Character is

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[129]Al-Attas, Muhammad Naguib. (1999). *The Concept of Education in Islam: a Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC).

[130] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." pp. 53–71.

[131] Seaton, Cherisse. "Psychological adjustment." Encyclopedia of positive psychology, Chapter: Vol 2, Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell, Editors: S. J. Lopez, 2009 pp.796-801 796-801.

[132]El Azayem, G. A., & Hedayat-Diba, Z. (1994). The psychological aspects of Islam: Basic principles of Islam and their psychological corollary. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 4,* 41–50.

[133] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." *Psychology of Education*. P. 53–71.

central to Ghazali's concept of psychological adjustment. In fact, Ghazali's defines "character" by describing the baseline for psychological stability:

> "A stable state of the soul, one which causes it performs its actions spontaneously and easily, without thought or deliberation. If this state is of the kind which causes good actions, i.e., those praised by intellect and religious law, the state is called good character, and vice versa." [134]

An individual with a stable soul—a stable sense of self—will find balance in life and from that a sense of peace and happiness. According to Ghazali, there are two means to achieve this happiness: (1) external acts of obedience to the rules revealed in divine scripture and the cultivation of virtues, and (2) acquisition of the knowledge that guides and motivates such behavior.[135]

In terms of external acts, Ghazali's focus is on the cultivation of virtue with hopes of establishing a stable pattern of thought and action that underline character. Good moral character (*khuluq)* is designed to shape an individual's life holistically from birth until death. For young children there must be "deliberate instilling of habits (*ta'wid*) by the immediate social environment, especially the parents, or by the chance influences of his surroundings. "As an adult, character—evident in one's manners and etiquette—can be acquired by: "self-training *(i'tiyad al-af'al, takalluf),* or the absorption of influences from the surroundings through observing the deeds of others (*mushahada)* and being in their company (*musahaba*)."[136]

The second means to achieving happiness is in facilitation of the first means of building character. Gaining knowledge is the primary means to accomplish this. However, the ideological shifts brought on by Modernity including secular, rational and individualistic thought—devoid of balance—arguably corrupt the very foundations of knowledge and truth that Ghazali believes are necessary to achieve a stable sense of self and from there, happiness.

Ghazali's theory of knowledge is derived from independent reason, but from revelation. Moreover, he is weary of the over reliance on natural understanding and reasoning alone. He believes this is "more likely to lead us astray because [independent reason] is itself liable to be led astray by desires." In contrast to Aristotle's ideas on the

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[134] Sherif, Mohamed Ahmed. (1975). *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*.p.29
[135] Hourani, G.F., (1985). "Ghazali on the Ethics of Action," 96: 69–88. pp. 77
[136] Giladi, Avner. (1992). Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society, p52

subject, Ghazali does not believe that when determining his overall end and purpose, an individual should arrive at rules of action or individual decisions from constructions of human wisdom—which are subject to change. On one level, this puts an immense burden on individuals to determine their own purpose (as McAdams suggests in his narrative theory of personality) and on another, it leads to disunity among individuals who may choose contradictory philosophies. Instead, Ghazali believes rules should come from the unchanging foundation of revealed Law. The daily decisions if couched in an overall stable system of belief can be deduced from human reasoning using "the scriptural premises, by the methods of analogy and narrowly restricted *islislah*" or a ruling that is intended to protect of the five purposes or *Maqasid* discussed earlier. [137]

Knowledge plays a central role in the holistic system of life and worldview for Ghazali. Al-Attas notes, "knowledge (*al-'ilm: ma'rifah: 'ilm)* occupies a most important position in Islam, where in the Holy Qur'an alone we find more than eight hundred references to knowledge." He discusses how particularly in the Postmodern world, man has the responsibility to do justice to knowledge. Justice, he suggests, "implies knowledge of the right and proper place for a thing or a being to be; of right as against wrong; of the mean or limit; of spiritual gain as against loss; of truth as against falsity and falsehood." So, when Ghazali cites the significance of knowledge, he is urging man to do justice to knowledge and therefore:

> "To know its limit of usefulness and not exceed or fall short of it; to know its various orders of priority in relation to its usefulness to one's self; to know where to stop and to know what can be gained and what cannot, what is true knowledge and what is learned guess and theory—in sum, to put every datum of knowledge in its right place in relation to the knowing one in such wise that what is known produces harmony in the one who knows. To know how to put what knowledge in which place is wisdom (*hikmah*). Otherwise, knowledge without order and seeking without discipline does lead to confusion and hence to injustice to one's self."[138]

[137] Hourani, G.F., (1985). "Ghazali on the Ethics of Action," 96: 69–88. pp. 87
[138] Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. (1995). Al-. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam."* P 68

***The Relationship of the Individual to Society in Ghazalian Thought***

The relationship of the individual to society, in Ghazali's thought, is essential to the purpose of mankind.[139] So much so that some consider psychology in Islamic thought closer to modern day sociology due to the symbiotic relationship between man and society. The relationship between an individual and society is ideally harmonious in which "the individual has the responsibility of supporting society's goals, and society has responsibility for assisting the individual's personal and spiritual development" of individuals.[140] This environment is achieved by maintaining the balance between divine and human knowledge and ensuring the preservation of the *Maqasid*.

Ghazali views society as one in which the exercise of individual duty is a product of an order that the individual actively creates and upholds. In Islam, order and authority—whether in nature or in society—is subject to the same natural law of God and His revealed ideals and truths of life. This 'perfect' divine order is not subverted by positive science and reason, but only further validated by it. And thus, positive science and reason are not only encouraged, but ordained as necessary for the free-thinking individual to prove to himself his role and duties in society. This is why belief is at the core of society. It is the ultimate unifier that remains an individual's standard and anchor for true free thought, liberty, equality and solidarity.

The individual with the completion of his role in and duty to society revives social order. Individuals, thus, carry immense responsibility. Pasha, following Ghazali's logic argues that man "has no natural right," but must adapt to his environment to attain rights, in other words, he must observe "the natural laws to which his ethical and physical existence is subject" and conform to them by "performing duties." His duties, once fulfilled, garner him the right to happiness, respect, and liberty. However, failure to do his duty is detrimental not only to himself (by the inability to attain these qualities), but also to society.

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[139] Quran (49:13): "*O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another."* (Asad, Muhammed. (2012).
[140] Peters, F. E. (1993). *A reader on classical Islam.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tahir and Sohail understand self-building in Islam as an "initiative toward society building; in other words, a personal good becomes a collective good."[141] Briki and Mahfoud similarly analyze the balance between individual autonomy and communal responsibility by suggesting that Islamic perspectives, like Ghazali's, on the one hand emphasize "the self-determined nature of the mind, in such a way that it conveys the view that all humans are driven by a sense of self-initiation, volition, and willingness" but also "that humans cannot function optimally and autonomously once disconnected to God and others (for the sake of God)." They draw a parallel with Maslow's (1970) perspective "that fulfilling (or not fulfilling) the purpose of life leads to develop healthy (or unhealthy) psychological patterns," but underline how in Islam optimal functioning (in terms of mental health, social adjustment, and performance) requires moving closer to God and worshiping Him and not just on "the capability of surrounding social environment to satisfy people's innate needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy" as it does in Maslow's self-determination theory.[142]

The social roles and responsibilities of an individual, after those required of him in personal worship, are outlined by Ghazali in volume II of the *Ihya.* They include "table manner, marriage ceremonies, laws regarding *kasb* (earning), *halal* (the lawful) and *Haram* (the unlawful), those concerning obligations to friends, Muslims, neighbors, near relatives, duties of kings, and duty to order good and forbid evil (*al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wan nahi 'ani'l-munkar*) and those pertaining to music ecstasy, seclusion and travel."[143] Part of an individual's duties are personal pertaining to action that will maintain a balance in the soul by reminding man of his duties and purpose. The duties to himself include acts of worship and the cultivation of virtue, character, and *adab*. Part of an individual's duties is political. As a citizen, he must exercise control over the government and ensure the primacy of Islam and Sharia. Part of an individual's duties is social. He must maintain Islamic principles as the "commonality of social purpose" by maintaining the ties and

[141] Tahir, A. R., & Sohail, M. (2012). The concept of ethical life in Islam. Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research In Business, 3(9), 1360–1369. Retrieved from from:http://search.proquest.com/docview/964018844?accountid=28930.
[142] Briki, Walid, and Mahfoud Amara. "Perspective of Islamic Self. " p841
[143] Umaruddin, M. (1996). *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzali*. p. 274

bonds "that produce unity and harmony" among other individuals in society. Collectively, these duties encompass Ghazali's views on social morality.

When looking at the normative understanding of Muslim identity, many begin with the understanding of the individual and community. I investigate personality development among young children which necessitates examining one of the smallest yet most important units of civilization: the family. Haddad comments of the various roles played by any individual beginning in the family structure by referring to a concept he refers to as a circle of memberships that is similar in some ways to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory in that it describes how interactions among overlapping systems provide the context for human development starting from the individual and moving outward. Bronfenbrenner's model, however, only acknowledges the effect of the systems' environment on the individual and not the reverse.

Haddad argues that in each system the "Qur'anic conception of the family is an open conception. The individual is surrounded by a set of circles of memberships, of eccentric circles each one of them opens on another, wider one." Each circle in this structure forms a family and the individual is supposed to be protected by the whole society. The rule, Haddad explains, "is the harmonious passage from a_circle of membership to another: from near family to extended family, from this latter to the "visible" community of the countrymen and coreligionists, to reach finally a more abstract level: God's community" or the *Ummah*.[144] The God-centered community for Muslims, thus, is built around the individual and the family, the bonds and responsibilities of which are replicated at different levels of society and community.

Allawi discusses at length the notion of an individual and the intimate connections to community within the Quranic understanding of the term *Ummah.* Citing the Quranic narrative of Abraham in which he himself was referred to as the *Ummah,* Allawi suggests a clear allusion to the "possibility of there being an identity between a community of believers and an individual, perfected person." The individual's primary role according to Allawi is first and foremost "to acknowledge, openly and freely, the basic principle which underpins its very existence." These basic principles are what are outlined by the Quran

[144] Haddad, Mohamed. (2006). "The Family as a Space of Social Integration in Islam." (n.d.): n. pag. *Marriage, Family and Society – a Dialogue with the Islam*. Helmut Reifeld,.

and Sunnah (prophetic tradition) and they provide the basis or "bedrock of any permanent, and permanently valid, ethic of being and action – a personal ethic as well as the basis for public organization."[145]

In line with Haddad's concentric circle explanation of individual rights, Allawi explains how in Islam, "the individual generates from within the virtues of the community, and vice versa." This allows a link between the individual and the group, "with little possibility of ethical atomization at the individual level or an oppressive conformity at the group level."[146] The purpose of this religious collective (and the individual) *Ummah* is a harmonious and just society. This harmonious symbiosis between individual and community upholds the principle central to the monotheistic faith of Islam: *tawhid* or oneness.

## PART III: HUMILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

> *"Souls were made humble through discipline, so that their qualities reached an equilibrium and their inner aspects were cleansed off all dishonesty, rancour, and ill-will. this in turn bore fruit in the form of contentment with all that God has decreed, which is the highest form of good character, since the man who dislikes the actions of God is discontented with Him, an attitude which is the most ignoble of all traits."*
>
> Al Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, *Riyadatul Sibyan*

Ghazali's personality theory with specific reference to humility in early childhood provides a way to address the crisis of self. Humility, however, is not a solely Islamic concept and like childhood, it has been a widely debated concept in Western history.

### *Ghazali's Concept of Childhood*

While for centuries, the West has tried to understand childhood in a philosophical system that uses a rational standpoint that often denies the emotional and spiritual dimensions of man, Ghazali provides an alternative conception.[147] The child, as Ghazali understands him, is human first. All humans—whether young or old, male or female—share fundamental characteristics of humanity summed up in earlier discussions on Ghazali's theory of personality and human nature. The child, while sharing his human

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[145] Allawi, Ali A. *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*. (2010). New Haven, CT: Yale UP,. Print.
[146] *Ibid.*
[147] Steinbock, Anthony J. (2016) The Role of the Moral Emotions in Our Social and Political Practices, International Journal of Philosophical Studies, 24:5

capacities with other men, is unique in that he is closer than adults to the original state of his *fitra*. In fact, the word for childhood *tufula* (طفولة) implies the one who is in need of their *fitra* to be refined and their excesses (desires) be balanced.[148] A child, according to Ghazali's philosophy, is born not in a state of perfection, but of balance. A child is not a blank slate, as was understood in the Age of Enlightenment. A child is innocent in this regard and not born in sin as the Puritans and other Christians believed. He has more than animal instinct in contrary to Darwin and Freud's theories. And a child's capacity for reason is limited, but that does not preclude him from learning right from wrong or from learning about his sense of self and identity.

One of the primary differences between a child and an adult, according to Ghazali, is his social role and responsibility. Until the age of puberty, he is not physically considered an adult and not even then, unless he is of sound intellect and is able to reasonably function in society. It is only once an individual enters adulthood, that he is held accountable for his actions. He must fulfil his duties and responsibilities as outlined by society and Divine law. In childhood, on the other hand, he learns of these future responsibilities and it is *his* rights that must be upheld by society. The preservation of these rights are the responsibility of parents, families and society and they have been made explicit by the Quran and Sunnah. They include but are not limited to: the child's right to a dignified name that connects him to family and lineage, the right to education and a safe, sound, moral upbringing to prepare him to meet the requirements of God and society, and the right to marry and have a family once mature.[149]

Ghazali references childhood and children exclusively in the book *Disciplining the Soul* (*Riyadatul Nafs)* in the chapter called *Riyadatul Sibyan* or literally the "training of boys." The word *riyadah* (رياضة) literally means "sport" (a possible reference back to Aristotelean work), but in Arabic the term originates from the word that means "a piece of land that has been cultivated."[150] Ghazali's deliberate word choice emphasizes the need for man to cultivate his character just like you would cultivate a piece of land.

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[148]Adhami, Shaykh Abdullah. (1998). "Implications of Gender-Related Language in the Texts of the Shariah." Damascus. Unpublished manuscript.

[149]Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), (2005). *Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam*, OIC/9-IGGE/HRI/2004/Rep.Final: http://www.refworld.org/docid/44eaf0e4a.html

[150] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan. (1979). "روض ." *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. P 424

Moreover, while the term for boys is used, the understanding is that this chapter is directed towards all children.[151]

Others Islamic scholars (i.e. al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), al-Qurtubi (d. 1273), al-Qayrawani (d. 996)), use the term *tadbir* in their works on children, but more often than not their work was medical in nature. In fact, the term *tadbir* is usually used in reference to 'managing' health or illness, not raising children.[152] Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 869) used the term *riyadah* prior to Ghazali and while it is not documented, it is most unlikely that Ghazali was unfamiliar with Tirmidhi's work from which he probably took the term *riyadah*.[153] Some contemporary scholars (i.e. Adhami), suggest that although *riyadah* is not the best term to reflect the "lighthearted," "playful," and "creative" nature of child-rearing exemplified in the Sunnah or the Prophet himself, Ghazali is able to make up for this in explanation. Others (i.e. Winter) have almost entirely written off *Riyadatul Sibyan* in *Riyadatul Nafs* as an "intrusion" to the broader work of the *Ihya* for it drawing too heavily from Miskawayh who in turn "copied his chapter" from Bryson.[154] And others (i.e. Giladi) recognize Ghazali's adoption of Greek moral philosophy in the balance of spiritual forces (an ideal formed from Platonic and Aristotelian elements) but suggest that when integrated into *Kitab Riyadatul Nafs* by means of interpretations of Quranic verses and *hadith* reports, a nuanced theoretical infrastructure is discernible unique from Ghazali's forerunning child-rearing theorists.[155]

Nonetheless, Ghazali's chapter was clearly influenced by Miskawayh's *Tahdhib al-akhlaq* and in turn by the ancient Greek philosopher, Bryson in the *Oikonomikos*.[156] A key difference between Ghazali's chapter and the parallel chapters in *Oikonomikos* and *Tahdhib al- akhlaq* is the emphasis put on the duty and responsibility of parents in educating their children to ensure the preservation of the "original nature of the soul" and that their child learns *adab* or is "accustomed to correct conduct at an early age."[157] Again, Ghazali grounds his chapter in the Quran—specifically Quran (66:6) that urges

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[151] Ahmed, Abdul Aziz, and Imam Muhammad Ahmed Al-Ramli. (2013). *Educating Children: Classical Advice for Modern Times (Riyadatul Sibyan)*. DTI Publishing House, Western Cape, South Africa.
[152] Adhami, Shaykh Abdullah. (1998). "Implications of Gender-Related Language"
[153] *Ibid.*
[154] Al-Ghazali. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires. P. LXIV*
[155] Giladi, Avner. (1992). Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society. P 50
[156] *Ibid.*
[157] *ibid*. p. 51

man to protect himself and his families from that which would lead to the fire of the hereafter—and with the understanding that the ultimate happiness is in the next life.[158]

This importance of intentional and purposeful parenting is further emphasized with Ghazali's opening argument for the chapter in which he reinforces the essential nature of child-rearing:

> "The child is by way of being 'on loan' in the care of his parents. If he is made accustomed to good and is so taught, he will grow up in goodness, he will win happiness in this world and the next, and his parents and teachers will have a share of his reward. But if he is made accustomed to evil and is neglected like the beasts, he will be woeful and lost, and the burden will then be upon the neck of those responsible for him . . . As much as the father shields his son from fire in this world, it is more meet for him to shield him from the fire of the world to come."[159]

According to Ghazali, the main purpose of child-rearing and therein education is to ensure the future of the believer in the next world. Early childhood is given special attention because "in its pristine state the child's soul is pure and open to influences [...] And not only is the child's future determined through his education, but that of his educators also."[160] Thus, it is incumbent on parents to acclimate their child overtime to be mindful that "every possible step should be taken to ensure that the struggle between evil and good, the sacred and the profane, in the human personality should always culminate in the establishment of virtues and in the annihilation of vices."[161]

The family (historically distinct from our modern notion of nuclear family) is considered the primary institution for character and personality development in Muslim society.[162] The active development process begins as soon as a child is born. Child-rearing and personality development entails teaching:

> "the child manners and civilization and educat[ing] him in the best of morals and protect[ing] him from bad companions and friends and [...] not letting the desire for physical beautification, fine dresses, ornamentation, physical ease, and comfort-seeking settle in his heart, otherwise, the child after growing up, will

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[158] Asad, Muhammed. (2012). *Message of the Quran*. Islamic Book Trust.
[159] Al-Ghazali,,. (1993) *Revival of Religious Learnings*
[160] Giladi, Avner. (1992). Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society, p51
[161] Ali, Abbas Husein. (1995)."The Nature of Human Disposition: Al-Ghazali's Contribution to an, Islamic Concept of Personality." *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 3, no. 1. p 109
[162] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." P 53

> waste his precious life in desiring and seeking these lowly things and will get eternally destroyed by them."[163]

Ghazali perceives childhood as the training ground (recall the meaning of *riyadah*) for long-term personality development. He argues that if a child's initial upbringing is done properly, then this development will "be pleasing to the self (*Nafs*)" and effectively, "get inscribed on the heart like an [indelible] inscription on a stone, auguring well for the child." Whereas,

> "if the child's mental development had been along the wrong lines, then the qualities of evil, shamelessness, desire for eating too much, greed for fine dresses, ostentation and ornamentation, gaudiness, arrogance and pride, would have been born in him/her, and his/her heart will refuse to accept this fact (i.e. the impermanence of the worldly life and the need to work for the life hereafter) like the dry wall refuses to accept dry soil (i.e. such teachings will not stick to the heart of the child)."[164]

The process by which parents should build a child's sense of self, character, and the other elements of personality take three primary forms:

(1) By *Nature: A* child may be born with a particular set of natural inclinations and traits. This is why Ghazali urges parents to choose their spouses carefully, observing their potential person's *adab* and character which will in turn influence their offspring's *adab* and character. This can also be analyzed as a caution to be vigilant of the genetic composition being passed on to a child which may predispose a child to sickness of the body, mind, and/or spirit. Under nature, one can also categorize Ghazali's focus on nursing young infants and the emphasis he puts on the diet and character of the mother or wet nurse, which he believes to undoubtedly affect the child's physical, mental, and spiritual health.

(2) Through active and passive *socialization* (*Al-Mukhalatah*): this is the primary means of acquiring good character in early childhood because of young children's natural inclination to imitate. Since most of a young child's learning is acquired through sense-perception and imagination

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[163] Al-Ghazali,,. (1993) *Revival of Religious Learnings*

[164] Hasan, Irfan. "Golden Principles of Raising Children." *Majmu'at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazzali (*مجموعة رسائل الإمام الغزالي*)*, by Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Dar-Ul Isha'at. P 7

(Abu Sway, 1996) it is essential for parents to monitor what a child may actively or passively be seeing and hearing.[165] Resultantly, Ghazali repeatedly reminds parents to be weary of the role models and companions young children have and to ensure that the example being set for children is not counterproductive. This is also a reminder to parents that they themselves are both actively and passively socializing their child and so parents must be aware of themselves and the actions, language, and *adab* they model.

(3) Through *habituation* (*Al-I'tiyad*): This process takes place through self-discipline or training (*riyadah)*; "by which the actions associated with such character are firstly enforced, until they ultimately become part of his nature or character.".[166]

***Building 'Self' in Early Childhood: Habituation & Adab***

Western psychology generally accepts that "for reasons that are physiological and cognitive, as well as social and cultural, it is in late adolescence and young adulthood that many contemporary men and women in modern societies come to believe that the self must or should be constructed and told in a manner that integrates the disparate roles they play, incorporates their many different values and skills, and organizes into a meaningful temporal pattern their reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future."[167] The question "Who am I?" is not a question that young children are believed to ask or understand because, as McAdams suggests, "such a question is relevant to modern adult 'selfing' in a way that generally escapes the ego of childhood."[168] Contrary to what these modern psychologists suggest, Ghazali believes that even in early childhood, man has an innate sense of self. He further argues that it is a crucial time for human development in terms of character, morality, and worldview all of which underline an individual's resultant sense of self as he ages.

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[165] Siraj, Saedah, and Asmaa Mohd. Arshad. (2008)."Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali Viewpoints on Children's Character Development and Education." p 63-4

[166] *ibid*. p 63-4 ; Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad (1989). Mizan al-'Amal

[167] McAdams, D. P. (1985). Power, intimacy, and the life story. New York: Guilford,

[168] Mcadams, Dan P. (1996)."Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self:" P. 306

During the first stage of childhood, Ghazali and other Islamic scholars emphasize the condition of nursing and the spiritual condition of the caretaker which influences the child.[169] The Islamic perspective asserts that every person has a birthright to know of his noble identity defined by the Quran and Sunnah (prophetic tradition) which they believe provides the most balanced conception of self for both males and females.[170] This also implies that knowledge is a birthright of the person and particularly the child who learns first of this identity through his parents and family.[171]

In infancy, this identity requires parents to address the needs of the child through love, which builds a sense of security in the child. Love requires parents to first respect and honor the dignity and sovereignty of the child.[172] For infants, this respect and honor is connected to self-worth which begins to develop when parents address the needs of an infant immediately—the first time they cry—which in turn will impact the overall amount he cries. This is contrary to many modern-day parenting techniques like the popular Ferber method which involves training a baby to 'self-soothe' by allowing him to cry for a predetermined amount of time before receiving comfort. For Ghazali and other Islamic scholars, the Ferber method may be perceived as undermining a child's dignity and ignoring his *fitra.* This opinion in some ways is supported by the modern evolutionary theory of attachment (e.g., Bowlby, Harlow, Lorenz) which suggests that children are biologically pre-programmed to form attachments with others in order to survive. This attachment is determined on care and responsiveness, i.e. love and respect. Thus, an infant's innate 'social releaser' behaviors like crying and smiling stimulate innate caregiving responses from adults. In denying this natural call and response system, parents at some level deny their own natural instinct and the natural *fitra* of their child.

In transitioning a young child from one stage of physical development to the next, Islamic scholars instead urge parents to rely on the anchor of love and trust built in early childhood through acts of intentional kindness, mercy, and attentiveness that fill

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[169] See Ibn Sahnun's *Adab al-mualimeen* for more information.
[170] Adhami, Shaykh Abdullah. (1998). "Implications of Gender-Related Language in the Texts of the Shariah." Damascus. Unpublished manuscript.
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] *Ibid.*

the child with a sense of sovereignty, dignity, and self-worth (all of which are a prerequisite for humility).[173] These acts (which often involve gentle-toned explanations and physical comforting) facilitate smoother changes in what are otherwise volatile moments in a child's life like weaning from nursing or co-sleeping. The emphasis for these early transitions require parents to listen to and respect the needs of the child although they may be demanding on the parents' time, energy, and patience. The time, energy, and patience are ultimately the investment of love and dignity that fill the reservoir of self-respect a child develops for himself.[174] Moreover, when a parent/caretaker approaches child-rearing less like a burden and/or disease with prescribed times of crying and soothing and more of a spiritual endeavor, the relationship and bond between child and parent is conducive to further love and respect. This paradigmatic shift in child-rearing affects the levels of anxiety and confidence in both parents and children, the latter of which have an innate ability to sense and mimic the former's spiritual state and subsequent level of distress.[175]

Through intentional child-rearing in the latter portion of the first stage and second stage of childhood, parents function as "protective barrier[s] between children and the 'outside world': filtering, buffering, shielding" their children from that which they deem dangerous or just contradictory to a child's desired character. Thus, what matters in early childhood is parents' worldview and how to manage the influence of contradiction to that system of knowledge at home and on children.[176] Goodnow explains how "meanings and views of the world are seen as flowing out of practices."[177] It is from accepted and reinforced practices—i.e. habits and routine—that children develop a sense of morality, self, and worldview.

Habits and routine in modern psychology are "usually accompanied by a sense of their being 'natural or 'proper.'" They help maintain "a sense of structure or order in one's life: a sense that can be lost or undermined when the usual routines or practices are disrupted." So, while we may take for granted "local practices that have to do with

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[173] *Ibid.*
[174] *Ibid.*
[175] *Ibid.*
[176] Goodnow, Jacqueline J. (2011). "Merging Cultural and Psychological Accounts." p 81
[177] *Ibid.* p 76

what our children eat, wear, are named, and where and when they should sleep," we can also understand these routines and habits as an extension of civility and a broader sense of self and society.[178]

Civility in any culture is a balance between self-restraint and self-expression and its study "is at once a study of the 'social bond'" or "'trust networks.'" Moreover, the "manner in which trust, distrust, pride, and embarrassment/shame are managed are the ultimate measures of a culture's civility ethos." The presentation of self involves complex processes very much affected by the emotions of pride, embarrassment, and shame, which are informed by a "a culture's preference for 'mutual association' or 'mutual distancing.'"[179] With Modernity's obsession with dichotomies separating the private from the public and the individual from the collective, civility itself is understood as either self-interested or other-interested further highlighting an assumed contradiction of self and society.

Mintz understands changes in manners and etiquette as a reflection of "changes in people's psychic make-up."[180] Medieval European manner manuals like *De Civilitate Morum Puerilim* by Erasmus[181] were designed to inculcate a new European civility for the social elite in the form of behavior and etiquette distinct from the average, crude, and uncivilized citizen. Erasmus' manners were part of a civilizing process in which the elite consciously put "a constraint upon themselves in order to give themselves a source of difference" from baser society. They "created capital for themselves through self-control."[182] The dramatic shift in manners transformed Western society in its reclaiming the idea of self-discipline, self-control, and self-respect. While the new dignity afforded to the self through this cultural revolution is important, the foundation of this change was based on leveraging imbalance: creating a separation between the nobility and gentry by making the latter appear socially incompetent. The foundational concept gradually created imbalanced individuals. Overtime, this warped sense of self became

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[178] *Ibid*. P 75
[179] Davetian, Benet. (2009).*Civility: a Cultural History*. University of Toronto Press.
[180] Mintz, S., & McNeil, S. (2016). "Manners and the Civilizing Process." *Digital History*. Retrieved April 22, 2018,http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/topic_display.cfm?tcid=66
[181] Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*. Basil Blackwell, 1978.
[182] Haugaard, Mark. *The Constitution of Power: a Theoretical Analysis of Power, Knowledge and Structure*. Manchester University Press, 1997.p 197

embedded in social culture and has contributed to many of the psychological issues characteristic of modern society like narcissism, hubris, entitlement, superiority and inferiority complexes, racism, and the like.

Ghazali's focus on *adab,* on the other hand, is not designed to separate or pit individuals against one another. By design, it minimizes difference and encourages balance in and among all people in society.[183] Ghazali's principles re-instill values of self-discipline, self-respect and morality, but of a very particular brand. They are grounded in a philosophic system of God-consciousness. They set clear boundaries for intellectual, personal, and psychological growth of individuals conducive to social harmony, not social conflict. In the adoption of *adab*, Ghazali hopes the 'psychic make-up' of young children remains balanced through life.

In a few broad principles, I have outlined Ghazali's advice that guide parents in helping develop their young child's personality—specifically their understanding of themselves and their life purpose—through habituation. His focus on *adab* or proper action provide concrete ways to impose self-control and discipline in different aspects of a young child's life from the seemingly most mundane aspects of eating and dressing to the more philosophical aspects of character and morality. His advice on child-rearing is strung together with a profound sense of humility or understanding of role and purpose in the world which arguably makes his recommendations timeless.

***Ghazali's Child-Rearing Principles***

*I. The Adab of Eating*

Eating is a physical, social, and spiritual action. The etiquettes of eating and, in general, the *adab* of food production and consumption are one of the first principles Ghazali begins with because "greed for food" is the first trait to take control of a child. He urges parents to teach young children to "pick up food only with [their] right hand, say 'In the name of God' when raising it, eat from that which is nearest to [them], and [...] not start eating before others." He also says a child "should not stare at his food or at the other people present" and that he should "chew it properly; he should not eat one mouthful after another without pause, he should not get food on his hand or his clothes, and he should acquire the habit of sometimes eating nothing but bread so that he does

[183] Erasmus, Desiderius, and Eleanor Merchant. *A Handbook on Good Manners for Children*. 2008.

not think that the presence of other kinds of food is inevitable." Ghazali further suggests that children should not overeat and should "enjoy giving the best food to others and encouraged to pay little heed to what eats and to be contented with its coarser varieties."[184]

The habits in regards to food again underline a key understanding that a child should develop in regard to respect to others, himself, and the world--(1) respect to others while eating *(i.e. he should "not start eating before others," he "should not stare...at the other people present," and he "should enjoy giving the best food to others")*, (2) respect to oneself while eating *(i.e. "he should "chew it properly; he should not eat one mouthful after another without pause, he should not get food on his hand or his clothes"*), and (3) respect to the food itself *(i.e. he should not overeat and be "encouraged to pay little heed to what eats and to be contented with its coarser varieties.")* The *adab* of food helps a child develop and nurture bonds and relationships integral to his personality. It helps him understand his role and function as well as the role and function of and respect for society, which refers to other individuals, but also to the environment and animals from where food comes. In urging children to be content with simpler and even coarser foods and not to overeat, Ghazali urges food consciousness—a trait that in the age of climate change, genetically modified cropping, and overproduction and consumption becomes increasingly relevant.[185]

*II. The Adab of Dressing*

In regard to dress, Ghazali continues with the theme of modesty and simplicity urging the development of "love and desire for simple and plain clothes." He continues by instructing parents to "encourage children to like white clothes over colors" and to "protect their child from meeting with all those children who are accustomed to prosperity, seeking comforts (comfortable lifestyle), and dressing proudly." Moreover, a child, Ghazali suggests, should even be protected from "stories about such ways of indulgence" that would thereby make it seem acceptable.[186] Ghazali's insistence on

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[184] Al-Ghazali,,. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires"*
[185]Butler, Colin D, et al. "Food, Livestock Production, Energy, Climate Change, and Health." *The Lancet*, vol. 370, no. 9594, 2007, pp. 1253–1263.
[186] Hasan, Irfan. "Golden Principles of Raising Children." *Majmu'at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazzali (*مجموعة رسائل الإمام الغزالي*)*, by Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Dar-Ul Isha'at. P 3

simplicity in dress and taste protects a child from seeking luxury and wealth—a desire that would make the child susceptible to vice and bad character later on in life. Ghazali suggests protecting the *nafs* from this desire can habituate the child to be content with whatever he has, not seek more than he needs, and also prevent him from growing "up to be ill-natured, dishonest, envious, obstinate, inclined to theft, backbiting, and excessive chatter and laughter, and slyness and immorality."[187]

The suggestion of white clothes has significant meaning in the Islamic tradition. Scholars have suggested that Ghazali's emphasis on white clothes is in reference to death during which the deceased is shroud in a white cloth in preparation for burial. A child who becomes accustomed to wearing white is at some level preparing himself for inevitable death. The end of his life narrative, like all other human beings, is not unique, but it is certain. Here, we can contextualize McAdams' ideas on narrative psychology in which the modern individual—in abandoning traditional morality and its worldview—faces an acute sense of anxiety from his inability to construct a linear narrative of his life that is disconnected from a cohesive concept of truth and purpose. Ghazali's ideas can address this source of anxiety by providing the structure of man's narrative and his purpose in life. It is for this reason, that he suggests acclimating a child to the fleeting nature of life and specifically (and gently) to make him aware of its end. This awareness is not only important for him to remain balanced in his appetites, but it also gives a child a basis from which to determine life priorities and value judgements separate from material worth.

Awareness of death (and life) is one of the unique recommendations that Ghazali insists a *child* (once he reaches the age of discernment) should possess. A strange concept, perhaps, in contemporary Western society that view death and dying as a foreign and unwanted experience. Lawrence Samuel, an American cultural historian, suggests that the hyper-rational motivations underpinning modern society have for centuries motivated the use science and medicine to "solve" the "problem" of dying. Reflecting the concept of *Homo Deus,* "the rise of the self has made it increasingly difficult [for individuals] to acknowledge the fact that our individual selves will no

[187] Al-Ghazali,,. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires"*

longer exist."[188] Ultimately, making death one of modern culture's biggest taboos and immortality one of its greatest and most destructive desires.

Beyond a healthy awareness of mortality, Ghazali's *adab* of dressing also facilitates an early consciousness around clothing and consumption. This is particularly relevant to society today considering the fast-fashion industry—the second greatest polluting industry in the world[189]—which not only wreaks havoc on the environment, but with its reliance on sweatshop production maintains a severe imbalance and injustice among people and nations.[190] Moreover, the overemphasis on appearance and fashion characteristic of the modern consumer market feeds a predatory capitalistic system that encourages debt and materialism and many correlating self-esteem and psycho-social problems.[191] Lasch uses the term 'propaganda of consumption' to describe how the romanticization of commodities and the institutionalization of envy has "created and exacerbated new forms of unhappiness—personal insecurity, status anxiety, anxiety in parents about their ability to satisfy the needs of the young." He argues that alienation itself has become a commodity and to address the resulting "spiritual desolation of modern life," consumption has been proposed as the cure.[192] Ghazali's insistence on instilling a habit of simplicity in dress and even a dislike for luxury early on is important given the growing industry of undermining a person's self-esteem vis-a-vis appearance and material worth.

### *III. The Adab of Social Interaction*

The *adab* of social interactions is the etiquette an individual should have when dealing with others. Ghazali's references to personal etiquette underline the dignity of and respect for oneself. He says a child "should be put in the practice of not spitting, yawning or wiping his nose in the presence of others, and taught not to turn his back to anyone, or to cross his legs, or lean his chin and support his head on his hand, for these

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[188] Samuel, Lawrence R. (2013). "Death, American Style." *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers. www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychology-yesterday/201306/death-american-style.
[189] Conca, James. "Making Climate Change Fashionable - The Garment Industry Takes On Global Warming." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 3 Dec. 2015
[190] Claudio, L. (2007). Waste Couture: Environmental Impact of the Clothing Industry. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, *115*(9), A449–A454.
[191] See: Kasser, Tim. *The High Price of Materialism*. MIT Press, 2006.
[192] Lasch, Christopher. (2018). *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* . W W Norton.

practices indicate the presence of sloth." Ghazali also urges parents to teach their young children the importance of honesty, trust, and respect by forbidding them "from making oaths of any sort" and from "speaking loosely," cursing, insulting anyone, or keeping company with those who participate in this kind of behavior.

Ghazali continues to address language and the manner in which children should speak or not speak. Modern research on language ideology discusses how deeper notions of a person's and/or society's concepts of power and respect are embedded in the nature and patterns of different languages.[193] While grammatically some linguistic cultures may naturally be more conducive to respect, Ghazali urges parents to teach children to consciously use respect in the way they speak. He says children "should be put in the habit of never speaking before anyone else, and of speaking only in response to question and in proportion to them, and of listening properly whenever an older person is speaking, and rising (when he enters), and making a place for him and sitting facing him."[194] The *adab* towards others reflects a deeper comfort with and security of self. Moreover, when Ghazali mentions that a child should "be taught to obey his parents and his teacher, and all people who are older than himself, whether relations or not, and to look upon them with respect and admiration," he is emphasizing the need for social intelligence, empathy, and humility in speech and interaction.

Ghazali also makes note that a child who has reached the age of discernment should be taught about the laws of God and of society. He should learn to fear "theft and unlawful gain" as well as "lying, treachery, deceit, and all other traits which tend to predominate among children." He acknowledges that a child may not fully comprehend these concepts, but by habituating them early against, then "as he approaches adulthood he will come to understand the reasons which underlie" them. These reasons are outlined in the section on Ghazali's understanding of the relationship between self and society.

*IV. The Adab of the Body: Sleeping & Exercise*

When it comes to the *adab* of the body, Ghazali's advice follows the idea that the ennobled body has rights over man and, thus, it is man's duty to do justice to

[193] Irvine, Judith T. (2012). "Language Ideology." *Oxford Bibliographies Online Datasets*. doi:10.1093/obo/9780199766567-0012.
[194] Al-Ghazali. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires." p 79*

himself. While this corresponds to the spiritual and psychological health of the body, the section of *Riyadatul Sibyan* also refers specifically to the *adab* of sleep and exercise. Ghazali recommends limiting a child's sleep in the day out of fear it may create laziness and disrupt sleep at night. Furthermore, Ghazali—continuing with the principle against luxury and self-indulgence—suggests a child be habituated to rough bedding.[195] With the same motivation of preventing sloth, Ghazali urges parents to not let the child's body grow fat. He echoes Greek philosophy in the importance of encouraging physical exercise.

Ghazali also highlights the importance of play in early childhood and suggests that for the health of a young mind, play is vital. Moreover, in asserting that play can be a means to teach and learn at a young age, Ghazali's ideas may resemble the increasingly popular early childhood education philosophy of Maria Montessori who highlighted the benefit of self-paced exploration.[196] In fact, Montessori education incorporates a philosophy not entirely at odds with Islamic and Ghazalian thought. Montessori's beliefs on exploratory play and the innate capacity for a child to recognize not only his own freedom, but the corresponding responsibility to himself and to others align almost seamlessly with the notion of the *fitra.* However, the explicit aim of Montessori is to develop the child, intellectually, physically, and socially. Here again one realizes the spiritual dimension of the child being neglected.[197] Another key difference between Ghazali and Montessori's notion of play is that play for Montessori is most commonly structured outside the home and family in an external institution. The socialization of young children *in the home* is of utmost significance for Ghazali who would view the institutionalization of *early* childhood education—a time when the bonds of trust between parent and child are most vulnerable—as detrimental to the overall personality development of an individual.

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[195] Ibid. p 78
[196] Berger, K.S. (2012). The developing person through childhood. p 269
[197] To avoid compartmental thinking that is so common to education and life in the modern West, we may turn to the *tawhidic (*unified) curriculum put forth by Ann El-Moslimany that presents an education philosophy grounded in the concept of unity of knowledge and existence. See more from: El-Moslimany, Ann. (2018). *Teaching Children: A Moral, Spiritual, and Holistic Approach to Educational Development*. IIIT.

In *Rasa''il Ikhwan as safa',* Ibn Sina (Avicenna) explains the nature of trust in the parent-child relationship in Islamic thought. Human beings do not feel securely anchored in themselves, instead they crave (*tawakkul*) or someone to lean on—children represent this best. They "trust their parents to procure for them the food, drink, clothing, and other things they need. All day long they are occupied with playing. They do not think about making a living and are not concerned with looking for a livelihood, because they trust their parents. Their hearts are undisturbed, and their souls are at rest because they are so secure of their parents."[198] The preservation of this trust depends on the preservation of the familial bonds between parent and child—the very bonds that have suffered with the cultural and historical changes of Modernity.

In general, Ghazali's notion of *adab* to the body and mind is an effort to maintain overall health of individual for the purpose of "gain[ing] strength for the worship of God."[199] By making the purpose behind every action or *adab* explicit, Ghazali reinforced the motivation aspect in his theory of personality. By reinforcing the concept of ideal happiness in the afterlife as the impetus for character development, a child is provided a structured design with identifiable limitations of behavior as well as a clear unchanging rationale behind that behavior. This clarity comes with the introduction to cosmology—specifically the concept of *tawhid*—at an early age.

*V. The Adab of Discipline*

In conjunction with his discussion on shame and praise, Ghazali offers a method on disciplining young children that relies heavily on positive reinforcement and privacy in order to protect a child's sense of self. He warns that a young child "should not be spoken to at length every time [he is corrected], for this would accustom him to being blamed for his misdeeds, and destroy the effectiveness such words have upon his heart."[200] A child's beliefs about their own self "worth are connected to parental confirmation, especially when parents remind their children of their positive accomplishments."[201] Furthermore, some suggest "parents who are too critical of their children foster low self-esteem, a belief that 'the self is fundamentally flawed.'"[202]

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[198] *Rasa''il Ikhwan as safa'* Cairo 1347/1928, Vol 1, pp. 221-223.
[199] Al-Ghazali. (2016). *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul & Breaking the Two Desires." p 80*
[200] Ibid. *p* 77-8
[201] Berger, K.S. (2012). The developing person through childhood. p278
[202] Ibid. 278

Ghazali urges parents to educate, rather than dictate their children. Moreover, it is only "with strong affectionate bonds between them and their children," that "parents should make firm moral demands." These bonds are delicate, and the overuse of shame and guilt may undermine the trust that forges them. This is why Ghazali looks unfavorably on physical forms of discipline and suggests that "parents should strive to punish psychologically... in order to induce feelings of remorse and guilt rather than fear and anger." He suggests that parents "use extrinsic methods of reward and punishment during childhood to pave the way for intrinsic ones by adolescence."[203]

Because at one level shame indicates social awareness,[204] shame and praise are to be leveraged in a balanced manner when dealing with young children particularly since both are directly linked with an individual's sense of self and self-esteem. In his empirical study on self-esteem, Hewitt suggests that "pride and shame presume a relationship in which culture and society set goals for individuals and provide means for attaining them, and in which individuals readily accept cultural guidance."[205] This is in line with Ghazali's personality development theory in which parents prescribe the goals set by divine law and guide their children in achieving those goals helping them inculcate virtue and character. Specifically, Ghazali says leverage praise by administering it "whenever a good trait or action manifests itself in the child [and] he should be admired and rewarded with something which gives him joy." Conversely, "when once in a while he does something bad it is best to pretend not to notice and not to bring it to the attention of others" so as to preserve the child's dignity and self-esteem discussed further in the following sections on humility.

The parent-child relationship is what propels the child on a balanced path to personality development and the parents on a trajectory for successful parenting. Giddens ideas seem to support this as well when he notes how "trust in [parents] is the key to the development of a sense of ontological security in the young child." He suggests that shame and trust are closely linked and basic "trust is established in the

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[203] Ali, Abbas Husein. (1995). "The Nature of Human Disposition: Al-Ghazali's Contribution to an, Islamic Concept of Personality." p. 109

[204] Berger, K.S. (2012). The developing person through childhood p 280

[205] Hewitt, John P. "The Social Construction of Self Esteem." *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, edited by C. R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez, Oxford University Press, 2002. p144

child as part of the experiencing of a world that has coherence, continuity, and dependability"—a world that for a young child is shaped primarily by his parents and family. Since "an experience of shame threatens or destroy trust,"[206] Giddens observations in fact empirically reinforce Ghazali's advice on limiting the use of shame to ensure: (1) the trust in and durability of parent-child relationships (corresponding to the relationship between individual and society in Ghazali's personality theory), (2) the child's belief in truth particularly as they relate to boundaries between right and wrong (corresponding to psychological adjustment in Ghazali's personality theory), and (3) a child's sense of self and self-esteem (corresponding to the self and unconscious in Ghazali's personality theory.)

The *adab* of discipline is integral to early childhood personality development. Ultimately, it refers firstly, to how parents regulate the behavior of children and secondly, to how children learn to self-regulate. This underlines the emotional intelligence that Ghazali urges parents to develop in children from an early age. This will help children later in life respond to issues and mistakes in an emotionally responsible and measured manner, which contributes to a more durable sense of self.

*VI. The Adab of Humility*

While many would categorize humility as a character trait or virtue, it is nonetheless a condition that denotes a certain proper behavior and etiquette, which is why I have categorized it as Ghazali's last and most significant child-rearing principle. In fact, humility, I argue, is the distinguishing element of Ghazali's personality theory. In the following section, I provide an in-depth analysis of humility and its significance in early childhood as a way to counter the challenges posed by Modernity in developing personality and therein, a stable sense of self.

***Ghazali's Conception of Humility***

Different approaches to moral education exist varying by educational aims and methods, however, the differences in these approaches are in fact philosophical. The exceptions are the psychological attempts to derive moral education conclusions that emphasize parental influence, behavior shaping, dilemma discussion, which are

[206] Giddens, Anthony. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity." p 66*

characteristic of psychoanalytic, social learning and cognitive developmental theory respectively. However, the over reliance on quasi-empirical research alone makes it "difficult to see how such conclusions might be justified without appeal, however covert, to specific epistemological, ethical and even political considerations."[207] Most modern moral educational approaches "avoid controversial conceptual, normative and/or evaluative assumptions and commitments." Moreover, the "allegedly 'impartial' goal of values clarification...appears to enshrine a deeply relativistic moral epistemology, and cognitive stage theory seems ultimately rooted in liberal ethical theory." In essence, the modern conceptions of moral education—associated "with ideas of just community, character development and caring—also appear to be fairly philosophically partisan."[208]

When discussing moral education, the idea of virtue ethics put forth by Carr and Steutel is a relevant launching point. They discuss virtue ethics (defined as 'a systematic and coherent account of virtues') as a possible framework to develop moral education. Accordingly, moral education becomes "a matter of the development of such traits, along with promotion of some understanding of their moral value or significance."[209] In Ghazali's system of virtue ethics, there is no attempt to disguise the epistemological roots of his philosophy, in fact it is encouraged that individuals investigate and continually learn the foundations of his philosophy by studying the Divine sources of the Quran and Sunnah.

In Ghazali's system of ethics, it is evident that humility is an essential virtue to his taxonomy of virtues and overall moral education. It is identified as a desirable trait because of its moral significance to an individual's intrinsic sense of self, but it is also an instrumental moral and social virtue. Thus, Ghazali's conception of virtue specifically in regard to humility, is distinguished not only by its contribution to personal and cultural formation, but also "indispensable to social cooperation."[210]

When we discuss moral education and virtue the obvious question for the modern individual is whether there is a real, objective, distinction between what is morally right

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[207] Carr, D. (Ed.), Steutel, J. (Ed.). (1999). Virtue Ethics and Moral Education. London: Routledge.p3
[208] *Ibid.*
[209] *Ibid.* p 5
[210] *Ibid.* p. 6; In contrast to John Rawls who differentiates civic and political virtue from religious and moral virtue, where the former is key to social cooperation and the latter to personal and cultural identity.

and good and what is morally wrong and bad? And also, why should we do what is morally right and avoid what is morally wrong?[211] In the modern era, the absence of an ultimate lawgiver makes it difficult to determine the boundaries of what is obligatory from what is forbidden. However, a sense of obligation is crucial for individual moral agency and in an individual's ability to determine his own course of action. The notion of obligation, however, often implies the subjugation of personal desire, which when framed in the discourse of coercion and imposition is seen as contrary to the freedom that modern civilization has been so desperate to attain. Ghazali's moral education is contingent not only on the acceptance of the boundaries set by God, but also affords man the purest freedom "in terms of the refinement of our attachments" of material and worldly needs, wants, and desires through the adoption of humility which as we will see implies a deep understanding of human dignity as well as giving "the right place and weight to important goods in one's choice and action."[212]

In the *Criterion* and the *Ihya,* Ghazali describes his system of virtues (see *Figure 4)* beginning with four principal virtues or what he terms the "mothers" (*ummahat*) of

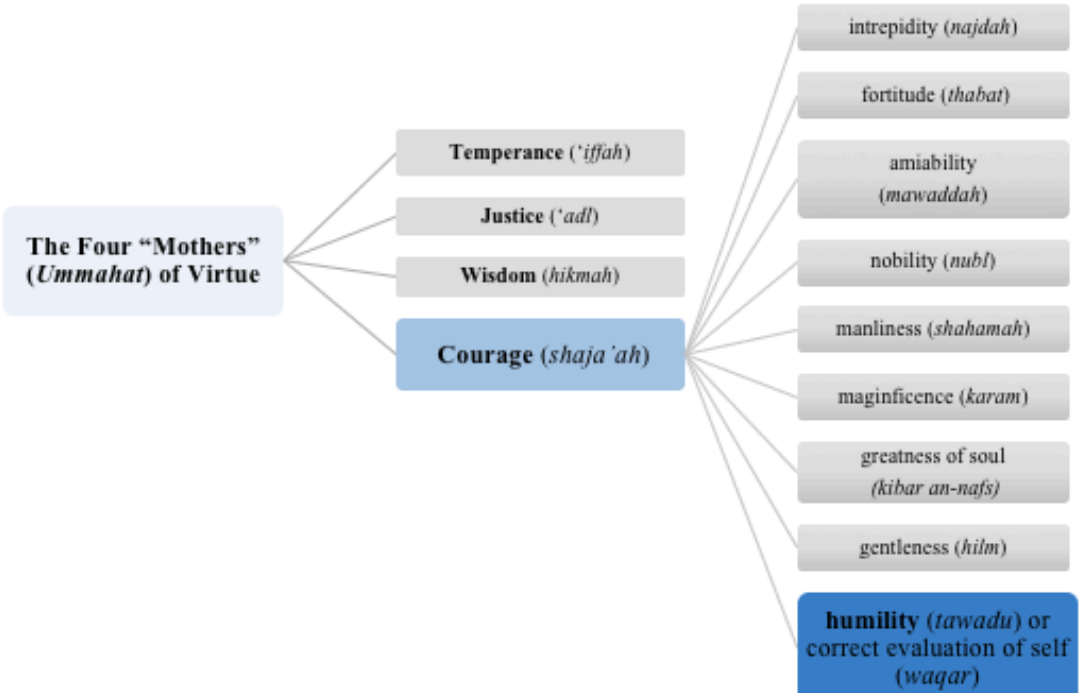


***Figure 6 Ghazali's System of Virtues***

[211] Dent, Nicholas (1999). Virtue Ethics and Moral Education. Carr, D. (Ed.), Steutel, J. (Ed.). London: Routledge. p 21
[212] *Ibid.* p 30

virtue: wisdom (*hikmah*), courage (*shaja'ah*), temperance (*'iffah*), and justice (*'adl*).[213] Virtue, Ghazali argues, is achieved when the body is in a state of equilibrium. Equilibrium "is the middle way between the two opposite character traits, each of which is an extreme."[214] He categorizes humility as a subordinate virtue of courage, which he describes as the mean of the two extremes, cowardice (*jubn*) and recklessness (*tahwawwur*).[215]

Courage is significant because it assists the individual in acquiring practical wisdom (using the conscious and rational aspect of the self: *nafs lawwamah)* to control "the irascible and concupiscent faculties of the animal soul" which, recall is part of the *nafs ammarah besoa'*. It is closest to the Divine attribute "Subduer" (*al-Qahhar*). Sherif identifies courage as the human parallel to *al-Qahhar,* alluding to man overcoming his enemies—the truest enemy being his own passion.[216] Courage has a number of subordinate virtues (see *Figure 4*) that "help man in his "greater struggle" against the base passions of his soul, but also enable him to teach himself humility."[217]

Despite the obvious Aristotelian influence on Ghazali's system of ethics, Ghazali's concept of humility is distinct. He, alongside other well-known Muslim philosophers including Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Avicenna), believes in the positive nature of humility. He argues that the goal of character training is *humility* itself, in contrast to Aristotle's belief in *Nicomachean Ethic*s which claims 'greatness of soul' as the ultimate goal. In Aristotelian ethics, humility "is completely incompatible with Aristotle's notion of the gentlemen, who must be, among other things, a great-souled man." In fact, humility is considered a vice and a "defect of greatness of soul."[218] Unlike Aristotle, whose system of ethics dealt with worldly honor, Ghazali is concerned with individual salvation. For Ghazali, the motivation behind morally virtuous actions is "the divine reality of the hereafter"—eternal happiness. Humility, thus, "serve[s] the goal of

[213] Sherif, Mohamed Ahmed. (1975). *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*. State University of New York Press,.p24
[214] *Ibid*. p 34-35
[215] *Ibid*. p43-4
[216] *Ibid*. p45
[217] *Ibid*. p47
[218] Sherif, Mohamed Ahmed. (1975).*Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*. State University of New York Press.p54

Ghazali's character training better than greatness of soul" and it is "better fitted to crown the moral virtues."[219]

In the *Criterion,* Ghazali initially used the term *waqar* or "correct evaluation of self" to describe his later understanding of humility. But upon writing the *Ihya*, he renamed this virtue *tawadu* or humility. He describes it as behaving toward one's soul in proportion to its merit. He categorizes it as the mean between the extremes of arrogance (*kibr*) and baseness (*khasasah*) and defines arrogance as putting the soul higher than it deserves and baseness as lowering the soul below what it deserves, commenting that if this lowering "is in the right way, it is called commendable humility."[220] Other Muslim scholars like Miskawayh, describe the virtue of "correct evaluation of self" as the "tranquility and stability of the soul during the agitations which accompany the pursuit of desires,"' Ibn 'Adi suggests that it "is equated with good manners of speech and respectful conduct in discourse with others," and Ibn Sina regards it as that "which restrains the soul from arrogance."[221]

To further examine Ghazali's conception of humility, we turn to scholars of Arabic linguistics. Franz Rosenthal notes, "terminology and definition were favored subjects of discussion among Muslim scholars brought up in the strict disciplines of Arabic linguistics and Aristotelian philosophy."[222] The emphasis on linguistics in Islamic scholarship resulted in precision of language evidenced in meticulous word choice. Ghazali was of this tradition and his use of language was as deliberate as it was meaningful to his understanding of the unity embedded in knowledge and philosophy. As a result, Ghazali's definition of humility or *tawadu* (تواضع) went beyond simple etymology. He provides a conceptual map of the term *tawadu* based on its semantic extremes, its derivatives, its antonyms, synonyms, its practical applications, as well as its Quranic, religious, and historic references.

*Tawadu* is derived from the root *w-D-E* ( ع-ض-و) The root is found in four derivations 26 times in the Quran, but does not correlate with the modern Western understanding of humility (see more in section on *The Western conception of*

[219] Ibid.p51
[220] Ibid.p53
[221] Ibid. p54
[222] Rosenthal, Franz. (2015). *Man, versus Society in Medieval Islam*. Edited by Dimitri Gutas, Brill. P 31

*Humility)*.[223] The root *w-D-E* ( ع-ض-و) carries a number of contextual meanings including those referring to setting a foundation—which underlines Ghazali's notion of humility as a foundational character trait in man—they include "to lay, to place, to set up, erect, to fix; to lay a foundation, lay a cornerstone."[224] In this same category of definitions, are the entries "to deliver, to give birth"[225] as they pertain to laying the foundations of civilization *i.e.* having children who will become the carriers of culture, civilization, and in turn, life.[226] Another pertinent category of definitions allude to the idea of truth—a concept central to Ghazali's overall personality theory—including: "to become clear, plain, patent, evident, to appear, show, to come out, to come to light."[227] A third category of definitions correlates directly to the modern understanding of humility: "to humble."[228] Another definition of the term underlines the inherent conduciveness of humility to filial and communal bonds: "to agree upon; agreement."[229] An additional entry on *w-D-E* defines it as "to make peace" that signifies making something "according to his or its measure." It is connected to the word *qadrat* (قدرت), which is derived from the word for destiny (*qadar*) in Arabic. This final entry brings Ghazali's conceptualization of humility full circle. In explication, it demonstrates how Ghazali's deliberate terminology reflects the significance of humility in harmony and unity with a divine plan and system that recognizes an unchangeable truth.[230]

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[223] Dukes, Kais (2009-2017). *Quranic Arabic Corpus*. University of Leeds. http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=wDE

[224] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan. (1979).".وضع" *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic: (Arabic — English)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. p. 1261.

[225] 'To bring forth a child' according to the Penrice, John. ".وضى" *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, Courier Corporation, 2004, p. 161, also defined as *Attitude, behavior, manners, birth, fetus, embryo* in Steingass, Francis Joseph. (1993). ".وضى" *The Student's Arabic-English Dictionary*, Asian Educational Services. p. 1218.

[226] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan. (1979). ".وضع" *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic."* p. 1261.

[227] *Ibid*.

[228] *Ibid*.; The Quranic term most commonly used for 'humbleness' comes from either the trilateral root *x-sh-e* (خ ش ع) found in three derivations 17 times in the Quran or from the trilateral root *D-r-e* (**ض ر ع**) found in four derivations 8 times in the Quran. (Dukes, Kais (2009-2017). *Quranic Arabic Corpus.* University of Leeds.)

[229] Almaany. (2010-2018). ".تواضع" *Almaany English Arabic Dictionary.* Retrieved from: https://www.almaany.com/en/dict/ar-en/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B9/; see also: See more: .الاشباه والنظائر – تاج الدين أبي نصر عبد الوهاب بن علي/السبكي (1971). Dar al-Kotob al-ilmiyah. Beirut, Lebanon. P. 111

[230] Lane, Edward William. (1980). ".وسم" *Arabic-English Lexicon*, II, Librairie Du Liban., p. 75.

The linguistic patterning of the root *w-D-E* is also described in contrast to the root word *raf'a* (رفع) meaning "to raise; to put something above something else; to make something proud; to raise one's self, grow proud, behave haughtily."[231] This connects directly back to Ghazali's definition of humility as the correct evaluation or positioning of self. *Raf'a* is also defined as "to remove; urge to a quicker pace; cause to disappear; live at ease,"[232] all which correspond to the social and personal problems Ghazali identifies in relation to a lack of humility and to the issues related to contemporary society with its quest for endless advancement and what Bauman refers to as the instantaneous deployment of power.[233]

Returning to the *Ihya,* we find that Ghazali says when an individual reaches one extreme of humility, he shows pride and at the other extreme, he shows meanness. The "best condition," however, is the middle, which "is modest conduct." And "he who adopts the middle course and pays the dues to whom they are due" demonstrates humility.[234] Thus, we can understand Ghazali's concept of humility vis-a-vis Ghazali's chapter on pride in volume III of the *Ihya*. In it, he claims that pride is shown in both religious and earthly matters. Religious matters are education, divine services and honesty, while earthly matters involve pedigree, beauty, power, wealth and lordship.[235] Pride, according to Ghazali, may be subjective or objective where "subjective pride is a habit of the self and objective pride is the action resulting from this habit."

He lists four causes of pride: (1) self- praise (*Wuzab*) that comes from self-conceit, (2) hatred, (3) envy, and (4) show[236] and suggests two primary consequences of pride that we see affect an individual's personality: (1) the refusal to accept the truth of his own nature and the world and (2) contempt of fellowship.[237] Pride can be expressed in many ways such as:

> " in [the] conversation, conducts, signs, gestures, movements and actions [of] someone who likes to be in leadership and have followers, someone who does not like to meet with others or associate with the poor, sick, or needy; [of

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[231] Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan. (1979). "رفع." *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic."* p. 405.
[232] Steingass, Francis Joseph.(1993)."رفع ."*The Student's Arabic-English Dictionary*"p. 425
[233]Bauman, Zygmunt.(2000). *Liquid Modernity*.
[234] Ghazzali, Imam. (1993). *Revival of Religious Learnings: Imam Ghazzali's Ihya Ulum-Id-Din*.. P272
[235] Ibid. P260
[236] Ibid. p 261
[237] Umaruddin, M. (1996). *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzali*. p 235); Al-Ghazali,,. (1993) *Revival of Religious Learnings" V*. III p 233; *ibid*. VII, p.211

someone] who does not give with his own hand or carry his own things and things necessary for his home; [of someone] who does not dress in ordinary fashion, but in adornments; [and of someone] who when anyone rebukes [him], gives trouble and [does not realize his duties]; and [someone who] does not keep patience."[238]

The cure for pride is in two stages. It begins with uprooting its root through knowledge of God, human nature and origin, and man's ultimate end. Ghazali argues that if a man knows his real origin and his Lord "he can appreciate that nobody is fit for pride except the Lord.[239] The second stage is removing the causes of pride or impediments to humility through action. He suggests "to conduct oneself very humbly before the people and to follow the conduct of the humble and the modest."[240] He suggests even in prayer—bowing and prostration—man is humbled with the reminder of his position in this universe. Thus, with knowledge and action pride is curable." It is only with the knowledge of the nature of one's self that individuals (adults specifically) will be motivated to act in a way that will instill humility.[241]

Al-Attas understands the existential crises faced of modern individuals as an issue of knowledge. Individuals feel a debilitating erasure of meaning and purpose in their lives. For some, this erasure may be analyzed as a condition of pride in their own rational capacity and secular worldview, for others it may be a condition of baseness or what Bauman terms a corrupt foundation of self-love that has uprooted the individual making them anxious and torn between the seemingly conflicting ideals of freedom and security.[242] Al-Attas sees the path to humility and in it the path to knowledge as a way to overcome this crisis. He follows Ghazali's logic in suggesting that "knowledge is both the arrival of meaning in the soul as well as the soul's arrival at meaning. In this definition [he] affirm[s] that the soul is not merely a passive recipient like the *tabula rasa but* is also an active one in the sense of setting itself in readiness to receive what it wants to receive, and so to consciously strive for the arrival at meaning."[243]

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[238] Ghazzali, Imam. (1993). *Revival of Religious Learnings: Imam Ghazzali's Ihya Ulum-Id-Din*. P260-264

[239] Ibid. P267

[240] Ibid. P268

[241] Umaruddin, M. (1996). *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzali*. p 235); *Ihya* III p 308

[242] Bauman, Zygmunt. (2014). *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. Print.

[243] Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam"* p14

Meaning is "arrived at when the proper place of anything in a system is clarified to the understanding"—a definition in harmony with Ghazali's concept of humility. The notion of 'proper place,' however, is not only "in relation to the spatio-temporal order" of existence in the material world, but it also in the "imaginal, intelligible, and transcendental orders of existence."[244] Knowledge applies to "the meanings of objects of knowledge" and their "respective places within the system of relations" and to recognize this proper placement—especially of one's own place and purpose in the world—is the position of truth or the acceptance that "there are limits to the meaning of things in the way they are meant to be known, and their proper places are profoundly bound up with the limits of their significance." Fundamental to knowledge, thus, is humility or humbling oneself to accept this truth and one's own purpose in such an order.

In correspondence to this line of thought, Al-Attas identifies the real challenge of today as the corruption of knowledge. A challenge resulting from a "state of confusion" as well as "influences coming from the philosophy, science, and ideology" of modern Western civilization with their "changes and restrictions in the meanings of key terms" about human nature that lead to an "intellectual confusion manifested in moral and cultural dislocation."[245] This intellectual confusion is otherwise known as a crisis of truth, identity, and self.

### *The Western Conception of Humility*

While humility in Ghazali's personality theory and his notion of self is of fundamental importance, it is a concept that has only recently been given limited attention in Western discourse on personality. Wright and her colleagues studied Western theological and philosophical literature and concluded that "the dominant view of humility for centuries was a fairly dark one."[246] In the Christian tradition, humility was seen "as a form of extreme self-abnegation – what Aquinas (d. 1274) referred to as 'self-abasement to the lowest place' in his *Summa Theologica.*[247] The notion of humility

[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid. p15
[246] Wright, Jennifer Cole, Thomas Nadelhoffer, Tyler Perini, Amy Langville, Matthew Echols & Kelly Venezia (2016): The psychological significance of humility
[247] Aquinas (1274). Summa Theologiae, vol. 44, trans. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge, UK: Blackfriars, 1972), p. 105, 107.

in the sense of lowness or abasement is undoubtedly found in the Quran (usually in the sense of: "to humiliate; to be humiliated; or humiliation") under the triliteral root *d-l-l (* ذ ل ل) used in 10 derivations 24 times in the Quran.[248] However, Ghazali's conception of humility, recall uses the trilateral root w-D-e (ع ض و ) to derive the virtue of humility which provides an entirely separate range of linguistic and etymologic meaning.

The more negative version of religious humility in the West "drew the critical glance of philosophers, ranging from Spinoza and Hume to Nietzsche and Sidgwick." With Enlightenment, "humility fell out of fashion" as it was increasingly associated with someone "who accepts his lowly position as due him."[249] Moreover, it was difficult to "see how [humility] could be a virtue—especially when a certain degree of dignity, self-worth, and self-esteem contribute to [modern conceptions of] health and happiness."[250]

This negative perception of the humility has continued to influence its layman understanding as seen in the *Oxford English Dictionary* that defines humility as 'the quality of being humble or of having a lowly opinion of oneself; meekness, lowliness, humbleness: the opposite of pride or haughtiness.'"[251] Linguistically, the modern English term *humility* has roots in Old French (*umelite*), Latin (*humilitatem)*, and Church Latin (*humilis*) all of which correspond to its modern definition of "lowness, small stature; insignificance; baseness, littleness of mind." However, etymologically humility also comes from *humilis* in Church Latin and the Proto-Indo-European root **dhghem*, both of which mean "earth." The term earth itself provides a rich etymological legacy in many European languages from Old English, to Old Saxon, Norse, and Gothic which define it as "the (material) world, the abode of man" (as opposed to the heavens or the underworld)."[252] The linguistic connection between humility and earth serves as a reminder of the humble origins of man who in most religious traditions is understood to have been created from dirt or clay of the earth. It

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[248] Dukes, Kais (2009-2017). *Quranic Arabic Corpus*. University of Leeds. http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=*ll#(20:134:18)
[249] Taylor, G. 1985. Pride, Shame, and Guilt. (Oxford: Clarendon Press) p. 17).
[250] Wright, Jennifer Cole, and Thomas Nadelhoffer. (2017)."The Twin Dimensions of the Virtue of Humility: Low Self-Focus and High Other-Focus." *Moral Psychology Virtue and Character*, MIT Press, p 312
[251] McArthur, Tom, and Roshan Mcarthur. (1998). "Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language." *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*, Oxford University Press.
[252] "Humility." (2001-2018). *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Douglas Harper.

also offers insights into how we can understand "the abode of man" or the proper place of man in the material world which reinforces a conception of humility that corresponds to Islamic notions of humility as expressed by Ghazali.

In the last three decades, there has been an attempt in Western academia to show the "close association between humility and numerous positive attributes and character strengths, suggesting that humility is a powerfully pro-social virtue with psychological, moral, and social benefits."[253] Nonetheless, the disputed definition of humility— according to Tangney— is the reason why it is a relatively "neglected virtue in the social and psychological sciences" adding to the significance of this study.[254]

Tangney suggests "humility could be assessed at two distinct levels—at the level of states and at the level of dispositions. A dispositional assessment would focus on stable, individual differences in humility" in which case it would be a "component of one's personality, as a relatively enduring disposition that a person brings to many different kinds of situations." As a state measure, it "would focus on feelings or experiences of humility 'in the moment.'[255] Tangney's highlights how humility in individuals is conducive to a healthy sense of self by reducing "the links between excessive self-focus and a broad range of psychological symptoms, including anxiety, depression, social phobias, and so on." She asserts that "humility not only implies an accurate assessment of oneself (neither unduly favorable nor unfavorable), but also entails a "forgetting of the self," an outwardly directed orientation toward a world in which one is "just one part." Furthermore, "Baumeister (1991) argues, there are many advantages to "escaping the self," not the least of which is a relief from the burden of self-preoccupation (Halling et. al., 1994) and the "Western" imperative to defend the vulnerable self."[256]

Wright, et. al. (2016) contribute to the reassessment of humility in arguing "that humility should be considered a 'foundational' virtue, necessary (though not sufficient)

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[253] Wright, et. al. (2016): The psychological significance of humility. p 6
[254] Tangney, J.P. (2000). Humility: Theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and directions for future research. Journal Of Social And Clinical Psychology, 19(1), p. 70).
[255] Tangney, June Price. (2002). "Humility." *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, edited by C. R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez, Oxford University Press. p414
[256] Ibid. p. 416

for the full development of other virtues, and of virtuous character more generally."[257] They view humility—similar to Ghazali—-as "a particular psychological positioning of oneself within the larger context of the universe—one that is both epistemically and ethically aligned."[258] Thus, they see an intimate correspondence between humility and the worldview of an individual. They discuss the "twin dimensions of humility" which are (1) low self-focus, that is, being hypo-egoistically decentered and aware of one's place in the grander scheme of things, and (2) high other-focus, that is, being attuned to the needs and interests of others and sensitive to the fact that others have moral standing, which requires our respect and attention.[259]

Humility also addresses the need of man to position his identity in a broader narrative structure, which McAdams saw as a necessary task for individuals living in contemporary society. Johnston explains the "phenomenological fact that we experience ourselves as the psychological center of a life that extends out of a remembered past and into an imagined future and that we experience that life as something to be lived—that is, something we can shape through practical deliberation toward action, guided by conceptions of 'a life worth living.'" He suggests that individuals "are constituted in such a way as to prioritize and privilege ourselves (our lives) over others," but humility "corrects for this by bringing this into an epistemically and ethically justifiable range."[260] In other words, humility balances our egocentric tendencies and gives us the ability for empathy and social cooperation.

Ultimately, humility has been recast as a virtue rather than vice in Western psychology for its potential to address the issues of a highly fragmented and disconnected postmodern society. Recent studies demonstrate the social benefit of individual humility. It contributes to "higher levels of cooperation, sharing, and a lack of self-preoccupation, it is also likely to foster closer ties with one's friends, family, and romantic partners" (Friesen, 2001), and "positively related to greater group status and acceptance, helping to form and repair relationships with strong social bonds" (Davis et

[257] Wright, et. al. (2016): The psychological significance of humility, p 6
[258] Wright and Nadelhoffer. (2017). "The Twin Dimensions of the Virtue of Humility." p 316
[259] Ibid. p 310
[260] Ibid. p 316

al. (2013).[261] It is "correlated with an increased sense of agency and self-direction," which researchers believe "is a reflection of something like the strong integration of agentic and community-oriented values found in moral exemplars (Frimer, Walker, Dunlop, Lee, and Riches, 2011)—where one's sense of self-direction and accomplishment become intertwined with one's desire to meaningfully contribute to the welfare and well-being of others."[262]

***Humility in Early Childhood: The Beginning of a Balanced Personality***

Western studies are still at odds when it comes to methods on developing humility, making Ghazali's ideas all the more relevant. Ghazali addresses humility throughout his writing, but our focus is on early childhood when humility can become a stable personality trait in individuals. Tangney sees the importance of these early years suggesting that during this time "children learn important lessons about themselves, the world, and their place in the world." Moreover, "as they mature, a sense of humility may be further fostered by exposure to different peoples and cultures, by life-changing events (a life-threatening illness, a serious accident, birth of a child, dissolution of a marriage), by religious beliefs, or via other types of "transcendental" experiences—-to help [individuals] develop a realistic assessment and acceptance of both their strengths and their weaknesses."[263] Tangney links humility in early childhood to the crucial development of a durable self-esteem in children and later in adults.

In the Islamic tradition, man was created in a dignified and noble state and it is their duty to protect this state (see Quran 17:70). The nobility of man's character (*muru'ah*) is part of the foundation for human dignity in Islamic thought. Relatedly, the rights and obligations of man to protect this dignity are the basis of Sharia and their goal of justice.[264] Part of man's duty is to protect his ennobled being which implies protecting his self-esteem. Dignity ('*izzah*) is when a person acknowledges the blessings God has bestowed upon them (faith, life, health, beauty, wealth, knowledge, prestige,

[261] Ibid. 325
[262] Ibid. p326
[263] Tangney, June price. (2002). "Humility." *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*". p417
[264] M. H. Kamali. (1993). "An Analysis of Rights in Islamic Law." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 10. P 178-201

etc.) and lives humbly with a recognition of those blessings while not deeming himself better than others. Thus, it is important to note that while humility can generate self-esteem in individuals, there is a fine line between *healthy* self-esteem and destructive arrogance and narcissism.

Hewitt suggests that "to the contemporary mind, self-esteem seems anchored in unqualified acceptance of the child early in life, the receipt of positive evaluations from relevant others, favorable comparisons with others and with ideal versions of the self, and the capacity for efficacious action." In this way, self-esteem has been misconstrued to "be dependent upon the child's acceptance within the social fold without regard to particular performances." Self-esteem is evaluative and "enhanced when the person is able to make favorable comparisons with other people or with an ideal self, and it is enhanced when the person acts effectively in his or her physical or social environment."[265] However, the contemporary social and cultural world pose a threat to the self and the way individuals cope with conflict. To understand "how individuals function in that world, we must understand the emotional economy it creates for them and examine how they respond to it." Western culture generally "puts the individual self on a shaky center stage" where "acceptance, evaluation, comparison, and efficacy capture the main ways in which the experience of self is made precarious."[266]

Baumeister and Muraven discuss the connection between selfhood, self-esteem, and identity building by underlining certain cultural and historical changes in Western society that have made the development of one's self a "method of highlighting one's individuality" and unique personality. They discuss how "personal fulfillment (in the sense of becoming a complete, unique individual whose special talents are fully realized) is a goal of many adolescents in society today." Increasingly, individuals tie self-worth to uniqueness. Identity crises, are therefore more likely to involve "how to best differentiate oneself from others" leading to further alienation in individuals and fragmentation of society.[267] Baumeister believes the same cultural forces behind the

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[265] Hewitt, John P. (2002). "The Social Construction of Self Esteem." *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, edited by C. R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez, Oxford University Press. p136

[266] Ibid. p 144

[267] Baumeister, Roy F., and Mark Muraven. (1996). "Identity as Adaptation to Social, Cultural, and Historical Context." *Journal of Adolescence*, vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 405–416

uniqueness trend also underscore "the current cultural fascination with self-esteem." His "evidence indicates that modern Americans are fairly successful in their pursuit of self-esteem, managing to convince themselves that they are superior to the average person in multiple ways." This "self-deceptive pursuit of feelings of individual superiority may be a crucially important way of satisfying the need to see oneself as unique in the context of a society that makes true uniqueness difficult to achieve." [268]

Baumeister and Muraven identify modern child-rearing practices as one of the most significant cultural and historical changes contributing to this phenomenon. They analyze the 'special' emotional attachment between parent and child, "along with marital intimacy," that have "become the focal meaning and purpose of the family," to be "in contrast to the greater economic and social functions that predominated in earlier times." As a result, "the typical child now receives a great deal of individualized attention and love. Thus, people grow up feeling special and important and supported in their uniqueness." But, "while modern child-rearing has instilled in people an increasingly strong desire to feel special and unique, modern culture has restricted the opportunities to fulfill this need." The world in which individuals operate today increases "the frequency of interactions among strangers, which remain superficial and in which each party could relatively easily be replaced by someone else." This postmodern reality is remarkably different "from the small town or village of earlier eras in which one's personal and family history was known to most interaction partners, and it undercuts the social validation of one's uniqueness." Even more troubling is the increased awareness—courtesy of mass media, advertising, and social media—people have "of many other people with similar experiences and background, making one feel less unique."[269] Using the Ghazalian framework, this struggle for uniqueness indicates a misalignment in human motivation and underlines an imbalanced valuing of the self, in other words a form of self-pride.

In his book *Generation Me,* Jean Twenge similarly suggests that modern parenting often leads many children to be raised with unconditional praise making them "unprepared for disappointments, criticism, and occasional failure." As a result, many

[268] Ibid. 414
[269] Ibid.

individuals are more prone to suffer from anxiety and depression and their idea of self-worth is dependent on being told they are special rather than through genuine accomplishments. “Instead of creating well-adjusted, happy children,” Twenge argues, modern parenting supports “the self-esteem movement [which] has created an army of little narcissists.”[270]

Lasch further supports this idea by claiming that “self-absorption defines the moral climate of contemporary society.” He suggests that the modern individual is guilty of the sin of narcissism due to his indifference to the past. Lasch argues that “the narcissist has no sense of history, of the continuity of time and society, and seemingly he does not want such a continuity.” Thus, an individual’s indifference to the past “easily shades over into active hostility and rejection,” and this is the “proof” of the cultural bankruptcy of modern society.[271] Moreover, “the search for competitive advantage through emotional manipulation,” and the air which “is saturated with statements that are neither true nor false, but merely credible” — only makes it easier for the narcissist to see the world as an extension of his desires.”

Overall, children today, Peterson observes, are rarely “encouraged to base their sense of self on internal assets rather than on good looks and expensive clothes.” Children— “bombarded with messages about the importance of individuality, self-esteem, and loving the self”—find it difficult being ordinary. Thus, Peterson claims that humility “require[s] a degree of cognitive sophistication to move beyond normative egocentrism.”[272] Peterson presents a brief discussion on how to cultivate the virtue of humility and he, like Ghazali, urges parents to begin with habituating young children to rituals that display and develop humility. These rituals— “trial runs”—would “allow children and adolescents to display and develop a valued characteristic in a safe (as-if) context in which guidance is explicit.” However, Peterson emphasizes how parental or educational intervention in developing personality and virtue needs “to be informed by what people in general believe about their origins.” Thus, “just as important as creating

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[270] Twenge, Jean M. (2014). *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable than Ever Before*. Atria Paperback.
[271] Lasch, Christopher. (2018). *The Culture of Narcissism”*
[272] Peterson, Christopher, and Martin E. P. Seligman. *Character Strengths and Virtues: a Handbook and Classification*. Oxford University Press, 2004.p438

strengths" like humility "in the first place are the rules, roles, and norms that sustain them."[273]

It is for this reason Ghazali's conception of humility in early childhood is not applicable without the adoption of his theory of personality and its corresponding foundations of human nature, life purpose, and truth which provide the necessary structure and narrative foundation to develop a durable sense of self. This is why historically, Muslim scholarship on child-rearing has gone hand-in-hand with discussions on education—or the means to knowledge and faith. Education leads to *adab*—acting upon the "recognition of proper places" and the "confirmation and affirmation in the self—of the reality and truth of what is recognized" as true and proper.

Logically then when an individual is able to subdue the animal soul with its rational soul—putting it in its proper place—then in "relation to one's self, one is putting oneself in one's proper place" i.e. exhibiting *adab* towards yourself. When the *adab* of humility is actualized by individuals that make up a family, community, society, or civilization, there is a social balance achieved as the rights of self and others are upheld and the "collective entity reflects the condition of justice" or a just order (*'adl*).[274]

In *Riyadatul Sibyan,* the *adab* of humility underlines all of Ghazali's child-rearing principles. By instilling in a child, a satisfaction with little, patience, and endurance—the qualities that stem from balancing the forces of desire and anger—a child learns the proper place of his desires and thus learns humility. In being prevented from boasting and showing pride over "anything from the possessions of his parents, his food, clothes, even something like his writing tablet and ink," a child learns the meaning of self-worth separate from material worth and thus learns humility. In dealing with all his companions—whether young or old, male or female—with respect and honor, a child learns to value human bonds and thus learns humility. In being generous, modest, and mild in his speech, a child learns the inherent nobility and power in himself and thus learns humility. In becoming accustomed to dislike wealth and comfort and to find joy

[273] Ibid. p27
[274] Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-.(1995). *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of IslÄ□m".*p17

in giving, a child learns the meaning of actions and intentions and thus learns humility. In becoming content with simplicity in food and dress—and deterred from wastefulness, overconsumption, and indulgence—a child learns of life priorities and thus learns humility. In learning to play fairly, trust himself and others, and to be patient in the face of difficulty, a child learns the boundaries of social cooperation and thus learns humility. In learning the rights of himself and the rights of other, the laws of God and the laws of society, the purpose of life and of death, a child learns about himself and about the world into which he is born and thus he learns humility.

Ghazali's notion of humility in early childhood personality development specifically helps individuals build a buffer against the tolls of everyday life. Humility promotes a healthy sense of self and self-esteem, which scholars like Hewitt believe promote optimal human functioning: "acceptance within a social fold, a sense of security, cultural competence, and the capacity to reconcile personal goals and social expectations."[275] Humility, as understood by Ghazali, facilitates the development of a positive and integral sense of identity that facilitates the capacity for empathy and cooperation. In a world "characterized by competition and pressure to perform well," humility "works and prevents us from the wear- and tear of everyday functioning" helping individuals maintain a balance of their self-esteem and self-worth while still living in harmony and co-operation with society.[276]

## PART IV: CONCLUSION

In the course of this study, I attempted to address modern society's prevailing crisis of self, evident in increased social and psychological pathologies linked to dissipating familial bonds, relationships, and anchors of social identity. The crisis of self is defined as a sense of isolation and atomization, moral and social confusion, and of uncertainty about one's place and purpose in life characteristic of contemporary experience. It is an identity crisis at its roots. The crisis has been building since the

[275] Hewitt, John P. (2002). "The Social Construction of Self Esteem." P 145
[276] Davis, Don Emerson, and Joshua N. Hook. (2013). "Measuring Humility and Its Positive Effects." *Association for Psychological Science*, www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/measuring-humility-and-its-positive-effects.

advent of Modernity when traditional and religious foundations were eroded and with them the meaning of man, truth, and the hope for a stable system of ethics.

In recent decades, the tremendous change in local and global society due to factors not limited to but including technology, warfare, migration, and the internet have only exacerbated the individual's struggle to understand themselves and their role in life and society. Moreover, as modern Western culture increasingly becomes the global mono-culture, researchers observe widespread institutional and civilization shifts that carry with them an epistemological bias favoring a secular, liberal, positivist worldview. For individuals, this has challenged, conflated, and at times erased essential and traditional markers of the 'self' including personal, generational, and cultural histories as well as the meaning of primordial relationships in tribes, communities, and most significantly families.

This study argues that Ghazali's approach to personality development and child-rearing addresses what Erikson and Giddens observe to be the root of the identity crisis. Erikson "observed that the 'patient of today suffers most under the problem of what he should believe in and who he should—or, indeed, might—be or become; while the patient of early psychoanalysis suffered most under inhibitions which prevented him from being what and who he thought he knew he was." Similarly, Giddens suggests identity crises begin when "individuals either lack a consistent feeling of biographical continuity or are paralyzed in terms of practical action because of an external environment full of changes (experiencing an inner deadness) or feel a lack of trust in their own self integrity." He asserts that to be ontologically secure is to possess—on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness—'answers' to four fundamental existential questions; questions to do with existence and being, finitude and human life, the experience of others, and the continuity of self-identity. These questions are in turn addressed by the theoretical framework of personality developed by Hogan and Smither.

Using their framework, I defined a theory of personality for Ghazali. Not surprisingly, the six principles of personality—human motivation, the self, the unconscious, personality development, psychological adjustment, and the relationship of the individual to society—also provide a framework to understand the modern crisis of self. In terms of human motivation, secularism and rationalism have acted as a dissolvent

of what was understood through tradition and religion as the purpose anchoring mankind. Recall that the image of the human psyche that is put forth by Ghazali and the Islamic notion of man is *Homo cum Deo* which alludes to the primordial connection of man to God through man's *ruh.* The *ruh* encompasses man's yearning for autonomy, individuality, and sovereignty, but also links man spiritually to his life purpose. The concept of *Homo cum Deo* implies that self-consciousness and God-consciousness are intimately connected and knowledge of one's true self will lead to knowledge of God and *vice versa.* It is with this knowledge that man is protected from "the terror of existence" and thus man can "face creatively the dangers of conversion of human conscience and psyche to naturalism, a dogmatic secularism, and an opposition to belief in the transcendent goal of life." *Homo cum Deo* is thus "the highest conceivable freedom" achievable by man.[277]

The concept of *Homo cum Deo* can be compared with two modern notions of man: *Homo Deus* and *Homo Moralis. Homo Deus*, Harari asserts, refers to the increasing ways in which modern individuals overreach themselves as they "agree to give up meaning in exchange for power." That power, Harari suggests, appears to provide modern men with godlike attributes: the ability to extend lifespans and even cheat death, the agency to create new life forms, to become intelligent designers of their own food and water, the means to end war and famine and plague. In essence, it is the process of fulfilling humanity's three deepest desires: immortality, happiness, and omnipotence. However, with unequal distribution, redundancy in labor, environmental catastrophe and the absence of tradition, religion, or another foundation of stable ethics, what future and end is really in store for a civilization of *Homo Deus*? Harari suggests that *Homo Deus* foreshadows the very end of the human race.[278]

*Homo Moralis,* on the other hand, is a term from recent discourse trying to understand the evolutionary foundations of human motivation. In a society of rational individuals, *Homo Moralis,* according to Alger and Weibull, is the most stable evolutionary condition of human preference. It is the median between the existing extremes of *Homo Oeconomicus*—individuals who act out of pure material self-

[277] See (Quran 49:14); Ansari, Z. A., editor. (2010). *Quranic Concepts of Human Psyche*. P35-6
[278] Harari, Yuval Noah. (2017). *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. Vintage Publishing.

interest—and *Homo Kantiensis*—individuals who do "what would be the right thing to do, in terms of payoffs, if all others would do likewise."[279] After a series of empirical testing, the condition of *Homo Moralis* was 'discovered' to be the most stable. *Homo Moralis* "acts as if he or she [already] had a sense of morality"—a degree of morality, the study finds, that "cannot be 'crowded out' in any direct sense by economic incentives."[280] The findings of *Homo Moralis* support Ghazali's understanding of the *fitra* and its innate sense of morality and purpose that humans are born with.

In terms of the conception of the self and unconscious, modern psychology rooted in positivist science has failed to answer the most basic question of what it means to be human (and therein a child). Unfortunately, it is evident that there has been a long-standing history of dehumanizing individuals under the influence of rational science. While the Islamic and Ghazalian perspective of human nature does not negate rational thought, science, or reason (in fact it encourages them; see more in section on *Ghazali's Theory of Human Nature*), their approach to science is balanced with the understanding of man's physical and intellectual limitations. Whereas, the modern Western concept of man has gone from the Descartes's assumption of man as self-sufficient, all powerful—almost god-like—to Darwin's ideas of man's behavior and actions as involuntary and a product of simple genetic evolution, to the pragmatic understanding of man as machine, and then to the humanist view in which the ultimate goal of man is self-esteem and self-actualization. In denying man's emotional and spiritual nature, Western psychology—absent a stable system of thought—has largely failed in its attempts of defining the 'self.' This ultimately contributes to its inability to adequately address the growing ontological crisis.

In terms of personality development and psychological adjustment, the breakdown of truth in favor of the liberal and pragmatic ideas of multiple truths, the denial of Divine knowledge, and the resultant amorality of individualistic society have profoundly altered the environment in which we live, and children are raised. They have erased conceptual and practical boundaries that have historically played an essential part

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[279] Alger, Ingela, and Jörgen W. Weibull. (2013 ). "Homo Moralis--Preference Evolution Under Incomplete Information and Assortative Matching." *Econometrica*, vol. 81, no. 6, pp. 2269–2302., doi:10.3982/ecta10637.

[280] *Ibid.*

in our experience of ourselves as individual persons. These boundaries prevent what is outside from coming in, but also what is inside from falling out.[281] But when these boundaries are threatened or completely dissolved—as has been the case for the social bonds of family and the traditional and religious boundaries of ontology—individuals and their sense of self are threatened. This has ultimately led to the challenges to the relationship of the individual and society.

The crisis of self is felt at the most intimate levels of society—within the home, in families and between parent and child. Families as we examined, have undergone a history of transformation analogous to modern society and its shifting moral, ideological, and psychological stances. In the compromise of their integrity as well as the essential socialization functions they provide, the breakdown of family on a micro level leads to the breakdown of civilization on a macro level. Without family as the incubator for social, emotional, and moral well-being, civilization is unable to pass on its worldview to children and thrive.

Child-rearing, as Rosenthal suggests, builds the next 'psycho-class' of society and provides the real basis for understanding motivation in human history. However, the changing ideologies of parents and parenting, have produced a psycho-class embodying the crisis of self. With issues of anxiety, depression, trust, and self-esteem, the children of today and the adults of tomorrow increasingly struggle to develop personalities with a durable sense of self that is both independently secure and socially congruent.

The theory of personality developed from Ghazali's ideas is significant because it addresses these issues. Firstly, Ghazali's personality theory addresses the ontological insecurity and need for narrative structure in modern self-building by explaining whole lives rather than discrete actions or cognitions. His personality theory is centered around divine knowledge, which he believes the human soul understands on an innate level: the *fitra.* Personality is accordingly not developed at any particular age. Instead, the various elements enclosed in one's personality are developed overtime and susceptible to change due to man's natural tendency to forget and succumb to desires that will imbalance him. While on the one hand, Ghazali's epistemological frame of

[281] Barglow, Raymond. (1994). *The Crisis of Self in the Age of Information: Computers, Dolphins and Dreams*. Routledge, London.

reference may pose a problem in the field of predominantly positivist personality research, it nonetheless highlights how the constancy of a system of belief is essential to an individual's sense of self and ultimately his personality. It is this belief—when shared and upheld by society—that leads to a justifiable system of ethics and morality and from there human solidarity and individual welfare.

Secondly, in contrast to the general Western psychological conception of personality development in which infants and children are not conceived to be "actively creating identity" because their sense of self is assumed to "not require a consideration of life, unity, and purpose," Ghazali's personality development is a process of teaching man to develop his sense of self vis-a-vis the *deliberate* and *constant* "consideration of life, unity, and purpose." And Ghazali sees the need to develop and nurture this consciousness specifically from early childhood. Identity, in other words, is not a simple product of adolescent negotiation as modern developmental research would suggest. Ghazali asserts it is a product of both nature and nurture—an inherent knowledge present at birth and a system of belief preserved by the individual—through constant mindfulness, self-evaluation, and self-building in the form of character development—and by society who supports this individual process.

Finally, Ghazali's ideas on humility in early childhood set his personality theory apart. Ghazali defines humility as a mean between pride and self-abasement, correct evaluation of self, and proper positioning of self in life. While the modern crisis of self is multifaceted, two contributing ideologic trends include: rationalism and individualism. Rationalist ideology for centuries has undermined the emotional and spiritual aspect of man's nature in the name of science. This ideology underlines the erosion of traditional systems of truth and knowledge from which individuals historically developed a sense of self. In terms of humility, rationalism (in its current imbalanced and hyper form) can be analyzed as a destructive form of self-pride—the modern individual's reaction to the violation of the church and discoveries of science.

This gives way to the second destructive modern ideology: individualism. Individualism, became fashionable in the wake of individual freedom being denied intellectually, spiritually, and physically. Today, we discover that in the attempts to free himself from traditions and systems that they found to be false and oppressive, the

modern individual shackled himself to the idea of truth in science which at its core is subject to change with the latest discovery.[282] However, freedom as it pertains to individual is a misleading concept as Rosenthal claims. He highlights how "the efforts to define this freedom of ours" which have technically been unsuccessful, tell us "more about the men and the times that produce them, than they do about freedom itself."[283] Freedom, he suggests, cannot be truly understood as an attribute of the individual. Rather, it must be understood as a condition of a society defined by its cultural system. In positioning the individual and his ability to reason and determine truth above all else, we again see the underlying self-pride that shapes the modern 'social imaginary.'

The consequences of these two ideologies are evident in the history of child-rearing that runs parallel to the history of Western psychology. The focus on the individual feeds unrealistic self-love (i.e. narcissism, self-deception, apathy, racism, etc.) to the detriment of everyone else—including one's own children. Moreover, in the fear of restricting freedom, modern society allows for values to be personally defined and any form of moral inhibition becomes a sign of oppression and backwardness.[284] With the inevitable value gap and moral disengagement that has become characteristic of modern society, the satisfaction and immediate gratification of every impulse and desire goes unchecked.

Humility, thus becomes a possibility for the moral and psychological reboot for modern civilization. Not only does it realign the individual with ontological structure, but it also grounds him with the value of social empathy and a consciousness that brings meaning back to social bonds. While new research in Western psychology has come to similar conclusions on the pro-social value of humility, I argue that humility cannot be taken without its structural roots. For Ghazali, Islam provides the structure that would allow humility to properly function in the stable development of personality, but this does not necessarily preclude another system from providing the same support—however, the current system does not suffice. Humility requires commitment, dedication, and submission on the part of the individual to an inviolable set of moral

[282] Rosenthal, Franz. (2015). *Man versus Society in Medieval Islam*. Edited by Dimitri Gutas, Brill.
[283] *Ibid.*
[284] Ali, Abbas Husein. (1995). "The Nature of Human Disposition: Al-Ghazali's Contribution to an Islamic Concept of Personality." p. 56-7

principles and with them the ideas on "self-worth, ideas about human limitations and power, concepts of human connection and interaction," and one's approach to life and death."[285]Humility is then "a self-dedicatory process [that] is deeply existential in the way that it defines what does and does not have meaning in one's life."[286]

To raise a child with humility, however, is only possible by first raising him with dignity which means reevaluating what human dignity really means and requires. As a result, human dignity and morality are intimately connected. A child's understanding of these complex notions begins (whether we plan for it or not) early in childhood when acceptance of social rules and patterns of behavior are explicitly and implicitly taught. To address the prevalent crisis of self, child-rearing must become an intentional process of empowering a child with a solid understanding of human dignity as well as a process of transferring knowledge of a child's holistic place in the world physically, socially, morally, psychologically, and ontologically. Individuals and parts of society have already come to this realization evidenced in a new wave of homeschooling, targeted psychological counseling, and revised education philosophy and curricula that moves away from compartmentalized thinking and emphasizes a holistic, unified approach to instruction and a focus on nurturing the social and emotional well-being of children.

Ultimately, Ghazali's theory of personality provides one set of guidelines out of the crisis of self with its primary requirement of rebalancing individuals with well-defined boundaries that guide individual agency as well as their contribution to social harmony. Nonetheless, the crisis itself has an impact far beyond the individual and his family, making this a topic of civilizational concern. It affects everything that a person does from the food he chooses to purchase and eat, to the clothes he chooses to wear, to the conditions he's willing to live with and support. These small decisions may seem inconsequential on an individual level, but when applied in mass, they result in devastating repercussions for the physical planet, let alone its inhabitants. Climate change, pollution, famine, war, and social oppression are just a few real consequences (see section on *Ghazali's Child-rearing Principles* for further discussion.) Thus, when

[285] Tucker, Shawn R. (2016). *Pride and Humility: a New Interdisciplinary Analysis.* Palgrave Macmillan. p. 12-3
[286] *Ibid.*

considering further steps for research, this study urges individuals to examine ways society is already attempting to address the crisis of self, specifically when dealing with young children, and to support them and move forward in facilitating the rebalancing of the increasingly imbalanced world.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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## SUMMARY

Sarosh Arif is a Pakistani-American Muslim artist, social entrepreneur, and educator. She graduated from Columbia University's Barnard College where she received a BA in Urban Studies & Political Science. While at Barnard, she was named an Athena Women's Leadership Scholar and inducted into the Athena Mastermind Program, an initiative designed for up-and-coming female entrepreneurs, for founding the philanthropic visual arts company *Arneeq*. While completing a MA in Teaching, she was awarded an AmeriCorps grant and an Urban Teaching Scholarship for her work in the NYC public school system. She has worked for NBC Universal, NY1 News, and the Pakistani Mission to the UN and has completed fellowships with Young People For and Teach for America. Sarosh is currently working with TRT World News in developing educational programming for refugees in Turkey.

## EDUCATION

**ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE, IBN HALDUN UNI. (TURKEY)**
M.A. in Civilization Studies (July 2018)

- Thesis: *Ghazali's Personality Theory: A Study on the Importance of Humility in Early Childhood*
- Honors: 2015 G20 Interfaith Summit Presentation, 2016 Interdisciplinary Research In Civilization Studies Conference Presentation

**RELAY-GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (USA)**
M.A. in Teaching (June 2015 )

- Thesis: *Student Achievement: A Study of 7th and 8th Grade Social Studies Mastery and Character Development*
- Awards: AmeriCorps Grant Recipient Fall 2013, Urban Teaching Scholarship Fall 2013, Dean's List 2014-2015

**BARNARD COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (USA)**
B.A. in Urban Studies/Political Science (May 2013)

- Thesis: *Upholding 'Mobocracy': Evaluating Violence & Informal Settlement in Karachi, Pakistan*
- Awards: Athena Mastermind Inductee: Initiative designed for up-and-coming female entrepreneurs; Athena Leadership Scholar; Dean's List 2010-2013; South Asian Journalists Association's 2011 Student Scholarship Award in the Undergraduate Engendered Category; The Constance Hess Williams '66 Scholarship for Women in Politics, Summer 2010; Awarded The Vivian Allison Pachman '33 Scholarship