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**The Concept of Self-Realization in the
Educational Philosophies
of
John Dewey and `Allāma Ṭabāṭabā`ī
(A Comparative Study)**

**Faculty of Education
Department of Culture and Values in Education
McGill University, Montreal**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Ph.D.**

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In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Dedication

To My Beloved Parents

O soul that are at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants. And enter into My garden. [The Qur'ān, 89: 27-30]

I dedicate this thesis to my mother S. Azra, who died of cancer in 1964 when I was five years old, and to my father S. Muhammad Taqi, who died of a stroke on December 6th, 1998, while I was preparing myself for my doctoral defense. Although my father's death was particularly painful to me, yet I felt confidence in Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent.

This research study on the concept of self-realization is dedicated to my darling parents, who fully realized who they were, what they lived for and whither they were ultimately bound.

May peace be upon them now as it was throughout their lives and on the day they died, and as it shall be on the day that they are raised to new life. May Allah bless them and help me to be dutiful to them.

Amen



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Abstract

This study presents a comparative analytical investigation of two divergent yet parallel doctrines of self-realization. John Dewey, a distinguished American thinker, represents a naturalist pragmatist conception of self-realization on the one hand, and `Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a renowned Muslim philosopher, an Islamic perception on the other. While Dewey is considered a spokesperson for modern American pragmatist and humanist thought, `Allāma may be seen as typical of Islamic Shi'ī thinking. In dealing with their conceptualizations of self-realization, the intention in this study is to focus on some significant aspects of the human self, to rediscover its potentiality and to determine the wisdom behind self-realization from a comparative perspective. After outlining the two thinkers' scholarly backgrounds, instructional contexts, sources, methods, works and purposes, the study examines certain specific issues. It investigates their understandings of human nature, and explores their positions on moral experience and human character, as well as on the arts and sciences as vehicles for self-realization. As its final chapter, the study elaborates the basic elements and manifestations of self-realization as depicted in Dewey's and `Allāma's systems of thought. This research aims at clarifying the parallels, similarities and differences that exist between the two scholars, through an in-depth comparison of their respective naturalist and Islamic approaches and attitudes.

Résumé

Cette étude propose une analyse comparée de deux doctrines divergentes, encore que parallèles, de la réalisation de soi. Éminent penseur américain, John Dewey représente d'une part la conception pragmatiste et naturaliste de la réalisation de soi tandis qu'`Allama Ṭabāṭabā'i, philosophe musulman renommé, représente pour sa part la perception islamique. Alors que Dewey peut être considéré comme un port-parole du courant de pensée pragmatiste et humaniste américain modern, `Allāma est typique du courant de pensée chiite islamique. En abordant leur conceptualisation de la réalisation de soi, on entend se concentrer sur certains éléments importants de la personne humaine pour redécouvrir sa potentialité et établir la sagesse qui se cache derrière la réalisation de soi dans une optique comparative. Après avoir souligné les antécédents savants des deux penseurs, leurs milieux d'instruction, leurs sources, leurs méthodes, leurs oeuvres et leurs objectifs, l'étude se penche sur certains problèmes particuliers. Elle examine notamment la façon dont ils perçoivent la nature humaine et analyse leur position sur l'expérience morale et le caractère humain, de même que sur les arts et les sciences comme vendeurs de réalisation de soi. Dans son dernier chapitre, l'étude développe les éléments de base et les manifestations de la réalisation de soi tels qu'ils sont illustrés dans les modes de pensée de Dewey et d'`Allāma. Cette recherche a pour but de clarifier le parallélisme, les similitudes et les différences entre ces deux penseurs et de comparer leurs approches et leurs attitudes naturalistes et islamiques respectives.

Acknowledgments

‘Whoever does not thank people, s/he is not thankful to the Creator’

I would like, in the first place, to acknowledge all those who assisted me during the writing of this thesis. Although all praise and thanks are due to Almighty Allah, it seems unreasonable to express them to Him until I have thanked His servants, whose guidance and assistance made my research possible.

I must acknowledge with thanks the help and advice of my thesis supervisor Professor Dr. David C. Smith, whose suggestions, corrections, insightful comments and supervision were invaluable to me in the course of my research, and helped raise my work to a higher level. His encouragement and comments on the present work were much appreciated. I would also like to express my appreciation to my advisors and co-supervisors Professor Dr. Elizabeth Wood and Professor Dr. Ronald Morris from the Department of Culture and Values in Education and Professor Dr. Todd Lawson from the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University. The comments, guidelines, insights and recommendations which I received from these scholars were of tremendous help to me.

I also owe a great debt to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for without its financial support this study could not have been undertaken. The scholarship which I received from the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was useful in that it allowed me to carry out research at McGill for the past four years. My sincere thanks are due to all my instructors and professors at the Imam Khomeini [Khomeyni] Education and Research Institute in Qum, Iran, especially Professor Ayatullah Mişbah Yazdı, whose support, encouragement, and advice have assisted me from the beginning of my studies in Qum to their culmination here in Montreal.

My thanks are extended to the former and present Chairs of the Department of Culture and Values in Education, Dr. Lawlor and Dr. Smith, and also to Grace Wong-McAllister, Claudia Weijers and other members of the staff of the Department whose efficiency, guidance and cooperation helped me a great deal in facilitating my research. Appreciation is also due to Mr. Stephen Millier whose editing helped me to express myself in sound English.

These acknowledgments would not be complete if the sincere support of my loyal wife, her patience and her belief in the value of this attempt were not also recognized. Also the contributions of my son S. M. Mahdi and my daughter Masoumehsadat have been much appreciated. Finally, I am grateful to my family in Iran, especially to my beloved brother S. M. Riḍā who provided me with a number of crucially important elementary sources without which the present research would have been lacking some of its cornerstones. I am sincerely thankful to all of the above-mentioned, but my final acknowledgment is to say faithfully:

‘All praise be to Allah the Lord of all universes.’

My Background

... we suffer immeasurable harm from the usual academic, objective, anonymous ways of writing, talking, and thinking about our values and visions. ... there should be someone at home in our reflections and theories—an identifiable human being who has come to his or her conclusion as the result of certain struggles and historical destiny. (Sam Keen, 1994)¹

Including some details of an autobiographical nature in the introductory part of the present study may help the reader situate the author's background and, as such, clarify the perspective from which the study was approached.

I was born in 1959 in Qumshah (Shahriḍā), in the suburbs of Isfahan, Iran, into a Muslim Shi'ī family. Later on I will elaborate on the Shi'ī faith of Islam when discussing the religious background of 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'i, one of the subjects of the present comparative inquiry.² Thoroughly familiar with Islamic beliefs and practices, my parents as devoted Muslims were attentive to what they learned from Muslim scholars.

I began my schooling in 1965 in a local elementary school when I was six. In summer of 1975, after receiving my certificate of completion of the third year of high school, I switched to a newly established non-state Islamic seminary in the city, to my own delight and with the support and recommendation of my father and elder brother. These two I respected not only as family members but as trusted advisors. In the Islamic institution I found a better relationship between the teachers, instructors and students on the one hand and among the students themselves on the other. Soon after arriving at the seminary I was warmly welcomed by a gentleman who was my teacher and advisor for more than two years. He was of good character and treated his students very kindly. I still feel a great debt to him and those who advised me in my studies following my switchover. An old saying maintains "people are the servants of beneficence." In the seminary I studied elementary and advanced Arabic literature and took courses on Quranic studies and interpretation, as well as elementary classic logic, Islamic tradition and history, mathematics, and English for two years under the direction and advice of the above-mentioned teacher.

¹ Sam Keen, *Hymns to an Unknown God* (London: Bantam Books, 1994), pp. 6-7.

² See the present study, pp. 45-48.

In the fall of 1977 I moved to the city of Qum where I registered in its Islamic Seminary, now the greatest seminary of Islamic studies in the Shi'i Muslim world. I believed then, as I do now, that a change of location helps one attain a better understanding of the world and its people. It allows one to discover one's potential to acquire a good sense of self-identity, to test one's self-reliance, and to exercise self-confidence. The Prophet of Islam after all recommended to Muslims that they seek knowledge even if they are obliged to go to some trouble in travelling to far-distant places.³ With this in mind, I chose to continue my education far from my home town. I was motivated to depart especially when I thought of the limited resources available at the school in my city. My major purpose was to continue my studies and enrich my knowledge in a larger and more developed educational institution. The best choice facilities were to be found at the Qum Seminary where I was able to take more advanced courses on Islamic thought. I had also more of an opportunity to study Islamic and comparative philosophies.

It was in 1979, after the victory and establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, that closer and more fruitful relations began to be built between the Seminary and the state universities. In the interests of greater intellectual intercommunication, a system of exchange of professors and courses between the two systems was developed. This creative atmosphere encouraged students on both sides to venture beyond the formal and traditional curricula of their academies. In the fall of 1980, therefore, in order to take advantage of this golden opportunity, I registered for part-time courses on Quranic studies, Islamic and Western philosophy, philosophy of ethics, economy, mathematics, research methodology, English, psychology, comparative law, political sciences and sociology. These courses were taught on a part-time period of five years (1981-1986) in Dar Rah-i Haqq Institute under the supervision of its program director Professor Ayatullah Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, a former companion and student of 'Allama Ṭabaṭaba'i. By then 'Allama was too old to teach any courses, so I was unable to study directly under him. However, I was very pleased to take part in the courses on philosophy presented by the above Miṣbāḥ. In these courses, 'Allāma's works on philosophy were used as textbooks.

³ Cf. Majlisī Muḥammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār [the Oceans of Lights]* (Beirut: al-Wafa', 1983), v. 1, p. 177: 55; v. 1, p. 180: 65; v. 2, p. 32: 21.

The students were expected to acquaint themselves with the above branches of knowledge and to prepare for further investigation and research.

In September 1986, after obtaining my certification from Dar Rāh-i Haqq Institute, I registered as a part-time undergraduate student of psychology in the Department of Psychology of the Bāqir al-'Ulūm Cultural Foundation. I was interested in making this my future career since, as a requirement of the faculty, the students were asked to do research on both Islamic and Western fields of psychology. This was for me a significant departure. At the same time I had to take courses in English in order to equip myself with at least an international language. The course materials and textbooks on psychology were Persian or Arabic for the Islamic section, and English for the Western. This part-time course of psychology took me four years to complete. Thus it was that in July that 1990 I received my diploma in psychology from the above department.

From 1989 till 1992 I worked part of the time as a research assistant, one of a group of researchers in comparative psychology (Islamic and Western). The group undertook a project on comparative developmental psychology, with a view to its serving as a textbook for university courses on comparative psychology. The result was the publication of a two-volume research work in Persian entitled *Ravānshināsī-i Rushd ba Nigarishī bi Manābi'-i Islāmī* [Developmental Psychology with a View to Islamic Sources]. The first volume appeared in 1995 and the second one in 1996. My major contribution to the writing of the above volumes was in the domains of "Sex-Role Development" and "Psychopathology." The research was sponsored by the Department of Psychology of the Seminary-University Cooperation Center.

The other half of my time (September 1981 to April 1992) was devoted to studying Islamic law, jurisprudence and theology. The result of these studies was the achievement of a B.A. in Islamic theology and jurisprudence. In 1992, while still in Qum, I applied to the M.A. program of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. On being accepted at the Institute, I moved to Montreal in May 1993. After two years of work towards the fulfillment of M.A. requirements of the Institute, I obtained my M.A. in Islamic studies.

The beginning of the Ph.D. program was a crucial time for me. I had registered as a Ph.D. II student in the same Institute. One semester passed, and yet I felt uncomfortable

because I was strongly tempted by the idea of transferring to another field of study. I was interested in continuing my further research in either psychology or education. Even in my earlier proposal for a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Admissions Committee of the Institute of Islamic Studies, I had chosen a topic related to the Islamic philosophy of education. The research for this proposal helped me a great deal and made it clearer in my mind what objective I wanted to achieve. I was delighted to receive a note from the Admissions Committee indicating "you must take a six-credit course in the Faculty of Education on the philosophy and theories of education." This was to me a grace from God and a blessing in disguise. It was because of this that I discovered the Department of Culture and Values in Education and the possibilities it offered me to pursue my interest in the philosophy and theories of education. I applied to the above program in education and, with favourable response to my request, I was officially admitted as a full-time graduate student of education.

Due to my background in Islamic studies, I decided to undertake research on a comparative study of Western and Islamic philosophies of education. As for the Islamic outlook, I was naturally drawn to the study of `Allāma Ṭabāṭaba'i's works. It has long been my wish to have studied under `Allāma. My mind had been occupied by this desire ever since arriving in Qum where `Allāma had been teaching or leading discussions on philosophy in particular and Islamic thought in general for more than thirty years. At the time I was not qualified or mature enough to take part in `Allāma's advanced courses, and then `Allāma passed away before I had the chance to enroll in them. During my work on the Ph.D. proposal I was excited at the thought that I could share my knowledge of `Allāma with those who had heard little if anything about this Muslim scholar. At the same time, however, I was really interested in developing my knowledge of Western thought in one way or another. This led me to undertake a comparative research study. In North America, I felt that John Dewey was an educational theorist who carried the same weight in the West as `Allāma did in Iran and the Muslim world. I have known Dewey and his remarkable influence on American education since the early period of my studies in the field of education and psychology. What follows has been, for me, an intellectual adventure in which I have investigated the thoughts of these two outstanding scholars.

***THE CONCEPT OF SELF-REALIZATION IN THE
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES
OF
John Dewey and `Allāma Ṭabāṭabā`ī***

(A Comparative Study)

PART I

Introduction

Introduction

Self-realization is a dominant theme in philosophy of education. It can be considered one of the most significant values in virtually any hierarchy of educational values. The following brief overview outlines a variety of definitions offered in works written by authors holding several different perspectives.

Givonni Gentile maintains that “self-realization is the ultimate aim of education.”¹ In an instrumental and vocational conception, self-realization from Edgar Krau’s point of view is an approach to the attainment of one’s goals in life. To the latter, work and career function as tools for self-realization.² From “the value-as-self-actualization point of view,”³ self-realization “is the idea that holds that the individual naturally seeks to *become* what [s/]he potentially *is*, that is, [s/]he seeks to exist in such a way to realize [her]his essential nature as a particular human being.”⁴ According to this educational ideology, “moral prescriptions apply only to those things that are humanly possible” and “all possibilities refer to certain identifiable human potentialities for acting or being.” Correspondingly, “the good life ... can ultimately be defined (although at a very high level of generalization) in terms of human potentialities that exist in order to be perfected or realized.”⁵ In educational psychology, Maslow uses the term self-actualization in order to establish the idea of self-fulfillment as “the realization of personal potential.”⁶ In philosophy of education, all approaches offer a number of educational applications and implications, suggesting the ways and means for the individual to rediscover his/her own self so that s/he may fulfill the ends of education as well as possible. From the above

¹ Howard Ozmon & Samuel Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education* (Columbus, Toronto: Merrill Publishing Company, 1990), 4th edition, pp. 18, 24.

² Edgar Krau, *The Realization of Life Aspirations through Vocational Careers* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers, 1997), pp. 1-22.

³ This ideology insists that the process of self-realization as an educational value can be practiced and fulfilled by every single human individual and based on his/her potentialities.

⁴ William F. O'Neill, *Educational Ideologies: Contemporary Expressions of Educational Philosophy* (Santa Monica, California: Goodyear publishing Company, 1981), pp. 48-50, 398-99.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁶ Antia E. Woolfolk, *Educational Psychology* (Boston, London, ... : Allyn and Bacon, 1995), p. 340.

sources, it is quite clear that notions of self-realization are implied in various educational theories providing an expanded consciousness of the self.⁷

Thesis Purpose and Approach

The purpose of this study is to examine the concept of self-realization, its process and its impact on both the individualistic and social aspects of human life. I will come to see different but complementary orientations that the self may possess and I will examine how the self can be realized on the basis of these contrasted positions. The thesis will also provide suggestions for integrating different theories into a unified and modified understanding of the human person and self-actualization. I will attempt to present a harmonized concept of the subject under question. I do not claim that the subject will be exhausted by this research. This thesis may be of interest to students of the philosophy of education, and its analysis a guide to further research and investigation.

On the level of spirituality, all theistic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as most of the ancient and modern theologies and rites, including Buddhism, Hinduism, naturalism and humanism have attempted to depict different states of the self, including its internal journey. I do not intend to explore all these traditions and compare them in one way or another. This task is clearly beyond the scope of the present study. Rather, I will focus on the concept of self-realization as represented in two different systems of thought, one non-religious and one religious, i.e., naturalist humanism and Islamic transcendentalism. Despite the different assumptions and attitudes held by the two traditions, it is, however, interesting to find that they both accept that everything has been made for the sake of human beings,⁸ or "exist[s] for the fulfillment of

⁷ For instance, see G. H. Bantock, *Studies in the History of Educational Theory* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), v. 2, pp. 13, 104, 271.

⁸ It is mentioned in Islamic teachings that God said, "O progeny of Adam, We have made everything for you and you for Our service." Imam Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khumayni [Ruhullah Khumeyni], *Forty Hadeeth: An Exposition of Ethical and Mystical Traditions*, trans. Mahliqa Qara'i (Tehran: Islamic Propagation Organization, 1989), part one, p. 41. In the Qur'an we read "He is Who created for you all that is in the earth, ..." 2: 29 "And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect." 45:13.

The above notion is also represented in the religious teachings of Judaism and Christianity. In the Bible we read "Behold, I [God] have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you:" See *Holy Bible* (Guelph, Ontario: The Gidecons International in Canada, 1989), Genesis 1: 26-29.

human life.”⁹ This thesis thus deals with two different trends of thought: naturalist, and religious. I have chosen two great figures, each of whom represents one of the above systems of thought. John Dewey (1858-1952), a Western thinker, and ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’i (1904-1981), a Muslim scholar, both were philosophers and educators who devoted much attention to the issue of self-realization.¹⁰

Both Dewey and ‘Allāma most often discuss the educational themes that deal with the concept and nature of self-realization in a philosophical or theological sense.¹¹ The thesis is a comparative appraisal of their philosophical-theological and psychological approaches or perspectives. In this comparative approach, I will present an analytical and critical assessment of the theory of self-realization held by Dewey on the one hand and ‘Allāma on the other. Where appropriate, I will refer to the commentaries and analyses that have so far appeared in relation to both schools of thought, in order to help both my readers and myself grasp concepts more precisely.

⁹ Paul Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II* (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1973), p. 9. *Manifesto I*, (pp. 2-11) “first appeared in *The New Humanist*, May/June 1993 (Vol. VI, No. 3).” *Manifesto II*, (pp.13-31) “first appeared in *The Humanist*, September/October 1973 (Vol. XXXIII, No. 5).” *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁰ The first chapter of the thesis will deal with the short biographies of the two thinkers.

¹¹ There is a significant difference between the terms philosophy and theology. The term ‘philosophy’ or ‘philosophical’ includes those rational and universal rules, facts and principles that exist by themselves independent on one’s mind and understanding. For instance, the principle indicating that two real opposites (contraries) like black and white can never be united in one specific object, or the one maintaining that two contradictories like existence and non-existence can neither unite nor can be absent altogether in one specific object are examples of logical and philosophical themes. These are the general rules which are taken for granted in any type of argument and scientific forum. They borrow their validity and authenticity from the real world in the sense that reality is never voided of them.

Once, “philosophy included the whole field of higher learning –everything beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic. But as a time-honored saying has it, ‘philosophy is the mother of the sciences.’” **Mathematics**, including “*ontology*, the theory of the nature and types of reality; and *cosmology*, or general theory of the processes of reality,” **logic**, with its subdivisions into *deductive* and *inductive* logic, **epistemology**, the question of valid knowledge in the theory of knowledge, **ethics**, the question of sufficient ground for the morally right and wrong, or any other valid principle of conduct, and **aesthetics**, the obvious topics of the nature of the beautiful, are among the predominant branches of philosophy.

Theology for its part discusses of the nature or reality of a religious belief system depending on the religion that the theologian adheres to. This religion and religious network can be either theistic or non-theistic. John Macquarrie, an Oxford University’s professor claims “Prior to theology is faith, an orientation of the whole person, or even of the whole community that shares a particular faith.” He maintains that, based on traditional language, “faith is itself the response to revelation.” In theology, the diversity of sources and branches corresponds to the diversity of theological approaches. **Rationalistic** approach, **revelational** approach and **humanistic** approach are more dominant ones in theology.

For more details on philosophy see C. I. Lewis, “Philosophy,” *The Encyclopedia Americana* 21 (1985): 925, 929-932; and on theology see: John Macquarrie, “Theology,” *The Encyclopedia Americana* 26 (1985): 633-640.

My reasons for selecting these two thinkers for comparison are numerous. Dewey and 'Allama share a number of characteristics. They are both comprehensive philosophers with an extensive background of knowledge in several branches of the humanities, in addition to their interest in the problem of self-realization. They also left a mass of invaluable literature that touches on many philosophical issues in education. Their doctrines were greatly influential and won them much respect as two of the pioneers of the philosophy of education in the present age. What is more, a comparative study of Western and Islamic scholarship can contribute to the development of a sound dialogue between the two trends of thought. This in turn may yield fresh perspectives on the issue of self-realization.

The present thesis will be of use to those pursuing research in modern educational theory. The contributions of both thinkers to philosophy of education are in no way limited to the societies in which they lived and taught. They aimed at something beyond their own cultures and societies. Their philosophies were not written to address just the age in which they lived but also future generations, since they touched upon some of the fundamental issues and elements of human life. As will become apparent in the following chapters, one who studies the writings of both scholars realizes that there are many parallels between them. Generally speaking, one can find many of the same topics or themes treated in both Dewey's and 'Allama's works, although obviously not with the same interpretation or comment. This makes the task of comparing these two thinkers a feasible one.

Just as Dewey has been a major influence on American educational institutions and "the main spokesman of America in the world of ideas,"¹² 'Allama's thought is said to have "exercised a profound influence in both the traditional and modern circles in Persia"¹³ in particular and on the Muslim world in general. The latter created "a new intellectual elite among the modern educated classes who wish to be acquainted with Islamic intellectuality as well as with the modern world."¹⁴ Both Dewey and 'Allama

¹² John Herman Randall, *Thought* (New York) 39, no. 155 (1964): 629.

¹³ Ṭabaṭaba'ī, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. Sayyid Husayn Naṣr [S. Ḥusayn Naṣr] (Pakistan: Karachi, Shia Institute of Pakistan, 1971), pp. 24-25. The book was translated from the Persian and edited with a preface and notes by S. H. Naṣr.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

have won an international reputation, and their works deserve to be reviewed, investigated, compared and commented on.

It is not the intention of this investigation to determine which one presents the more accurate and perfect doctrine. The present dissertation is, instead, an attempt to present the two figures and their positions on the concept of self-realization as accurately as possible, and to compare them, so that we may better understand them and benefit from their considerable knowledge.

In comparative research, one must try to present a balanced study of the assumptions, attitudes, theories, and doctrines of those under investigation.¹⁵ At times, however, depending on the context and subject-matter of a study, this task may not be fulfilled. In cases where one party has either qualitatively or quantitatively something more to say than the other, a different treatment is unavoidable. In such cases, it is not appropriate to disregard what is elaborated by one and neglected by the other. In these cases, I may keep a balance between the two parties by comparing two different themes discussed by them differently. An example may help us achieve a better understanding of this point. In arts, one easily can find that Dewey, as compared to 'Allāma, has more remarks, whereas in morals and morality, the latter has more. The best way to treat the two fairly is to parallel these two cases.

I wish that Dewey and 'Allāma had met each other, challenged and exchanged their ideas when they were alive. However, as this was not possible, I hope to provide a forum for such an exchange. The present dissertation will serve as a link between the educational philosophies of a theistic and non-theistic, a Muslim and non-Muslim thinker and will, it is hoped, provide fresh perspectives on the goals of education. The thesis will bring these two philosophers together and will match their thoughts so that the fruits of this exchange and comparison will benefit our present generation and perhaps those who come after. The result of my challenge, I hope, will not be merely an arid debate or a rigid discussion. What I would like to achieve is a more comprehensive and reconciled approach to the concept of self-realization as one of the ultimate aims of education.

¹⁵ Cf. Alex Inkeles & Masamichi Sasaki, *Comparing Nations and Cultures: Readings in a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective*, (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1996), p. xi-xv, [preface].

What follows illustrates the major goals pursued in the present study. It is intended to analyze the two scholars under study in terms of their elaboration and conceptualization of the idea of self-realization. In short, I will study both philosophies in order to:

- ☐ analyze the different effects of dissimilar belief systems, world-views and ontological or epistemological perspectives of the world, nature and human being;
- ☐ examine the sources on which they relied in arriving at their respective positions;
- ☐ study the methodologies they utilized in explaining and describing the process of self-realization;
- ☐ specify the purpose they pursued in their investigations;
- ☐ measure the internal and external validity of the variables and elements that underlay their designs of self-realization and apply them to reality.

In this regard, the following research questions are to be explored through the present thesis.

1. In what circumstances and educational contexts were Dewey and `Allāma raised and educated?
2. What was the intellectual framework within which they formulated their ideas of self-realization?
3. How did they evaluate the conceptual definition of "human nature" and examine the meaning of "self-realization" and its process?
4. How are moral experience and character formation related to self-realization?
5. How much and in what sense are the arts and sciences considered a means for realizing the self?
6. How do Dewey's and `Allāma's concepts relate to their philosophical or theological principles and presuppositions of either naturalism or transcendentalism?
7. Is there any parallelism or similarity between their respective concepts and interpretations of self-realization?
8. Is there any implication for the harmonization of their different concepts?

Self-Realization as a Fundamental Element in Human Life: Significance of the Study

The significance of self-realization has been taken for granted in many branches of human knowledge. Many philosophers and thinkers in the humanities intend in one way or another to show at least an image of the 'self', either in a public or an individual portrait. In other words, the study of human life by means of various approaches is the axis and cornerstone of the humanities. The major objective in this large field is the exploration of the self, either of the exploration of one or some specific aspects of the self, or the exploration of the self as a whole.¹⁶

Taking this point into consideration, our educator can be either a human being or non-human agent, an abstract conception or a non-living existent. For example, we might learn from a tree, a bird, a little ant or a special sign how to act to find ourselves. Thus, the creatures that live around us may also work for us as educators. Like Mahatma Gandhi, however, I believe that there is no book of education better than "the book of humanity" with its all features - body, mind and spirit.¹⁷

The recognition of the self and its implications can be embodied in the groundwork of all branches of the humanities. In sociology, although one studies social issues and the general or public aspects of human life, one has to gain at least a brief image of the human self. In psychology the study of the psyche and behavior cannot be completely fulfilled unless an understanding of the self is acquired. In physiology, the function of the senses and organs as a physical, physiological or psycho-physiological aspect of the self is under the study and investigation of physiologists. The same can be applied to the fields of anthropology, history, art and literature.

Many kinds of art, including children's drawing and painting, demonstrate images of the self and its communication with nature or even occasionally with somewhere beyond the natural realm. Going further, we find narratives written and stories told that

¹⁶ It is not the intent of this study to grasp all aspects of the self in just one or another branch of humanities. The best approach, I think, is to mirror one by one those aspects and potentialities of the self which have been depicted in each field and merge them in a comprehensive setting.

¹⁷ Mahatma Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers: Life and Thoughts of M. Gandhi as Told in His Own Words* (Switzerland: UNESCO, 1959), p. 151.

also manifest aspects of self-realization. The following personal experience illustrates the way in which the process of self-realization is evident among young children.

In February 1997 I was invited to a book launch held at St. Patrick's elementary school in Montreal. It was a celebration of a wonderful effort made by the students of grade 2 who had worked diligently on writing, publishing, and illustrating original books of fables. The three-part works included a very short autobiography, the contents of the fable and its illustration. The students were requested to write about themselves as young authors and to explain the moral of the fable they had narrated. They were taught to choose animals as their fables' characters.

Though the students were too young to understand and interpret the concept of self-realization, they were at least able to know and identify themselves as they were. In all, the concept of self-knowledge as the very first step to the stage of self-realization shone out from among their words. Some differences may be found between the way female and male students described themselves. Here are some of their words:

- Christina, a seven-year-old girl, says, "I have long hair ... I'm in grade two. One day I would like to be an author. I would have to be a good storyteller ... I have many ideas for books, so that my books would be enjoyed by children all over the world."
- Jeffrey, an eight-year-old boy, writes, "... My favorite food is patty. I have a sister, a mom and dad. They all love me. ..." Jeffrey's favorite sport is hockey.
- Crystal, a seven-year-old girl, tells us that she has long hair and that she is a good student whose favorite activity is to go to school, write and sing songs.
- Natalie, an eight-year-old girl, introduces herself as a smart student and because of this she likes herself. She says, "When I go to school I feel great."

The students were quite able to understand and explain the morals of the fables authored by them.¹⁸ Here are some examples:

➤ Be your self	➤ Do things what [when] you're supposed to
➤ Save people in danger	➤ Do your best all the time
➤ Be sure you can do the thing you undertake	➤ Practicing makes you better
➤ Don't do what is not good	➤ Help someone and someone will help you

Images and Implications of Self-Realization in Elementary Years

¹⁸ Montreal: 28 February 1997. Thanks are due to Madam Julite D' Sousa, the teacher, and to Mr. Waguih Tabet, the principal, who provided me with a copy of the students' fables.

Some sort of conceptualization of self-realization can also be seen during adolescence when individuals begin to reach physical, psychological, and cognitive maturity. Adolescents begin to express themselves, not necessarily in their language and words, but rather in shaping and transforming their appearance. They may imagine someone as their ideal example and try to be more like him or her. However, the figure who represents a good example for them is continuously changing from one to another and is not an established ideal. At this level of maturity, adolescents may seek an example whom they would like to follow, imitate, or even resemble. They are also able to explain why they are interested in following someone important to them. Perhaps, part of the task of parents and instructors is to tell the story of significant and distinguished individuals and heroes or heroines and help adolescents find and choose a good example to follow.¹⁹

As human beings, we are both active and passive-minded, i.e., we may influence the minds of others and change or develop a thought. We may also be passively influenced by others. This is a matter of intercommunication in the level of human life. At times, we may unconsciously be influenced by a human or non-human agent existing around us. Sometimes we are generally aware of the position of the self and its capabilities but not consciously or in detail, despite the fact that we live with that position. Our mind functions like a photo camera. It takes pictures of many eye-catching or interesting objects, then keeps them in its either conscious or unconscious reservation and develops or projects them when necessary. At times, for a sound and successful fulfillment of the self, I would argue, it seems necessary to transfer from the position of unconsciousness to that of consciousness. In order for my readers and me to get a sense of the process of the above transformation, I would like to present an example of a real case that happened to me while I was writing my M.A. thesis. This example, as well as so many other instances that I experience in my everyday life help me understand the state of unconsciousness and its transformation to consciousness.

While completing my M.A. dissertation I was thinking of a fine phrase or sentence as dedicating words. Finally, the following statement came into mind:

¹⁹ 'Alī Mişbah et al, *Ravānshināsī-i Rushd bā Nigārishī bi Manābi'-i Islāmī* [Developmental Psychology with a View to Islamic Sources] (Tehran, Qum: Howzeh-University Co-operation Center, SAMT, 1995), p. 404.

“To Those Who Discover the Truth for the Sake of the Truth”

Now I thought that it was my own words of dedication. I arranged them into a nice shape and beautiful frame intending to insert them in the very first page of the thesis. It was a day before I was to submit the thesis that I was reviewing one of the major Arabic references of the dissertation. At once my eyes caught the same words printed on the page of dedication of that book. The only difference found between the author's words and mine was that the author's words were in Arabic and mine were in English. I did not remember that I had already seen those dedicating words, and if so I believed it was the first time that I saw them consciously. At any rate, I was sure that on using that book as my reference on several occasions, I must have seen those words, and my mind must have taken a picture of them and reserved them in my unconscious. Otherwise, I think I could not have created the exact words. After I was trying to find an interesting statement of dedication, my mind contributed in making and formulating that statement and finally chose the most wonderful words it had reserved. In fact, the mind transferred something unconscious to conscious.

The above example explains the unconscious knowledge and experience that we have about our real world and ourselves. Again, I insist, to accomplish the process of self-realization, one needs to move from the stage of unconsciousness to that of consciousness. In fact, self-realization functions as the major point of departure from which human individuals actualize and develop themselves. The above should not be taken in the sense that self-realization alone is the only way to one's success or the only means for problem-solving, but in the sense that the latter is the starting point and the major condition and requirement for either of these two purposes.

Self-realization, as a double-sided process, includes both individual and social aspects of human life. In other words, both the individual and social appearances of the self are present in the process of self-realization. They are two faces of one coin and are derived from the same root with different functions and outcomes. This same root in its turn is deep-seated in the relationship between the inner and outer or the individual and social selves. It entails the reconciliation of the private and public self and recalls one's individual and social self.

There is always some unknown dynamism within our spirit encouraging and leading us towards some higher level. This dynamism allows us to co-exist in all conditions and circumstances. It lives with us whether we are at work or rest, awake or asleep, healthy or sick, happy or sad, poor or rich, at home or away, in private or in public, etc. The following list of questions may draw our attention to such an internal motivation. To find the answers, one must journey to her/his soul. One's precise reply to the questions requires precise attention to the problem of self-realization.

- ☐ Do you feel dissatisfied with the level of progress or self-improvement that you have achieved so far in your life?
- ☐ Do you feel motivated from within to progress beyond this level?
- ☐ Do you wish that you could attain a greater understanding of your own self?
- ☐ Do you feel something within you that encourages you to achieve self-actualization?
- ☐ Do you have any experience of your own self-realization?
- ☐ What is your image of self-realization?
- ☐ Is it because of an initial dream?
- ☐ Do you think that you have been successful in self-realization?²⁰

At times, I realize that I am searching for something mysterious and I don't know what it is, though I am sure that there is something. Sometimes I feel that I am being encouraged to make a commitment to some agent beyond myself and my material life, i.e., to something transcendent. This perception or feeling does not need any discursive intellect, and, at the same time, it is not considered to be irrational. This is a matter of internal and psychological feeling or spiritual taste. Everybody may be able to realize, feel or taste it, yet it seems difficult to plumb it by intellect or express it in words, and even sometimes it may be something beyond the individual's voluntary operations.²¹

²⁰ The above questions are mine.

²¹ This fact is what distinguished philosophers and psychologists such as William James and Rudolf Otto advocated in the non-rational or indescribable aspect of spiritual experience. For information on James's thought see William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1985), pp. 292-293.

Adina Davidovich, assistant professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School, influenced by the Jamesian notion of noetic quality, devoted a chapter to "The Noeticity of Religious Feeling" in her *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 149.

For information on Otto's description see Rudolf Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion, Based on Kant and Fries*, trans. E. B. Dicker, (London: Williams & Norgate, 1931), p. 9. Also, see: Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), translator's preface, pp. xv-xvii.

As the above examples and observations have demonstrated, self-realization can be seen to be a foundational element in human life. This, then, is why detailed study of self-realization is of utmost significance. A comparative investigation of the works of Dewey and `Allāma may lead us to further understand the concept of self-realization as these two highly-esteemed twentieth century thinkers viewed it. It is hoped that this will provide the foundation from which, ultimately, we can work towards educating for self-realization.

Literature Review: Data Sources

There is a vast body of general literature on human nature, self, and personality, extending from the earliest works of Greek philosophical education to the present. And yet there is an absence of analytical or critical comparison of two of the chief thinkers of our time in this field and in the area of self-realization in particular.

Many books and articles have been written about John Dewey's philosophy;²² nevertheless, the ambiguities of his thought and especially of his doctrine of self-realization cannot simply be eliminated by definitions and descriptions of the educational threads represented in his philosophy. In his essays on the conceptualization of self-realization, Dewey himself looks at this issue as the moral ideal.²³ Previous research on Dewey's philosophy and thought have concentrated on re-examining some of the themes discussed by him in his works on educational theory, but with the exception of the work of Robert J. Roth, little attention, even of a peripheral nature, has been paid to Dewey's

Philip C. Almond, explaining Otto's understanding of rational and non-rational aspects of religious experience, identifies "the rational with thinking and the nonrational with feeling." Expressing himself in Kantian terms, Almond mentions that "a rational object is one which can be thought under the a priori categories of understanding; a nonrational object is one which cannot be so thought." Philip C. Almond, *Rudolf Otto: An Introduction to His Philosophical Theology* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 55-57.

²² For instance see Thomas M. Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience and Nature: the Horizons of Feeling* (New York: SUNY Press, 1987); Steven M. Chan, ed., *New Studies in the Philosophy of John Dewey* (Hanover, New Hampshire: the University of Vermont and New England, 1977); George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press; London and Amsterdam: Feffer and Simons, 1973).

²³ Dewey, "Self-Realization as Moral Ideal," in *The Early Works of John Dewey 1882-1898*, v. 4, ed. Jo Ann Boydston, with an introduction by Wayne A. R. Leys (London & Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, Feffer & Simons, 1967), pp. 42-53; Dewey, "The Place of Self in the Moral Life," in *The Middle Works of John Dewey, 1899-1924*, v. 5, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (London & Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, Feffer & Simons, 1976), pp. 351-58.

position on self-realization.²⁴ Even Roth, who concentrates on the concept of self-realization and addresses some of the topics that will be raised in the present thesis, fails to discuss all aspects of the topic, and offers little in the way of comparison. As John Herman Randall indicates in his review of Roth's book:

Father Roth takes Dewey as 'the main spokesman of America in the world of ideas,' and he concentrates on what is 'typically American' in his thought. Also, dissatisfied with the usual piecemeal treatment of the several themes of Dewey, he emphasizes Dewey's 'over-all purposes,' which he states as 'human self-realization achieved through interaction with nature.'²⁵

Another review of Roth's work maintains that: "Fr. Roth presents Dewey's philosophy systematically. Taking experience as central, he offers a clear and convincing description of how Dewey conceived man to be capable of attaining his most complete development and fulfillment"²⁶ It is worth noting that Roth selects from several of Dewey's works in order to arrive at the latter's position on self-realization.²⁷

Islamic thought, including Islamic philosophy, Quranic exegesis and the study of the Prophetic traditions, are to be the main sources in providing a background for evaluating and interpreting 'Allāma's doctrine of self-realization. 'Allāma's "al-Walāyah,"²⁸ for instance, developing the idea of the perfect human being and complete realization of the self, is one of his earlier work on self-realization in which the author relies on Islamic spiritualism.

²⁴ For example see Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991), p. 143; J. Chambliss, *Educational Theory as Theory of Conduct; From Aristotle to Dewey* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987); Alexander Makedon, *Reinterpreting Dewey: Some Thoughts on His Views of Play and Science in Education*, paper (Illinois: November 1991), p. 1; Donald J. Willower, "Dewey's Theory of Inquiry and Reflective Administration," *Journal of Educational Administration* 32: 1 (1994): 5-22; *The Psychology of John Dewey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Thomas M. Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience & Nature: the Horizons of Feeling* (New York: SUNY Press, 1987).

²⁵ Herman Randall, Jr., *Thought*, v. 39, p. 629.

²⁶ Arnold Berclant, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (New York: State University of N. Y. at Buffalo, 1963), v. 24, p. 589.

²⁷ Among these works there find Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934); Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916); Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1922); Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1930).

²⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Walāyah [The Idea of the Perfect Human Being: Complete Realization of the Self]," in *Yadnamah-yi Mufasssir-i Kabir Ustād Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i* [Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'i: Commemoration Volume] (Qum: Intishārāt-i Shafaq, 1980).

In "al-Walāyah" the author emphasizes that the achievement of high levels of human perfection is part of the potential of ordinary people. Based on this general formula, he explains how a human being can become a perfect human being. 'Allāma, however, restricts himself to explaining some essential key notes, without going into details to explain all efficient and practical parameters that are involved in the process of self-realization.²⁹

For further remarks, one must look at 'Allāma's twenty-volume Quranic exegesis, *al-Mizān*,³⁰ his essays on human nature, his writings on educational themes, and even his philosophical studies for references to his understanding of this concept. Indeed, his philosophy of education and doctrine of self-realization are primarily expressed in many sections of his philosophical and exegetical works. For the most part, I will rely on 'Allāma's "al-Walāyah," *al-Mizān* and his independent works on human nature, life and identity ("al-Insān").³¹ *Al-Mizān (the Criterion, the Balance)* is an encyclopedic work, dealing with more than 750 minor and major issues³² including the concept of human nature and self-realization. 'Allāma's "al-Insān," discussing human nature and identity, describes three stages of human life *before, in, and after* the earthly life.

While there exist many analyses and commentaries on 'Allāma's works and thought, I do not know of any specific work by his later pupils or commentators analyzing his theory of self-realization. Except for 'Allāma's works on human nature,³³ his other remarks on self-realization have been left without any comment or review since the time of their publication.

²⁹ More comments on the volume will come into view in concluding part.

³⁰ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lami, 1970-1974).

³¹ Ṭabaṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā"; "al-Insān fī al-Dunyā"; "al-Insān ba'd al-Dunyā" ["Human Beings before the [Mundane] World; in the World; & after the World."] in *Rasā'il al-Tawhīdīyah* (Qum: Bunyad-i 'Ilmī va Fikr-i 'Allāma, 1986), pp. 165-314.

³² According to Ilyās Kalāntar's classification of the topics of 'Allāma's exegesis, these amount to a total of 775, listed alphabetically. Each of these topics is discussed more or less peripherally in several places of the exegesis. See Ilyās Kalāntar, ed., *Dalā'il al-Mizān*, trans. 'Abbās Tarjumān (Tehran: Bayan Publications, 1970).

³³ 'Allāma's *al-Insān* was translated and commented on by Šādiq Lārijāni. The latter added an introduction, clarifications and comments of his own in order to reveal the dilemmas and complexities of 'Allāma's work. See: Šādiq Lārijāni, ed., *Insān az Aghāz tā Anjām [Human Beings from the Beginning to the End]* (Tehran: al-Zahrā' Publications, 1992).

After the emergence of 'Allāma's works, at least two independent volumes appeared on the subject under investigation. One was *Insān-i Kāmil* (*The Idea of Perfect Human Being*)³⁴ by Murtaḍā Muṭahhari and the other was *Khud-Shināsi barāy-i Khud-Sāzi* (*Self-Realization for Self-Construction*)³⁵ by Muḥammad Taqī Mišbah. The authors were 'Allāma's former students and his companions. These volumes, however, are not considered to be a review of or commentary on 'Allāma's writings on human nature and self-realization. However, one may think that each of these two independent volumes was inspired by 'Allāma's thought and, at the same time, compensates for gaps of 'Allāma's remarks.

It can be seen from the foregoing review that very little study has been undertaken of the concept of self-realization within a comprehensive examination of the educational philosophies of Dewey and 'Allāma. It is therefore hoped that through research into questions which will be addressed, the present study will make a special contribution to this area of comparative education.

Definitions of the Variables

To avoid confusion, it will be important to describe the items and expressions used by either Dewey or 'Allāma. The definition of variables will help both the researcher and his/her readers realize exactly what the subjects under study mean in terms of their function. Without such definitions, one cannot judge the value of a theory or even any of the assumptions supporting a theory. In this way, one could see how for example the terms divine religions, revelation, angels, etc., may be interpreted as superstitious according to Dewey's standards of reality, and as rational and realistic based on 'Allāma's thought. Their different world-views and epistemologies result in different perspectives and understandings.

In the present study, the variables such as self, self-realization and actualization, nature, naturalism, science, art, transcendentalism, supernaturalism, metaphysics, religion, God, instrumental and consummatory ends, etc., must be defined in the way that the two

³⁴ See: Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, *Insān-i Kāmil* [*The Idea of Perfect Human Being*] (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ṣadra, 1983).

³⁵ See Muḥammad Taqī Mišbah, *Khud-Shināsi barāy-i Khud-Sāzi* [*Self-Realization for Self-Construction*] (Qum: Dar Rah-i Ḥaqq Publications, 1991).

scholars conceptualized them and intended them to be understood. I see for example that to 'Allāma, 'religion' or 'religious' means something other than that which Dewey intends. This should be clarified at the outset of any comparative discussion I might undertake. What follows will give my readers some comparative sense of how these two scholars conceptualized their understanding of self-realization.

A realistic orientation guides Dewey's and 'Allāma's study of self-realization.³⁶ Both Dewey and 'Allāma declare that their metaphysical philosophies are based on reality though they do not propose the same conceptions of reality and realism. Dewey's realism restricts itself to the natural and material cosmos. For the latter the real world is nothing more than the natural experimental world. Even when Dewey speaks of something transcendent and spiritual, he means a type of naturalist transcendence and spirituality. 'Allāma's ideology holds "that reality, knowledge, and value exist independent of the human mind."³⁷ Accordingly, reality and realism are attributed to both material and nonmaterial, visible and invisible domains. In 'Allāma's ontology, God Himself is the First Real Being, and the First Truth Who creates all beings. Thus considered, all reality owes its existence and actuality to God's existence.³⁸

In Dewey's philosophy, human "self-realization" is proposed as a means of developing the human personality, the fulfillment of which is feasible through an individual's *interaction with nature*. Dewey insists that an individual's growth, enhancement and enrichment, as well as his/her integrated and significant development

³⁶ The term realism, as defined in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

is used for the view that material objects exist externally to us and independently of our sense experience. Realism is thus opposed to idealism, which holds that no such material objects or external realities exist apart from our knowledge or consciousness of them, the whole universe thus dependent on the mind or in some sense mental.

R. J. Hirst, "Realism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 7 (1967): 77.

³⁷ However, 'Allāma, in explaining his own realism in his *Uṣūl-i Falsafah va Ravish-i Ri'ālism* [The Foundations of Philosophy and the Method of Realism] never accepted the Platonic Ideas. In the second chapter (v. 1, pp. 52-86), 'Allāma, commenting on realism and idealism, opposes idealism of any sort, rejects its arguments, and establishes realistic metaphysics. For additional information see Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah va Ravish-i Ri'ālism* (Tehran: Ṣadrā Publications, 1989), v. 1, pp. 52-86.

³⁸ Explaining 'Allāma's religious realism, one may compare him, in one way or another, to Thomas Aquinas' religious realism. Both Aquinas and 'Allāma believe that God is "the Unmoved Mover who gave meaning and purpose to the universe." They "used the rational approach ... in analyzing and dealing with various religious questions." For them "all truths were eternally in God. Truth was passed from God to humans by divine revelation, but God had also endowed human beings with the reasoning ability to seek out truth." See 'Ozmon & Craver, *Philosophical Foundations*, pp. 38, 44.

take place both in and through a “successful elimination of ‘disparity’ between man and nature” and “by closing the gap between the organism and environment.”³⁹

In `Allāma’s philosophy, although nature is considered a means for self-realization and fulfillment, the relation of the self to nature is not as basic as it is in Dewey’s thought. For the sake of self-realization, a person does not only have to deal with his/her surrounding environment, but should also have some connection between his/her “self” and the One Supreme Being Who bestowed it. This element is never seen as a factor in disconnecting the self from nature or alienating it from the material world. Rather, the material world or nature is a vehicle or bridge to further actualization of the self, that is its connection to the Creator, God. `Allāma insists that “the necessary personal concomitant of professing God’s Unity is devotion to Him.”⁴⁰ To him, human individuals live in harmony with the environment; the environment raises them “like a loving nurse.” He maintains that

A deeper awareness of the order reigning in the world is enough to show that the world, along with the order reigning over it, is the creation of an omnipotent Creator who has brought it into being through His limitless knowledge and power and who directs it toward an end.⁴¹

To this extent, the path of self-realization is considered to be the unique path which will guide a human person fully and completely toward realizing God.⁴²

Why these two scholars emphasize self-realization and its conditions can be understood from their positions on human nature, human life and destiny. They agree that a human being’s fulfillment cannot be attained through chance or without any effort.⁴³ Although they describe it differently, both Dewey and `Allāma insist that the field of

³⁹ Robert J. Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization* (N. J. Greenwood Press, [1962 by Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N. J. and reprinted in] 1978), p. 5-6, where the following are cited:

(1) Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1934), pp. 13-15.

(2) Dewey, *Logic: The theory of Inquiry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1938), chap. 2.

(3) Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1929), pp. 252-262.

⁴⁰ Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *A Shi’ite Anthology*, trans. William C. Chittick (London: Muhammad Trust, 1980), p. 91.

⁴¹ Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Shi’ite Islam*, p. 126.

⁴² Ṭabāṭabā’ī cites the following sayings that came to us from the Prophet Muḥammad:

“He who realizes himself/herself verily knows the Lord:” and “Those among you know God better who know themselves better.” *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 6; Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Shi’a dar Islām*, with an introduction by S. H. Nasr [S. H. Nasr] (Tehran: 1969), pp. 153-154.

fulfillment and perfection does not restrict itself to brutishness or to a biological and sensual level.

The term *naturalism* will be employed frequently to identify the Deweyan system of thought. But what would be the appropriate term with which to describe 'Allama's system of thought? Whether or not a term such as supernaturalism as opposed to naturalism can be applicable to 'Allama's epistemology is a matter of debate. In order to avoid misinterpretation it is necessary to define both naturalism and supernaturalism in advance. It is important to define these two terms in accordance with the context(s) in which they have been used.

The word naturalism has been used in several fields, including literature, philosophy and theology, with different concepts. I restrict myself to two cases where the term has been frequently in use. As a philosophy, naturalism is the system of thought that holds that all phenomena can be explained in terms of natural causes and laws without attributing moral, spiritual, or supernatural significance to them. The term "when used as the name of a general philosophical outlook ... usually signifies the view that all objects, truths, and facts fall within the scope of scientific inquiry, that nothing is in principle insusceptible to scientific explanation."⁴⁴ In theology, naturalism is the doctrine that all religious truths are derived from nature and natural causes and not from revelation.

Assume for the moment that some of what the theist says is to be interpreted as asserting the existence of a supernatural being who created the universe. If the theist is right in making this assertion, presumably, the naturalist will be obliged to show that God can be brought within the scope of scientific inquiry. The naturalist will, in other words, have to construct a "natural theology."⁴⁵

The above definitions will be shown to apply to Dewey's belief system both when seen as philosophy and theology. None of these definitions, however, is applicable to 'Allama's philosophy or theology.

As for the definition of the word *supernaturalism*, it may be described in the following terms. *Supernatural* in one sense is synonymous with preternatural, irrational, irregular, ghostly, or to some notion of magic. The term *preternatural* "applies chiefly to

⁴⁴ Jeffrey Stout, "Naturalism," *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 10 (1987): 315.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 316-17. For more on naturalism as both philosophy or theology see *ibid.*, pp. 314-18, s.v. **Naturalism**.

what is not regarded as natural or being within the usual range or compass of nature. Usually the term means abnormal or strange and inexplicable to an extreme or startling degree ⁴⁶

The word *supernatural* in its other sense describes the world of the Divine, a realm beyond the observable and corporeal universe, somewhere beyond the natural world which is unseen yet subject to epistemological or metaphysical analysis. As the deviation from natural, the word *supernatural* "is felt as above or beyond what is observable and capable of being experienced by ordinary means."⁴⁷ The term in much of its use stresses spirituality and implies "relation to God or to divine powers." Seen in this way, the belief in God as a Divine agent is natural to one who adheres to supernatural religion that speaks of the real existence of the Divine beyond nature and advocates that human beings will have a "*supernatural* life, the life of the soul above the natural life of the body"⁴⁸ The term therefore "implies a transcending of what is natural and especially of what is comprehensible or capable of becoming comprehensible" by means of natural experience.⁴⁹

To understand Dewey's and 'Allāma's positions on naturalism and supernaturalism, one has to seek the definition of the term within the context and framework of their thought and belief systems. As such, the neutral or abnormal connotations of the term must be avoided. The term may be confusing if it is defined far from its appropriate context. As will be discussed, Dewey's and 'Allāma's reflection on the first group of the conceptual definitions of the term is clear and needs no explanation. When it comes to the second group of definitions, however, Dewey expresses a negative reflection on the issue, whereas 'Allāma strongly verifies the idea of the existence of a divine realm, elements and agents beyond the natural scene.

I find nowhere that 'Allāma himself employs any term in either Arabic or Persian to be translated into its English equivalent, *supernaturalism*. The terms "*mavarāy-i ḥiss va*

⁴⁶ Philip B. Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary Synonyms* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1984), p. 800, s.v. (**supernatural**) **preternatural**.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 799, s.v. **supernatural**.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 800.

tajribah"⁵⁰ (beyond sensation and experience) and "*al-ghayb*"⁵¹ (the unseen realm) are two terms which are used by `Allāma to describe the realm beyond the natural domain. When it comes to the body of the thesis, I will borrow Dewey's and `Allāma's terminologies from within their own writings in order to explain them and their philosophies or theologies more clearly.

Thesis Structure

This thesis will consist of an introduction, five chapters, commentary and conclusion, as well as two appendices. The three-part categorization has been done in light of the nature of the different subjects under study. In this way, all introductory discussions fall into the first part. The second part contains the major framework, body and core elements of the thesis. In the third part, where the commentary and conclusion are to be found, I will offer my own interpretations and evaluations. The concluding part will be followed by another section devoted to two appendices that represent respectively the epistemological and theological principles of Dewey's and `Allāma's belief systems in a condensed yet more direct and comprehensive way.⁵² I intend to summarize here the second part in order to show what the thesis is going to discuss as its major points.

In the first chapter, the philosophical context and roots of Dewey's and `Allāma's doctrines will be discussed. A short biography of both Dewey and `Allāma will give us an idea of the contextual and philosophical roots of their educational doctrines in general and their interpretation of self-realization in particular. The scholars' dissimilar but parallel contexts, their works and influences, their common domains and dominant themes are underlined in this chapter. The impact of Greek philosophy and the influence of naturalist or religious features on either of the scholars as well as their originality will be examined in this chapter. On the one hand, I will examine Dewey's cultural and religious background and his impact on both Western and Eastern education as well as his response to religion and religious affinity. On the other, I will examine `Allāma's response to

⁵⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "Mavārā-yi Ḥiss va Tajribah [Beyond Sensation and Experience]," in *Majmu'ah-i Maqalat* [Collected Essays: Questions and Answers,] ed. S. H. Khusraw Shāhi (Daftar-i Nashr va Farhang-i Islāmī, 1992).

⁵¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 11, pp. 45-46 (Beirut).

⁵² For information on the appendix in Dewey's case see Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto* [I], pp. 7-11, and in `Allāma's case see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 215-17.

Western philosophy of education, as well as his contribution to Islamic education and his status in the eyes of both the Western and Islamic scholars. Their purposes, methodologies and approaches in their position on self-realization will be analyzed in the closing part of this chapter.

Since the study of human nature functions as a basic background for self-realization, a chapter is devoted to explaining this crucial issue. In this regard, the emergence of human beings on the earth based upon either natural evolution or divine creation, dualism or unification of human body and soul, as well as the doctrine of their resurrection are matters of comparative discussion. The chapter will provide a sense of the educational features of human nature and conduct, including both the individual and social aspects of human life, as well as the correlation of nature and experience in forming the educational perspective of self-realization.

Moreover, in a comparative study, the soul-body interrelationship will be examined on the basis of both philosophical and psychological perspectives. In a philosophical or psychological sense, there is much to say about the soul and body and their interrelationship. The result will be either the acceptance or rejection of dualism of soul (mind) and body, with different interpretations depicted in virtually all Western and Islamic ideologies.⁵³

Moral experience and human character as avenues towards self-realization will be the major focus of the third chapter. There, moral principles and self-realization, the correlation between theory and practice, and the wisdom behind morality and conduct will be investigated from both Dewey's and 'Allāma's points of view.

The arts, sciences, technology and self-realization, discussing the notability of aesthetic feelings and thought and their role in self-realization, form the fourth chapter in

⁵³ Regarding the issue of body-soul or body-mind relationship, one finds two major approaches. The most common idea is that which is indicated by dualist philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Kant. Accordingly, there are two distinct components, namely, the soul and the body which are related to each other and have strong interaction between them. In contrast with dualism, there are monistic theories that deny the existence of two distinct things as the body and the soul. Later on I will discuss in detail comparing Dewey's and 'Allāma's points of view to realize how they attempt to touch upon the problem. For additional information about the above see Jerome Shaffer, "Mind-Body Problem," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 5 (1967): 338; Jenny Teichman, *The Mind and the Soul. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Humanities Press, 1974), pp. 1-2; Abbas Ali Shameli [A. 'Alī Shāmīlī], *The Soul-Body Problem in the Philosophical Psychology of Mullā Ṣadrā (1571-1940) and Ibn Sīnā (980-1037)* (Montreal: McGill, Islamic Studies, M.A. Thesis, 1995), pp. 10-14.

the thesis structure. Such a discussion, moreover, will emphasize self-realization as a remarkable art with implications such as creativity and the discovery of one's potential. The manifestation of one's self in one's art, the self's inclination toward perfection and improvement, God's beauty, the beauty of faith, the relationship between art and beauty, and other topics will be comparatively discussed as subtitles of arts and sciences.

In chapter five, the basic elements and manifestations of self-realization are evaluated from the two perspectives. The more substantial issue with regard to the present comparative research is to identify those significant and essential points where the elements of our thinkers' thoughts are founded. While the realistic conceptualization of transcendentalism and spirituality are taken for granted from both points of view, naturalism in Dewey's philosophy of education and divine transcendentalism in 'Allama's doctrine function as two completely opposite epistemological world-views, upon which the two establish their educational doctrines. For one of them belief in something/someone beyond the natural domain is seen as unreal and superstitious, whereas for the other it is viewed as a reality which plays its indispensable part in human life improvement and self perfection. To the latter, the belief in God helps the individual understand how far s/he can evaluate her/his affinity to the Divine in the process of education and self-realization and fulfillment.

Last but not least is the concluding chapter in which the findings of the thesis will be presented. I will come to a critical position on both Dewey's and 'Allama's conceptualization and interpretation of self-realization. The thesis will close with a discussion of a number of suggestions for further research.

PART III

Chapter 1

***Philosophical Contexts and Roots of
Dewey's and 'Allāma's
Doctrines of Self-Realization***

Chapter 1

Philosophical Contexts and Roots of Dewey's and 'Allāma's Doctrines of Self-Realization

Introduction

The context and environment wherein a thinker is educated is almost as important as the subject-matter and curriculum of his/her education. The educational background contributes to shaping the scholarly personality of a thinker. To discover reasons behind a certain trend of thought one must often review the lives of those intellectual leaderships who publicized that trend. Even a minor phenomenon or a small incident happening during the lifetime of a scholar may have played its part in constructing and formulating the framework of an advanced school of thought. The biographies of individual thinkers shed light on several angles of their lives and demonstrate the factors that led to their success. We study these biographies in order first to develop our knowledge of their opinions and of those elements that shaped their thinking, and second, to reproduce in practice the positive experiences they left behind and avoid the negative ones. The cases of Dewey and 'Allāma are no exception to this rule.

The lives of great thinkers are always worth studying by those who are looking for examples of influential persons. Some people, in order to enlighten themselves or to empower their spirit, look at the autobiographies or biographies of distinguished figures and try to study their accomplished lives and borrow their heartening words. The history of the great thinkers manifests many angles of their life providing readers with signposts to their successfulness. One may learn from their biographies how they grew up, how they were educated, and how they made decisions and what they experienced. These are just

some reasons as to why readers might take their examples from the great. However, our study of Dewey's and 'Allāma's biographies has not been done in order for us to be inspired by or imbued with their instructional goals or educational intentions. It will be, rather, a critical approach in which I evaluate some of the key ideas that function as the basis for their later doctrines of educational self-realization.

Short Biographies

Dewey's Biography (1859-1952)

John Dewey, a renowned American philosopher and theorist of education, was born in 1859 in Burlington, Vermont into a Protestant family. He was born on the eve of the Civil War and "spent the last winter of the war with his parents and two brothers in northern Virginia, where the privation suffered by the people of the devastated region made a deep impression on the young boys."¹ George Dykhuizen has elaborated Dewey's family tree in his biography. Dykhuizen mentions that "Dewey's roots penetrated deeply into Vermont" where he passed his boyhood and youth (1859-1879). Accordingly,

Three generations of his forebears were Vermont farmers and each of his parents was born and raised on a farm in Vermont. Being Yankees, these forebears had the characteristics traditionally attributed to the early New Englanders: they were industrious, shrewd, self-reliant, thrifty, without pretense or show, independent in their thinking, puritanical in their conduct, and deeply pious.²

Dewey's father, Archibald Sprangue Dewey, married Lucina Artemisia Rich a few years after he left the family farm and began his occupation as a grocery businessman in Burlington, where later on their son John was born. His parents, like the majority of the people of that town "belonged to the middle class, neither exceptionally rich nor unusually poor." Dewey's mother, Lucina, like her husband

came from a farm family, but one considerably more prosperous and prominent than his. Her grandfather, Charles Rich, was a Congressman in Washington for ten

¹ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley: a Philosophical Correspondence, 1932-1951* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964), p. 5. See also George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press; London & Amsterdam: Feffer & Simons, 1973), p. 1.

² Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 1.

years; her father, Davis Rich, was a member of the Vermont General Assembly for five years.³

John Dewey, in Burlington spent his “life of a typical middle-class Yankee schoolboy and eventually went on to study at the University of Vermont (1875-79).”⁴ Since Burlington had a culturally mixed population, Dewey had opportunities to experience varied cultural contacts. His family was of early American stock; however, unlike many youths with a Vermont background, “he had a breadth of social horizon and a depth of understanding for members of other cultural groups. ...”⁵

Dewey’s birthplace, Burlington, has long been recognized as a city with a cultivated society, “rich in social attractions and prominent in leading social entertainments.” Dewey’s biographer, Dykhuizen presents an image of Burlington as a city where the prevalence of social equality as well as a citizenry blessed with intelligence, virtue, and a reasonable degree of manners would have been attractive to any newcomer. The same biographer writes “Through associations in home, school, church, literary circles, and study groups, Dewey’s parents were identified with the ‘cultivated society’ of Burlington. John and his brothers came in turn to know and be known by most of the members it comprised.”⁶

Dewey’s character and morality, define him as a person who

was quiet and reserved, but liked fun and was always ready to participate in the play and games of the playground and neighborhood. Shy with strangers, he was friendly and companionable with those whom he knew well. His teachers found him courteous, well-mannered, conscientious, and likable; some entered his name as “Johnny” instead of “John” on their class lists.⁷

What follows describes Dewey’s education and academic careers up to 1884. Having obtained a Bachelor of Arts, Dewey was ready to enter upon the next step of his career. Due to the philosophical problems that had been raised in his mind, his academic orientation was fixed by his interest in pursuing philosophy as a professional career.⁸ Dewey’s mind was occupied by philosophical questions about the interrelationship of the

³ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁴ Sidney Rantner and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, p. 5.

⁵ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

self and the natural world, of human body and soul, of God and nature, etc. He could hardly accept the so-called “oppressive dualism that he had acquired in New England at college and at home” that led to the separation of the above issues from one another.⁹ Moreover, during his university studies, Dewey was influenced by “the philosophical teaching of Professor H. A. P. Torrey.” The latter “encouraged Dewey to make philosophy and college teaching his life vocation.”¹⁰

During his senior-year course of study, Dewey “was confronted with problems that held a deep fascination for him; in quest of their solution he was led eventually to the pursuit of philosophy as a professional career.”¹¹ Dewey himself was always grateful for his senior year since he felt that this course “fell in with [his] own inclinations.”¹²

Dewey's Schooling and His Academic Life

Grade School Studies; Burlington: September 1867

Dewey's school studies began a little late due to the Civil War.¹³ The first year began in a crowded classroom, with low standards, lax discipline, irregular attendance, a poorly prepared teacher, with 54 pupils whose ages ranged from 7 to 19. The second year began while “an up-to-date, city-wide system with graded classes, uniform standards and practices was in operation.” The traditional subjects such as reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, grammar, history, geography, etc. were taken as the assignments of the school period.¹⁴

High School; Burlington: September 1872

Dewey enrolled in the college preparatory course, being encouraged by his mother who had always hoped he would go to college, and by his closest friends who were enrolled in the same course. He was required to take a four-year course that included Latin, Greek, French, English grammar and composition, and mathematics. “As his work was of high quality, he was allowed to double up in his studies to finish the four-year

⁹ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹¹ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 12.

¹² See Dewey, “From Absolutism to Experimentalism,” *Contemporary American Philosophy* 2 (1930): 13.

¹³ Cf. Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, p. 5.

¹⁴ Dewey, “From Absolutism to Experimentalism,” p. 4.

course in three.” He, like his parents, was very fond of reading, and there was no restriction placed on his reading by his parents. He “had considerable freedom in his studies, reading, and out-of-door activities.”¹⁵

University Studies- Undergraduate; Vermont: September 1875

Dewey entered university when he was not quite 16 years of age. “His earlier shyness had diminished somewhat and he felt more at ease in company ... [H]is ability to present ideas with logic and precision, even though in a hesitating and drawling manner, won him admiration and respect.” Although most of the subjects of the first three years continued on an advanced level, his high-school studies, the sciences and especially the biological ones “that touched upon the controversies on evolution current in academic and religious circles” were fresh and interesting to him. As he himself wrote, he was “an omnivorous reader,” interested in “reading whatever books and magazines were of interest and available to him.” Political and social philosophy dealing with the history of civilization, political economy, constitutional history, international law, and the constitution of the United States, as well as mental and moral philosophy, psychology, logic, metaphysics, moral science, evidences of religion, and, in addition, the theory of fine arts, “marked a turning point both in Dewey’s college career, and also in his life.”¹⁶

Dewey’s Career and Graduate Studies

On his graduation from the University of Vermont in 1879,¹⁷ Dewey took his position as an instructor in Oil City High School from 1879-82. “The only evidence the high school has of Dewey’s teaching is two commencement programs, ... Each of these lists Dewey as one of a three-member teaching staff and as assistant principal.”¹⁸ In his years of graduation, he “was an outstanding student in philosophy at John Hopkins University from 1882-1884.”¹⁹ In this period, Dewey produced, in addition to his doctoral dissertation, “three articles accepted for publication while he was still a student.” In addition to several courses taken in the historical field, Dewey attended Charles S.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 10-12.

¹⁷ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, P. 18.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁹ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, P. 6.

Peirce's courses on logic and George Sylvester Morris's on philosophy.²⁰ The latter, influencing Dewey by the impact of his neo-Hegelian logic and metaphysics, provided him with greatest satisfaction.²¹ Indeed, Dewey expressed his appreciation of Hegel's dialectic since the latter treated "human culture as modeling the ideas, beliefs, and intellectual attitudes of individuals" It was to this effect that Dewey rejected those theories of human nature that isolated human mind from its physical world. Moreover, Dewey thought that "he owed to Hegel his emphasis on the principle of continuity and the important role of conflict in human affairs and in nature."²²

Dewey applied for a teaching fellowship, and his application found "the healthy support of Morris and other members of the Department of Philosophy." Thus, he was granted a teaching fellowship and was "listed among the fellows in The John Hopkins University Circular of 1883-84."²³

He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from John Hopkins University in 1884.²⁴ How well he did for the comprehensive examination for his Ph.D. degree "is revealed in a letter" of recommendation written by George S. Morris. The latter wrote, "I am delighted to hear that Mr. Dewey's oral examination was so creditable. His name is under serious consideration for a subordinate appointment here."²⁵

Dewey began his academic career as a professor at different universities, teaching and writing on various philosophical, psychological and educational subjects. Dewey's university career shows him to have been an outstanding and charismatic figure whose thought and teachings attracted many students. The universities of Michigan and Minnesota (1884-1894) were the first institutions where Dewey lectured. Dr. Dewey's²⁶ duties at the University of Michigan in particular included a variety of tasks performed by him during two periods of time:

1. From 1884 to 1888 he served as:

²⁰ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, pp. 28-39.

²¹ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, P. 6.

²² Ibid.

²³ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, pp. 40-41.

²⁴ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, P. 6.

²⁵ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 42.

²⁶ Out of twenty-two members of the staff of the University, only three of them, including Dewey, had Ph.D. degrees. "Dewey's work was entirely with undergraduates of the junior and senior classes." Ibid., p. 59.

- a) an instructor in philosophy in September 1884.
- b) Morris's associate in the department when the latter was offered the headship in 1885.
- c) a professor of psychology.
- d) a conductor of a Bible class organized by the students' Christian Association.
- e) a charter member of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club founded in 1886.²⁷

2. From 1889 to 1894 he was:

- a) the head of the Department of Philosophy; succeeding G. S. Morris after the latter's death in March 1889.
- b) teacher of a section of a course on Introduction to Philosophy, advanced courses in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hegel's *Logic*, Advanced Psychology, Advanced Logic, Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, upon returning to Michigan.
- d) a member of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, ("whose meetings he frequently addressed") due to his "deepening interest in education."²⁸

In the academic year dividing these two periods (1888-89) Dewey was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota. He resigned soon after taking up his post and returned to the University of Michigan after having been chosen as the successor of G. S. Morris in the professorship of philosophy.²⁹

These three periods can be viewed as the most significant in Dewey's academic life because they helped Dewey's mind develop. As a result of courses and addresses presented, he was always opening new windows on the understanding of philosophy, psychology, education, ethics, etc.

Soon after his decade of teaching at Michigan and Minnesota came to an end, Dewey began his duties at the University of Chicago for the period between 1894 and 1904. He was turning thirty-five when he became professor of philosophy, psychology and education.³⁰ President Harper had it in mind to establish a strong department of philosophy at Chicago University, "but up to the time of Dewey's appointment he had not succeeded in getting an outstanding scholar to establish and head the department." Arriving in Chicago in July 1894, Dewey helped in the establishment of the Department of Philosophy, which at the time included psychology and pedagogy. He also suggested

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 44-51.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 61, 64, 66.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-63.

³⁰ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, P. 9.

and took steps toward building a separate department of education.³¹ These two periods mark Dewey's outstanding contribution to the progress of philosophical and educational thought. "There he was to achieve national and international recognition as the leader of what William James and others were to call the 'Chicago School' of American philosophy."³² He made further contributions to the development of philosophy and education while he was teaching and researching in some other universities including Columbia.

At the University of Chicago he served as chairman of the department of philosophy, psychology and pedagogy during the period 1894-99. As president of the American Psychological Association (1899) and the American Philosophical Association (1905) Dewey continued his administrative and academic career.³³ He had been teaching as a charismatic philosopher for over forty-six years until he retired in 1930. Dewey's name is recorded in the list of the founders of the New School for Social Research in New York City which was established in 1919.³⁴

For a period of time after his retirement, from 1930 to 1939, he was recognized as an emeritus professor. During his academic and scientific life, Dewey received national honors and an international reputation as an educational and instructional consultant. Dewey traveled to China, Japan and Russia, lecturing and visiting schools.³⁵

Although Dewey did well in his school work and "was allowed to advance rapidly", he was not satisfied with the traditional procedures of schools especially with those instituted by the superintendents of the schools in Burlington. He was, in fact, partly motivated by his own experience to call for change in education and particularly in classroom techniques.³⁶

Many scholars, important figures and professors either directly or indirectly contributed to Dewey's education and affected his philosophical, theological and educational thought. Charles Darwin, the evolutionist, Charles Peirce, the American

³¹ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, pp. 77-79.

³² Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, P. 9.

³³ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 99.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 194-95, 235.

³⁶ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 4. In his early writings on education, Dewey suggested the progressive education as an alternative to traditional education.

pragmatist, William James, an advocate of naturalism and a pragmatic thinker on philosophy and religion, and G. Stanley Hall, the founder of experimental psychology were the more prominent scholars whose thought and doctrines influenced Dewey's mind. Succeeding Peirce and James, he became a leading exponent and theorist of American pragmatism.³⁷

Darwinian evolution,³⁸ as well as Neo-Hegelian logic and metaphysics were also among those influential trends of thought that appealed to Dewey. Neo-Hegelianism overcame what he had learnt of dualism corresponded to "the division of one's self from the world, of soul from body, of nature from God."³⁹ Dewey showed sympathy towards neo-Hegelian thought especially "during the first four years of his teaching [philosophy] at the University of Michigan (1884-88)"⁴⁰

The circumstances in which Dewey lived encouraged and motivated him towards an evolutionary and progressive thinking in American philosophy, education and theology. Dewey lived for almost one century and served American culture and literature during at least seventy five percent of his long life. He died June 1, 1952 leaving behind a huge number of writings many of which reveal his doctrines in a variety of fields. Like many scholars and thinkers, Dewey in his writings on social problems and critical issues, used to address the general public and lecture or write in its language and on the level of general understanding.

Some of Dewey's early works such as *Education and the Health of Women*, *Moral Control*, *The Good*, *The Idea of Obligation*, *The Idea of Freedom*, *Freedom and Responsibility* can be classified in the general public category. In this way, Dewey is recognized as "a participant and leader in many social movements, including women's suffering." His teachings, writings and works on some other areas such as *Human Nature and Conduct*, *Moral Philosophy*, *Psychological Ethics*, *The Significance of the Problem of Knowledge* and *The Metaphysical Method in Ethics* seem more philosophical than technical in nature. Again, in this way, Dewey's words and works have contributed to the

³⁷ Magnus Magnusson, ed., *Chambers Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh. New York: Chambers, 1990), s.v. Dewey John, p. 414.

³⁸ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, p. 5.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

development of American philosophy and to its twentieth century intellectual and cultural heritage.⁴¹

Dewey's Belief System

One cannot determine any specific belief system to which Dewey adhered unless one studies Dewey's progressive mind both when an adolescent and when an intellectual freethinker. Dewey's belief system borrows its form and structure from his metaphysics. One may examine Dewey's metaphysical mind as a motivated process with a range of alternatives and several stages of development or evolution. As S. Morgenbesser mentions, "Dewey's metaphysics is frequently classified as a process philosophy—according to which everything that is[,] is an event-process; that is, no event is a sequence of nonchanging time-slices"⁴² In his "Events and the Future" Dewey maintains, "If existences are histories or events in the sense of becomings, then *past-present-future* are on the same level, because all are phases of any event or becoming. Any becoming is *from, to, through*."⁴³ To provide an image of Dewey's changing and process-oriented metaphysical and philosophical mind, I would think of three eras of Dewey's life as follows:

Dewey as a Christian Protestant Believer

It was when Dewey as a schoolboy was spending his life with his practicing devoted Christian parents. During his school years, he was highly recommended, especially by his restrictive and narrow-minded mother to follow moral theology and Protestant teachings and pietism.⁴⁴

Dewey as an Advocate of Evangelical Protestantism

Dewey was not persuaded by the teachings of the churchmen of his time. He also did not want to restrict himself to what "his mother's narrow pietism and excessive religious emotionalism" had demanded that he practiced. In his college years he was

⁴¹ *The World Book Encyclopedia* 5 (1995): s.v. **Dewey John**.

See also Larry Hickman, director, *Center for Dewey Studies* (Internet: <http://www.siu.edu/~Deweyctr/>, 1997).

⁴² Sidney Morgenbesser, ed., *Dewey and His Critics* (New York: The Journal of Philosophy, 1977), p. xxvi.

⁴³ Dewey, "Events and the Future," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 13, no. 10 (1929): 256, italics not in original. See also Morgenbesser, ed., *Dewey and His Critics*, p. 340.

⁴⁴ Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," p. 4.

searching for an alternative to religious emotionalism. For him, liberal evangelicalism was a rational form of Christianity that he found was “more palatable to his developing intellect than was his mother’s religion.”⁴⁵

Evangelicalism was the outcome of a revivalism that “became a steady feature of an advancing Protestantism throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth.” The “great time of evangelical triumph” was in that period of his intellectual awakening.⁴⁶ As Ahlstorm indicates in his expansive work on *American Religious History*,

[t]hese were the days above all when the “Evangelical United Front” took up the manifold causes of moral renewal, missionary advance, and humanitarian reform - with revival preaching almost always leading the way. Its aim was to bring the gospel to all America and to heathen lands abroad, but primarily it hoped to make America the world’s great example of a truly Protestant republic.⁴⁷

This was later on paraphrased by G. M. Marsden in his article on *Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity*. The latter indicates,

[t]he term evangelicalism usually refers to a largely Protestant movement that emphasizes (1) the Bible as authoritative and reliable; (2) eternal salvation as possible only by regeneration (being “born again”), involving personal trust in Christ and his atoning work; and (3) a spiritually transformed life marked by moral conduct, personal devotion such as Bible reading and prayer, and zeal for evangelism and missions.⁴⁸

Dewey as a Revolutionary Experimental Naturalist

Evangelical thought, however, could not satisfy Dewey’s need for a different understanding of religion or religious sense as he passed through his college years and afterwards. Dewey did not stick any longer to this specific school of Protestant movement, as one can understand from his later work *A Common Faith* (1933-34), and his remarks on religious humanism (1933).⁴⁹ Dewey’s later reflections and experiences

⁴⁵ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁶ Sydney E. Ahlstorm, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press: 1972), p. 387.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ George M. Marsden, “Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 5 (1987): 190.

⁴⁹ For more on Dewey’s definitions and enunciations of religion, religious experience and humanist religion see Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 1-28; Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, pp. 7-11.

convinced him to challenge, change or improve his understanding of religion, religious feeling, values and valuation, morality and virtue, and to suggest new perspectives on all the above. I will explore this issue when it comes to Dewey's position(s) on religion.

His philosophy and theology are free from rigid Christian affiliations and dogmatism, while his concept of religion and religious thought summons us to "an immense release, a liberation."⁵⁰ He in fact attempted to develop the idea of reconciliation between theology and modernity. For the most part, he was successful in his efforts and contributed to the development of a new conceptualization of educational, philosophical and theological thought. As will be seen later, he taught that even to conceive of God, for instance, one does not have necessarily to adopt a transcendental divine perspective.⁵¹

It was due to the effect of Hegelianism and Darwinism that Dewey was inspired and encouraged to find an intellectual alternative to his evangelical faith, as well as to his conception of philosophy.⁵² Following Hegelians and neo-Hegelians, "Dewey, it may be claimed, wanted philosophers to engage in a reconstruction of their culture so that it might become rational and exhibit intelligence at work."⁵³ Dewey is told to be a revolutionary thinker, to the extent that "he and those influenced by him must become strangers to more traditional philosophers."⁵⁴

There were many sides to John Dewey's belief system and philosophy, and to their development and progression;⁵⁵ however, the above account of his life should throw sufficient light on the way his thoughts and teachings evolved.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," p. 19; Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 18.

⁵¹ Cf. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 42, 50, 53; George R. Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 219; Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, pp. 262-63.

⁵² For more on the impact of the above trends of thought on Dewey's experimental naturalist mind see Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, pp. 5-8.

⁵³ Morgenbesser, ed., *Dewey and His Critics*, p. ix.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ It is developmental and progressive in the sense that Dewey's thoughts do not seem to be constant. One can see changes and progress in his thought especially in his views on philosophical, theological themes.

⁵⁶ For more details and further information see: Dykhuizen's *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*. See also Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, pp. 3-24.

‘Allāma’s Biography (1903-1981)

Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā’ī, known as ‘Allama,⁵⁷

was born in 1903 in Tabriz,⁵⁸ East Āzarbāijān, a province in the west of Iran, to a Shi’i Muslim⁵⁹ family of clerical background. The title *Sayyid* in its Persian use suggests that he was originated from “a family of descendants of the Holy Prophet which for fourteen generations has produced outstanding Islamic scholars.”⁶⁰ His father, grandfather and most of his recent ancestors were among the highest-ranked clergy and religious scholars.⁶¹ Since ‘Allāma’s sixth ancestor was the head judge of Āzarbāijān, the descendants of this same judge, including ‘Allāma, were given the title *al-Qāḍi*, i.e., the Judge.⁶²

Ṭabāṭabā’ī is considered to have been one of the most distinguished exponents of Islamic thought, particularly in the field of Islamic philosophy and Quranic studies. He is referred to as “the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher.” He was the author of several works, among which the most important is his *al-Mizān* in twenty volumes. *Al-Mizān* is an exegesis of the Qur’ān by the Qur’ān itself, “which is rightly counted as the

⁵⁷ A title given to a Muslim scholar by his students meaning greatly learned.

⁵⁸ Tabriz, in 530 km. north-west of Tehran is “the second largest city of Iran and capital of ... East Azerbaijan Province.” The city has been “an important commercial centre with expanding industries. The principle product is carpet, others include soap, matches, paint, leather goods, cotton and wool textiles, and dried fruit and nuts.” It is said that the name was derived from tab-riz that means causing fever to flow, “reference to the many thermal springs in the area.” Tabriz also is known for its freedom-loving heroes who in times have defended the city and country against despotism and dictatorial enemies. As the centre of Iranian Nationalist movement in 1902-1906, ended in the establishment of the national parliament and constitutional government, the city “has continued to play an important part in Iranian politics.” See M. V. S. W. *Encyclopedia Britanica* 21 (1970): 597-98.

Tabriz has been a city of Muslim population since the early century of the emergence of Islam. In recent decades, and particularly in 1977-78, during the Islamic revolutionary movement of Iran, Tabriz has been among the active cities to assist the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. See Ghulamriḍa Gulī Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Janbakhsh: Farāzha’i az Zindagi-i ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī* [*Life-bestowing Drinks: ‘Allāma’s Biography*] (Qum: Intisharāt-i Ḥuzūr, 1996), pp. 50-51.

⁵⁹ Later on, I will explore the term Shi’i Muslim in some details.

⁶⁰ S. H. Naṣr’s preface to ‘Allāma’s *Shi’ite Islam*. As Dr. Naṣr indicates, the term *Sayyid* in Iran has implied exclusively the above sense. This is “while in the Arab world it is usually used as the equivalent of ‘gentleman’ or ‘Mr.’” See Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Shi’ite Islam*, p. 22, 28, foot. 21.

⁶¹ Gulī Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Janbakhsh*, pp. 48-49. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥusayni Ṭihirāni, *Mihr-i Ṭābān* [*Luminous Sun—‘Allāma’s Biography*] (Tehran: Bāqir al-‘Ulum Publication, 1982), pp. 21-22.

⁶² Ḥusayni Ṭihirāni, *Mihr-i Ṭābān*, pp. 21-22.

fundamental pillar of scholarly work containing the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader.”⁶³

‘Allāma’s Schooling and His Academic Life

Grade School Studies; Tabriz, 1912

‘Allāma lost his mother when he was five and his father when he was nine years old. Due to these two depressing events and some other disturbances he could not attend the school before he was nine years old.⁶⁴ However, from the earliest stages of their elementary schooling he and his brother were raised by foster-parents. The two brothers began to attend public school for a while, then left the school when a tutor began coming to their house, an arrangement that lasted for six years. It is possible that dissatisfaction with the public system motivated this change, for as ‘Allāma himself mentions in his autobiography, in those days there was “no set program for primary studies.”⁶⁵ It might also have been due to the fact that a private tutor and teacher could teach them more and in a better way than was possible in a school of their time. During his elementary years he learned the Qur’ān, which was a part of the traditional school curriculum of his time.⁶⁶ Sa’di’s *Gulistān* and *Bustān*⁶⁷ as well as poetry, literature, calligraphy, ethics, historical texts, mathematics, trigonometry and geometry were among the courses that ‘Allāma took in his elementary and secondary education. That ‘Allāma was able to pass and learn the

⁶³ See *al-Mizan: An exegesis of the Qur’ān*, trans. S. S. A. Rizvi (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Service, 1983), v. 1, p. xv, preface.

⁶⁴ Gulī Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, p. 52. Husayni Tihirāni, *Mihr-i Tabān*, p. 22.

⁶⁵ Tabātabā’i, *Islamic Teachings: an Overview*, translated by R. Campbell (New York: Mostazafan Foundation, 1989), p. 13.

⁶⁶ In educational system of Iran today, teaching the Qur’ān is scheduled in terms of different levels for all elementary, secondary and high school students. Those who are interested in further understanding of the Qur’ān can learn it outside the schools curriculum.

⁶⁷ Muṣṭafī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abdullāh Sa’di (d. 1292), “highly regarded in his native land,” was a great Persian poet and anecdotist of thirteenth century. His works *Gulistān* (Rose-Garden) and *Bustān* (Garden) are marvelous literary traces that contain a great number of poems and proses. They are still fresh and attractive and preach a good sense and nice morality to their readers. Parts of these books are included in several stages of Iranian schools’ literature. A literary man who was a high school teacher used to teach us *Gulistān* twice a week. Sa’di arranged his *Gulistān* and compiled it in eight parts with each part in specific topic including his discussion of love, youth, old-aged, the role of education, talking manners, etc. This book contains 180 fables and stories which were either narrated or invented by the poet. Each story contains a specific morality. See: Muṣṭafī ibn ‘Abdullāh Sa’di, *Gulistān-i Sa’di*, ed., Keyvan Furughi (Tehran: Jaras Publications, 1996), pp. 1-20. For more on Sa’di in English see Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 1284.

above courses in almost six years was an evident indication of his high intelligence and talent.⁶⁸

Arabic and Islamic Studies; Tabriz, 1918

He started his study of Arabic grammar and Islamic studies in 1918 when he was sixteen years old. For almost the next seven or eight years he studied elementary and advanced grammar, the elementary principles of Islamic law, jurisprudence, logic, theology and philosophy.⁶⁹

`Allama believed in invisible assistance (*imdādhā-yi ghaybi*) received from the Divine Being. He wrote,

Naturally, everyone has tasted the sweet and the bitter of life in terms of his own experience. I in my turn have found myself in varied environments faced with all kind of vicissitudes, especially since I have spent most of my life as an orphan or a foreigner, or far from friends, or without means, or in other difficulties. I always sensed, however, that an invisible hand has delivered me from every terrible precipice and that a mysterious influence has guided me through a thousand obstacles toward the goal.

Though I be a thorn, and though there be a flower to grace the meadow,

I grow by that Hand which nurtures me.⁷⁰

Such had been `Allāma's feeling since his early education. He maintained that at first when he began to study grammar and syntax, he had no enthusiasm for the courses so that he could not comprehend much of the course content. While suffering from this discouraging situation that led to his weakness in understanding and comprehension, he believed that divine help and favour reached him and transformed this situation, "so that," as he writes,

I grew excited over my studies and impatient to learn all there was to learn. ... I cut back food and sleep and life's other necessities to the bare minimum and devoted the rest of my time and resources to scholarship and research. I would often spend the night in study until sunrise (especially in spring and summer), and I would always research the next day's lesson in advance, making whatever exertions were called for to solve any problem that arose, so that, by class time, I would already

⁶⁸ Guli Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 52-53.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 53.

⁷⁰ Ṭabaṭabā'ī, *Islamic Teachings*, p.15. Guli Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, p. 55.

have a clear understanding of the professor's topic; I never brought any problem or mistakes before the professor.⁷¹

Higher Islamic Education; 1924, al-Najaf

In 1924 he left Tabriz for al-Najaf⁷² where he studied advanced law, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic, mathematics, geometry, algebra, ethics and mysticism for ten years. `Allāma was particularly fortunate in that he studied philosophy for six years under the tutelage of his master Sayyid Ḥusayn Bādkubī "the most renowned philosopher of the time." This master, recognizing `Allāma's inclination to philosophy, advised him to study mathematics in order to ground his enthusiasm in practice and reality. `Allāma therefore enrolled in the courses in mathematics, analytical reasoning, plane and solid geometry given by Sayyid Abu'l-Qāsim Khānsari, "a master mathematician."⁷³

One of the greatest educators and pedagogues of `Allāma in al-Najaf was his father's cousin Mīrzā `Alī Qāḍī Ṭabāṭabā'i Tabrizī (1868-1946). Mīrzā, a great jurist and mystic, was a very attractive, influential and effective figure of his time. `Allāma's spirituality, pietism and mysticism were deeply influenced by Mīrzā's teachings and instructions. In appreciation, `Allāma himself acknowledged the invaluable knowledge he had acquired from his master, to whom he owed a great deal. Whenever `Allāma talked of self-journey, spirituality and spiritual excellences, he talked of his master Mīrzā.⁷⁴

Going Back to Tabriz; 1934

Due to financial problems, he was obliged to move back to his birth town Tabriz in 1934. There, he had to work for more than ten years on the small farm which he had inherited from his father in order to earn a living and meet his expenses. Therefore, except for a very short space of time, he had to set aside his studies during this decade. `Allāma was not happy during this period of his life as is shown by the deep discontent he

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 15-16; Guli Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 53-55.

⁷² Al-Najaf is One of the four Shi'a Muslim holy cities in Iraq. Its holiness is due to two reasons: 1) because the shrine of Imam `Alī, the Commander of the Faithfuls and the first Imam of Shi'a Islam is located there, and 2) because this city has been one of the most significant centers of Shi'a clerical seminaries for almost one thousand years. There are a great number of Shi'i scholars and thinkers who were educated in al-Najaf.

⁷³ Ḥusaynī Ṭihirani, *Mīhr-i Ṭabān*, p. 14. Guli Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 55-56.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-15. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

expresses in his autobiography. He described this period as “years I must really count as a period of spiritual barrenness in my life, because I was held back from scholarship and reflection by the unavoidable involvements and social contacts entailed in making a living (by farming).”⁷⁵

Moving To Qum Islamic Seminary; 1945

In 1945, after ‘Allāma’s financial situation improved, he finally decided to move to Qum,⁷⁶ a very famous city of central Iran renowned as a center for Islamic learning.

‘Allāma’s scientific efforts began to flourish immediately after he moved to Qum, and initiated teaching Quranic studies and Islamic philosophy. He soon began to emerge as an internationally recognized scholar of Islamic studies. He stayed there for the rest of his life, and it was there that he died in November 1981. It was in Qum where ‘Allāma began to teach philosophy, Quranic studies and theology and where he succeeded in establishing an academic seminary for teaching and discussing a wide number of scientific themes and issues. The results of this seminary may be seen in the outstanding scholars who have graduated from there and the great number of books published. It was in Qum where ‘Allāma’s courses on the fundamental elements and components of Islamic philosophy resulted in the publication of two volume textbooks. Soon after their publication, the two volumes were included in the curriculum of Islamic seminaries and universities. They are still fresh and have been evaluated to remain as part of the philosophical courses’ requirements. Again, it was in Qum where ‘Allāma’s courses on the Quranic studies and commentary ended to the publication of his twenty-volume

⁷⁵ Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 15. Gulī Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 84-87.

⁷⁶ Qum, a noble city of central area Iran, in 140 Km. of the south of Tehran, has almost the same position as al-Najaf in the eyes of Shi’a Muslims. It has its reputation and fame first due to the holy shrine of Faṭīma Ma’ṣūma, a descendant daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad and one of the respected ladies of Islam, and second due to its most significant living and active seminary of Islamic learnings and sciences. Today, Qum has gained its priority over al-Najaf’s position. So far, since the foundation of Qum Seminary in early twentieth century, hundreds of great scholars have graduated from Qum Seminary. “The most important theological seminaries complex is in Qum. It dates back to the Safavid era but its present structure dates back 60[2] years when Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Abdol-Karim Ha’eri Yazdi [Shaykh ‘Abdul-Karim Ha’in Yazdi] established it.” See Board of Editors, *Iran: Year Book 1996* (Germany: BM Druck Service, Köln, Nov. 1995), p. 124.

Every year many Iranian and international students come to Qum and study at its Seminary. There is a well-founded school in the Seminary used to be at the service of international students of Islamic studies for more than ten years since the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Its service was replaced by another school after the number of the foreign students was increased. Interestingly enough, the construction of this school was planned and suggested by ‘Allāma soon after his arrival in Qum. Ḥusayni Ṭīhrāni, *Mihr-i Tabān*, p. 8.

exegesis of the Qur'an.⁷⁷ Today in Iran, many institutions, including academies, colleges, universities, publishing houses and institutes are named in honor of 'Allāma.

The Curriculum of the Islamic Seminaries

In concluding this survey of 'Allāma's education, it is worth noting that regardless of their differences, all Islamic seminaries⁷⁸ are more or less the same in terms of their style of teaching, academic curriculum, texts, contexts and financial resources.

#	Academic Levels and Grades	Curriculum	Academic Degree or Equivalent
1	Fundamental and Preliminary Studies Introductory Level [Muqaddamat]	Arabic Grammar: (<i>Ṣarf & Nahv</i>) I-III; Arabic Conversation: I-III; Arabic Literature: I-III; Quranic Sciences and Commentary: (<i>Tajwid & Tafṣīr</i>) I-III; Islamic Ethics (<i>Akhlaq</i>): I-III; Islamic Theology (<i>Kalām</i>): I-III; Jurisprudence (<i>Fiqh & Sharī'a</i>): I-IV; Traditions (<i>Hadīths & Sīra</i> of the Prophet and his Successors): I-III; Islamic History; Principles of Law (<i>Uṣūl al-Fiqh</i>): I; Classical Logic;	B.A.
2	Intermediate Level Preparation for Higher Education [Sath]	Jurisprudence; Principles of Jurisprudence and Islamic Law; Islamic Philosophy; Comparative Philosophy (Mostly Greek & Islamic); Islamic Theology; Quranic Studies and Commentary	M.A.
3	Advanced Level Higher Education [Kharij]	The major task at this level is to focus on: a) Advanced Jurisprudence; and b) Advanced Principles of Jurisprudence. this in order to educate experts in these two fields. However, there are incentives, facilities, courses and supports for those who are interested to continue in one or more of the other fields mentioned above. ⁷⁹	Ph.D.

A General View of the Academic Curriculum in Islamic Seminaries

⁷⁷ See Guli Zavarah, *Jur'ahā-yi Janbakhsh*, pp. 87, 91.

⁷⁸ Including those of Tabriz, al-Najaf and Qum, where 'Allāma used to study and teach.

⁷⁹ For more on clerical structure of the theological seminaries see Board of Editors, *Iran: YearBook 1996*, pp. 116-127. In recent years there have been some changes or modifications in the structure, format and contents of the academic curriculum of Islamic seminaries. Therefore, the above chart may not reflect the most recent version of the curriculum.

The table above demonstrates the basic levels and their corresponding programs in these seminaries. Except for certain recently founded institutes of Islamic studies such as “Imam Khomeyni Institute” and “Dār al-Shifā’ Teacher Training” of Qum Seminary,⁸⁰ the central Seminary itself does not provide students with an official degree like that in state universities. This is why in the chart above I devote a column to identify the equivalent degree of the seminaries’ curriculum.

The above-mentioned institutes and academies are subject to the authority and control of Qum Seminary. They have been founded in order to meet students’ needs and interests in several branches of the human sciences, in addition to their work on Islamic jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence or to reinforce their level of knowledge of these fields.⁸¹ The departmental curricula of these institutes frequently offer part time undergraduate or graduate programs which are not included in the seminaries’ main curriculum.⁸²

There are some remarkable aspects that set the Islamic seminaries apart from other academic and scholarly institutions. In order to become more familiar with ‘Allāma’s educational experience, let us take a general look at the character of the Islamic seminaries.

⁸⁰ At these particular institutes students undertake undergraduate or graduate courses and obtain their M.A. or Ph.D. in theology, philosophy, etc.

⁸¹ I restrict myself to the description of the Islamic seminaries’ curriculum because I think there are many who know little if any about this agenda. It seems unnecessary to illustrate and categorize the educational and instructional curriculum of state schools, academies and universities or to arrange its academic levels and degrees since it is more or less evident for my readers.

⁸² “Imam Khomeini [Khomeyni] Education and Research Institute” in the Seminary of Qum is an example.

Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute was established according to the decree issued by the grand leader of the Islamic Revolution, the late Imam Khomeini. The institute, which is under the patronage of the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, and the direction of the eminent scholar, Misbah Yazdi, aims to train committed intellectuals to research, train, expose and systematize the Islamic sciences.

The Institute I assume is a unique or at least one of the unique in its kind, where one can find a bridge between Islamic and Western intellectual dialogues as well as, interfaith discussions. The institute publishes a quarterly scholarly Journal (*Ma’rifat*) in Quranic studies and human sciences. The Institute’s students pursue studies in the Qur’an and in the human sciences such as philosophy and theology, law and politics, economy, psychology, education, management and history (Western & Islamic). Due to the emphasis on comparative studies, students are expected to take courses in English or other Western languages. For details see the Institute’s web site at location: <http://www.qabas.net>.

1) Due to the emphasis on logic and philosophy, an Islamic seminary provides a valuable foundation for its students, preparing them for the intricacies of academic dialogues and scholarly debates.

2) Due to its affiliation to Islam and its financial independence from states and governments,⁸³ an Islamic seminary has been always prepared to support the Islamic cause and stand against those who would deny Muslims' rights and their law. Their involvement in this cause is proven by the careers of Muslim religious-political leaders who have been educated in these seminaries. In the last three decades, Iran has witnessed to the leadership of the Late Imam Khomeyni (1902-1989) who was succeeded by his pupil and colleague Āyatullāh Khāmīnī (1939-). Both were in great measure educated at the same Islamic seminary of Qum, and occupied highly-ranked clerical positions before taking up the Islamic Iranian leadership.

3) Due to its focus on ethics and morality in its curriculum, the seminary encourages humility, politeness, a positive mentality and a warm and emotional relationship between teacher and pupils. In seminaries, the teacher-pupil relationship does not restrict itself to scholastic matters. It rather extends itself to a sympathetic and emotional friendship. Teachers are humble and open-minded towards their students and the students are polite and respectful to their teachers. A good example was 'Allāma himself both as a student and as a teacher.⁸⁴ 'Allāma's former student Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī draws "a picture of an extremely polite and meticulously observant man." In the latter's words,

He was so humble, polite, and observant of manners to the utmost degree. ... For close to forty years, no one has ever seen him lay back on a pillow or cushion [in front of his guests]. He would always, when he had guests, sit a bit away from the wall, lower [in his position] to the visiting guest. I was his student and used to go to his house frequently, I wished, out of politeness, to sit lower to him. But it was

⁸³ Religious taxes are the major or perhaps "the only crucial source of financial support for sustaining the clerical establishment." As 'Allāma's pupil Muṭahhari explained, "[d]evote believers calculated their own religious taxes and delivered them to the religious authority of their choice." These taxes which were "given to religious authorities without the slightest hint of pressure or demand ... constituted the principle source of sustaining the Shi'i [Shi'i] clerical establishment." Hamid Dabashi, *The Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1993), p. 169.

⁸⁴ Cf. Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī, *Mīhr-i Ṭābān*, pp. 15-16.

impossible. He would stand up and say, "Well, then, I will have to sit in the threshold of the door, or go and sit outside the room!"⁸⁵

Today, 'Allāma, is seen in the eyes of both Muslim and non-Muslim philosophers and thinkers as having been one of the most distinguished and expert philosophers in the history of the resurgence of Islamic thought. He was "one of the foremost masters of the traditional and religious sciences and Islamic philosophy"⁸⁶ who contributed greatly to Islamic resurgence, as well as to the awareness of the younger generation of Muslims. His formulations helped students of philosophy equip themselves with strong arguments by means of which they might discover the logical answers for many unsolved problems.⁸⁷ The aforementioned Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī maintains that 'Allāma was renowned among American thinkers thirty years before Iranian seminaries even recognized him. He was invited to teach Eastern philosophy in American universities but he did not accept and preferred to stay in Qum and continue with his courses on philosophy at Qum Seminary.⁸⁸

'Allāma's Belief System

'Allāma, in his belief system, was a Shī'ī Muslim thinker whose faith and religious doctrines sided with the Shi'ite Islam. In the interests of accuracy, a certain amount of terminology derived from this set of doctrines will be employed in the thesis. 'Allāma himself wrote a book on the Shi'ite and Shi'ism due to the idea proposed in 1963 by Professor K. Morgan of Colgate University and Professor S. H. Nasr. As Nasr mentions, "the aim of Professor Morgan was to have a description of Shi'ism by one of the respected traditional Shi'ite scholars, the ulama, ..."⁸⁹ Because of the ambiguity of this terminology it might be appropriate to focus for a moment on the Shi'ite Islam in order to familiarize ourselves to some extent with an important aspect of 'Allāma's thought.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 51, quoted and translated into English by Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 301.

⁸⁶ Ṭabaṭabā'ī, *Muhammad in the Mirror of Islam*, trans. S. H. Nasr (Qum: Darut Tablighi Islami [Dar al-Tabligh al-Islami] Press, ?), p. 1, editor's note. For a short biography of 'Allāma in English, see Nasr's preface to 'Allāma's *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 22-26.

⁸⁷ Cf. Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī, *Mīhr-i Ṭabān*, pp. 28, 61-62.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 28. The biographer did not mention the name of the American university(ies) that invited 'Allāma to teach Eastern philosophy.

⁸⁹ See Nasr's preface to 'Allāma's *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 17-19.

There are two major schools in the Muslim community: the Sunnite and the Shi'ite. Each has its own sub-divisions and sub-sects. One of the most renowned sects of the Shi'i school of thought, to which 'Allāma belongs, is that of the Twelvers. They are called Twelvers due to their belief in the twelve Imams who came after the Prophet Muḥammad and took their appointed positions as his divine successors. "Imam or leader," as 'Allāma indicates, "is the title given to a person who takes the lead in a community in a particular social movement or political ideology or scientific or religious form of thought."⁹⁰ The Shi'ite Twelvers constitute the majority faith in present-day Iran. The Sunni population in Iran lives mostly in the border regions of the country. The succession to the Prophet according to the Shi'a is considered "to be the special right of the family of the Prophet"⁹¹ In fact, the Shi'ite believers are those "who in the field of the Islamic sciences and culture follow the school of the Household of the Prophet."⁹² According to the Sunnites, there were only four caliphs who were successors of the Prophet Muḥammad, holding office from 632, the date of the Prophet's death, to 661, the date of the death of the fourth caliph 'Alī, the Prophet's cousin and his daughter's husband. 'Alī was at the same time the first of the twelve Imams believed by the Shi'ites to be of the Household of the Prophet.⁹³ These twelve Imams, as 'Allāma remarks, in taking the position of Muslim leadership, constituted the office of Imamate in the Shi'i sense.

The position of leadership in religious and civil matters in the Islamic society is known as the Imamate, and its holder is known as the Imam. It is the belief of Shi'i Muslims that God Most High must have designated an Imam for the people after the death of the ... Messenger ... to uphold the culture and laws of the religion and to guide people on the way of truth.⁹⁴

'Allāma then maintains that according to an account narrated from the Prophet, "[t]he Imams are twelve in number" whose names were listed by the Prophet one after another.⁹⁵

There are a couple of similarities and yet a number of differences between the two Muslim sects. They believe in the same God (Allah), the same Prophet and the same

⁹⁰ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, p. 173.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 113-115.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111. For more on the knowledge of the Imam (Imamology) see Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 173-189.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Qur'an, and share their faith in some of the main pillars of Islam. However, they think differently in terms of certain juridical and theological issues, the most distinct of which is the doctrine of the Imamate. Sunnites reject the latter, focusing instead on the doctrine of the caliphate. For Shi'ites, the Imamate constitutes "one of the fundamentals of Islam" According to the Shi'a, the office of the Imamate belongs to the members of the Household of the Prophet who like the Prophet are infallible and guided by God. They "must be free of sin and error. Otherwise, the religious summons would be defective, and divine guidance would lose its effect."⁹⁶

From the Shi'i standpoint, the Imams of the Shi'a, as the original and authentic commentators and interpreters on revelation (the Qur'an) and the Prophetic traditions, were appointed to fulfill the responsibility of transforming and teaching Allah's commands and religious duties to the Muslim community. The office of the Imamate commenced with Imam 'Ali (601-661) and will terminate with the Twelfth Imam "the Promised Mahdi"⁹⁷ (b. 870-"still alive, but in occultation."). The Shi'a believe "that the prophet publicly announced them by name; and that each of them announced his successor."⁹⁸ According to the writings of both sects, a great number of the people of tradition

narrated from the Prophet concerning the reappearance, at the end of time, of the Promised Mahdi [the Guided One], who is a descendant of his daughter Fa'imah, and how he will spread justice and equity throughout the world, after it has been overcome by injustice and oppression.⁹⁹

This is the Promised Mahdi, the "great reformer" and savior of humankind. Both Muslim sects, including the Sunnites "have accepted this good tiding, but with different interpretations."¹⁰⁰ The Mahdi, as the Messiah, is expected "to bring salvation to the world."¹⁰¹ The Shi'a believe that this Mahdi, whose name is Muḥammad, is definitely the son of the eleventh Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askari (846-873), born in 870 and yet still alive.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 139.

⁹⁸ Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar, *The Faith of Shi'a Islam* (Iran: Qum: Ansariyan [Anṣāriyan] Publications, 1989), p. 39-40. For more details on the Shi'ite see 'Allāma, *Shi'ite Islam*. For a brief look on Shi'ism see Naṣr's preface to 'Allāma's *Shi'ite*, pp. 3-16..

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

On the basis of such a belief, Muḥammad al-Mahdī is the Imam of the present age, yet he is absent in divine occultation, and is expected to reappear. `Allāma argues “that words and deeds of the” Imams “are as authoritative as” those of the Prophet.¹⁰²

It was in the earlier centuries (7th-8th AD) of Islam that the religion was first warmly welcomed by Iranians. Since then the latter coming into contact with Arab Muslims, and becoming acquainted with the Prophet, his teachings and his Household, have come to love them and to follow their faith and its teachings. Even before then, in fact during the lifetime of the Prophet, many Iranians dwelling in Yaman and Baḥrayn showed their sympathy and inclination towards Islam and converted to this religion. One of the first Iranian converts was Salmān the Persian, whose name immediately stood up among the highly-ranked companions of the Prophet, to the extent that the Prophet himself said of him that “Salmān is one of us, as one of the members of the Household.”¹⁰³ This has been regarded as the point of departure for Shi`ism of Iran.<sup>104</sup> Today, the Islamic cultural heritage of Iran bears witness to an ample literature written by scholars of both the Sunnite and Shi`ite schools, from the very emergence of Islam in Iran.¹⁰⁵

Dissimilar but Parallel Contexts

We have seen how different were Dewey's and `Allāma's social contexts and educational milieus. How, then, can one justify comparing them to one another or establish an idea of confrontation or perhaps reconciliation of their respective Western and Islamic philosophical and educational thoughts and doctrines?

To provide a clear answer, it seems important to avoid restricting myself only to their distinct and particular positions on education. In the introductory part of the thesis, I indicated those areas and criteria according to which these two thinkers may be compared.

¹⁰² Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 108. For further information and for more on the doctrine of Imamate, Imams and their attributes, proofs of the Imamate and need for the Imam, see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 111-141; Muẓaffar, *Shi'a Islam*, pp. 31-42.

¹⁰³ Muṭahhari, *Khadamāt-i Mutaqābil-i Islām va Iran* [Exchanged Cooperations between Islam and Iran] (Tehran: Ofset Publication, 1981), v. 1, pp. 58-61, 76, 98. For additional information about the tradition see: Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 22, pp. 331, 348, 349 & 373.

¹⁰⁴ The official religion of ancient Iran (Persia) before Islam was Zoroastrianism. See Muṭahhari, *Khadamat*, v. 1, pp. 139, 145; Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 1602, s.v. **ZOROSTER**.

Now, I add this point, that the results of the different styles and curricula in which they were educated, show an outstanding parameter for the present comparative studies. One may even find basic points in the contexts of their respective educations that offer grounds for comparison. For instance, as regards their childhood, we have seen how both Dewey and 'Allāma were fostered and trained in a religious atmosphere. Dewey's mother never wanted her son to leave Christian teachings behind him. Instead she strove to encourage him and create a constant link between him and the Protestant church. With respect to 'Allāma, we have seen that not only were his parents and guardians practicing Muslims but that he himself was also zealous in practicing what he believed to be a divine faith. This is one of the primary points upon which I may compare their two lives, for while Dewey finally abandoned almost the entire Christian faith he had learned during his childhood and adolescence, 'Allāma was trained in a religious environment and kept steadfastly following and practicing Islam more firmly and intimately until his death. This is not to say that Dewey was against religion in its general conceptualization; nevertheless, it does indicate that he was critical of institutional religion or of what he was taught by the church to be religious doctrine and Christian faith.¹⁰⁶

I will explain later both Dewey's and 'Allāma's positions on religion and religious experience as well as numbers of their views on philosophical and educational thought and teachings. Both agreed upon the fact that religion is an intrinsic need of the human soul. However, when it comes to the interpretation of this innate need, they differ widely.¹⁰⁷ Or, for instance, both believe in self-realization as one of the chief ends of education, yet the approaches they take and the assumptions or premises they construct are not of the same sort. Again, both link their conceptualization of self-realization to transcendentalism but with the difference that one promotes the idea of natural transcendentalism, whereas the other supports the principle of divine

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., v. 2, pp. 18-19. For more on Shi'ism in English, see Dwight M. Donaldson, D.D., *The Shi'ite Religion: A History of Islam in Persia and Irak* (London: Luzac & Company, 1933).

¹⁰⁶ To a large extent, as was mentioned earlier, neo-Hegelian logic and philosophy, as well as the strong wave of Darwinism contributed to Dewey's abandonment of his early religious ideology. Cf. Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 1-28; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 19-20.

transcendentalism.¹⁰⁸ This is but one example of how the two thinkers may be viewed in a comparative study.

The Works of Dewey and 'Allāma and Their Impact

Another aspect of Dewey's and 'Allāma's biographies that makes a comparison of them a feasible task is to be found in their academic works and teachings, both as philosophers and educators. Most of their works are presented and written in answer to problematic questions occupying the minds of students of philosophy and education as well as in order to quench the thirsty minds of youth in general. Dewey and 'Allāma were never inclined to keep following the current traditions of the schools, universities and/or seminaries of their respective ages.

Dewey wrote to rid schools of their traditional styles of educating children; he also tried to end the emphasis therein in the traditional teachings of institutional religion of his time. Conventional creeds and rituals were inadequate "in relation to his own personal experience, and to the needs of others who had suffered some poignant tragedy...." This in turn led him "to abandon institutional religion."¹⁰⁹ His writings and comments on the educational theories and systems of his age stressed the need for improvement of the teacher-pupil relationship and the elimination of "dualism traditionally between life in the school and life outside the school."¹¹⁰ His *Applied Psychology* offered a scientific basis for the thesis that education should be based on the interests, activities, and ideas of the children taught.¹¹¹

'Allāma, in his turn, used to teach philosophy not for its own sake but to help students correct and improve their minds and become familiar or better to rediscover Islamic philosophy and find reliable answers to the philosophical or theological problems they might face.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Dewey, "Self-Realization" *The Early Works*, v. 4, pp. 42-53; Ṭabāṭaba'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 150-154, 175-176; Ṭabāṭaba'i, "al-Insān fi al-Dunyā," pp. 189-202. The discussion will be explored in the following chapters.

¹⁰⁹ Sidney Hook, *John Dewey; an Intellectual Portrait* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 12.

¹¹⁰ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 96. Dewey, *School and Society*, pp. 88-90.

¹¹¹ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, p. 8.

¹¹² Cf. Ḥusayni Ṭihirāni, *Mihr-i Ṭabān*, p. 62. Gulī Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jāmbakhsh*, pp. 89-95.

`Allāma's teachings, writings and presentations for their own part contributed to the development and improvement of the seminaries' curriculum. Before he began to establish his courses on philosophy and to present philosophical lectures, philosophy even in its Islamic sense used to be taught in private and not as a part of the seminaries' curriculum. The dominant subjects taught in the seminaries of `Allāma's time were Islamic tradition, theology, history, Quranic studies and, especially, Islamic jurisprudence and its principles. At that time, due to a misconception of philosophy and philosophical discussion, it did not enjoy a good reputation or any validity in the eyes of the majority of scholars and students. Philosophy in their view was a product of pre-Islamic Greek thought and could not stand as a means of evaluating Islamic thought. Therefore, it seemed a danger to Islam with more negative effects than beneficial or positive ones. They used to think that for students of Islamic teachings the best course was to concentrate on the Qur'ān and Prophetic traditions or those traditions that have come down from the Prophet's successors. They feared that philosophy might distort or destroy the principles and pillars of Islam and therefore must not be included in seminaries' curriculum. This explains why philosophy was taught in private, and why philosophers were usually the targets of dogmatist Muslims of their times.¹¹³

In such an atmosphere `Allāma dared to start offering his modest course on philosophy, later on developing it into philosophical comparative studies. His attempt was a great blessing for the seminaries, for it changed their understanding of philosophy and resulted in the:

- devotion of more attention to rational methodology.
- development of public philosophical seminars.
- training of philosophers and ideologues.
- production of a large number of scholarly philosophical works.
- attraction of thousands of seminary students to philosophy.
- construction of a better foundation and groundwork for scientific challenges and debates.
- safeguarding of Islamic philosophy.¹¹⁴

`Allāma's efforts did lead to the resurgence of Islamic philosophy in particular and philosophical inquiries and discussions in general. It was indeed a renaissance of

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 60-62. Ibid., pp. 93-94.

¹¹⁴ For more on `Allāma's approach to philosophy see Ḥusayni Ṭīhrāni, *Mīhr-i Ṭabān*, pp. 26-34.

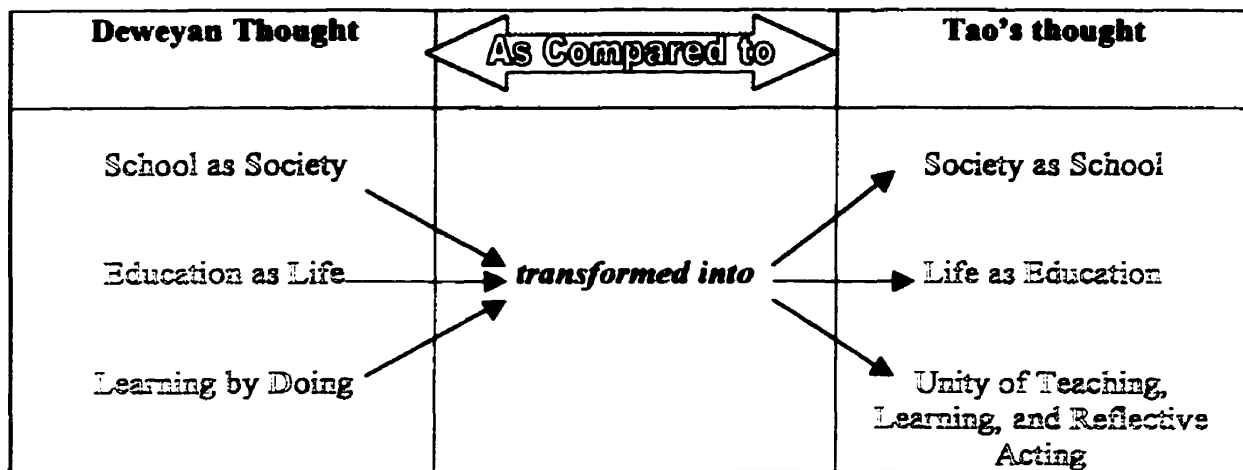
philosophy in view of the fact that the Islamic seminaries of Iran and particularly those of Isfahan had already known a great number of learned philosophers since the time of Ibn Sinā (980-1037), among them Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631), Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (1571-1640), and Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (1596-1681). The latter three were all educated in Isfahan, and their names are listed among the philosophers of the School of Isfahan.¹¹⁵ This to me means that philosophy was not foreign to the curriculum of the seminaries though it was often taught in private.

Looking at Dewey's and ṬAllāma's lives from another angle, one should not disregard the importance of the role of those who were educated under their supervision and direction. Their past students and pupils, who were/are distinguished philosophers and educators in their own regard, represent an invaluable cultural and scholarly heritage left to the next generation. To me, this can be seen as part of Dewey's and ṬAllāma's scholarly contributions, and seems as lasting as their own written works. It is most probably due to the great variety of their philosophical thinking as well as to their charismatic and effective styles and contexts of their teachings.

As regards the case of Dewey's pupils, one may think of those educators, philosophers or psychologists who in Dewey's time or later were to a large extent influenced by his teachings or by the train of his thought. For instance, Tao Xingzhi, "a most prominent figure in Chinese history of education" and "a former student of John Dewey at Columbia University" was among those who "boldly experimented with Dewey's philosophy in Chinese teacher education." On the basis of educational and philosophical principles that he originally borrowed from his master Dewey, "Tao established the famous Morning Village Normal School" that "served as both a base for preparing rural teachers and a center for village renewal." As Zhixin Su has elaborated, "Tao's efforts represented the most thorough and creative implementation of the Dewey philosophy in Chinese teacher education."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ As professor Henry Corbin explained, during the reign of Shāh ṬAbbas I (1587-1629), Isfahān became the capital of the Islamic arts and sciences and the center of spiritual culture in Iran." At that time those thinkers philosophers "who began to proliferate in Iran ... should be grouped under the heading of 'School of Isfahan'." The greatest name of the School of Isfahan was Mīr Dāmād, "the 'teacher of thinking' to several generations of Shiite philosophers." See Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (London: The Institute of Islamic Studies, 1991), pp. 338-39.

¹¹⁶ Zhixin Su, "Teaching, Learning, and Reflective Acting: A Dewey Experiment in Chinese Teacher Education," *Teachers College Record* 98: 1(Fall 1996): 126.



Tao's Alternatives to Deweyan Principles

The above diagram illustrates some of the Deweyan principles which were transformed by Tao into his own. The diagram, at the same time, indicates to what extent and how the latter was influenced by Dewey's philosophy and education.¹¹⁷

Another example is Abraham Maslow,¹¹⁸ the world-renowned American existentialist who was viewed as the primary representative of humanistic psychology. Maslow was to great extent influenced by Dewey's philosophical, theological and educational thought. In his humanistic perspective on religion and psychology, Maslow was strongly inspired by William James as well as John Dewey. The former influenced him through his lectures under the title *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and the latter through his *A Common Faith*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Abraham Maslow, an American existentialist, humanist, philosopher and psychologist is generally regarded as one of the eight pioneers of religious psychology. The other seven are William James, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Gordon Allport, Alan Watts, Erich Fromm, Viktor Frankl. Maslow is the primary representative of humanistic or "Third Force" psychology, and has written many books and articles, among them: *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*; *Dominance, Self-Esteem, Self-Actualization*; *Toward a Psychology of Being*; and *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*.

See: Abraham Maslow, *Religions, Values and Peak-Experiences* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), p. i; Andrew Reid Fuller, *Psychology and Religion: Eight Points of View* (US: Lanham, MD, 1994) – Peruse, PsychoInfo Database, religious psychology, content presentation; Orlo Strunk, "Humanistic Religious Psychology: A New Chapter in the Psychology of Religion," *Journal of Postural Care* 24: 2 (1970): 90-97 – Peruse, PsychoInfo Database, 1971; Seyed Ahmad Rahnamaci, [S. Ahmad Rahnama'i] *The Concept of Religion and Religious Experience: Spiritual Growth and Self-Realization as Depicted in the Works of William James, Rudolf Otto, and Abraham Maslow*, comprehensive exam-paper 1, (Montreal: McGill University, Department of Culture and Values in Education, March 1997), pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁹ Maslow, *Religions*, p. vi.

Furthermore, Maslow, himself aware of such an influence, indicates that in his interpretation of religion he has examined religious experiences as psychologist like James, Dewey, and Fromm have done.¹²⁰ The latter three, in Maslow's perspective "examined religious experiences ... descriptively, empirically, objectively, humanistically, in the effort to be as truthful as possible."¹²¹

The Iranian educator and educational psychologist 'Ali Shari'atmadari¹²² is another scholar who has been influenced in part by Dewey's educational theories, especially the latter's doctrines of philosophy of education and his position on the role of experience and democracy in education. Shari'atmadari's *Society and Education*, for example, shows his positive regard for and reliance on John Dewey. He occasionally refers to the latter as a high-ranking philosopher and educator. In his preface to *Society and Education*, Shari'atmadari, elaborating on why he quotes or refers to Dewey, maintains that, 1) Dewey presented original and fundamental thoughts and opinions on research, scientific methodology, democracy and education, and 2) Dewey was a revolutionary thinker who was even invited by Stalin to reform, improve and organize Russia's educational system. Dewey at first accepted Stalin's invitation, but later on the latter's dictatorial actions dismayed him, with the result that he was not very optimistic about Russia's future. Stalin therefore forced Russia's press to write criticism of Dewey because of his opposition to Stalin's conduct.¹²³

Shari'atmadari is, however, an independent Muslim thinker in terms of his concept of religion, religious education and religious experience. His conceptualization of

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. i & vi.

¹²¹ See Maslow's preface to his *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964), p. xi. See S. Ahmad Rahnamaei [Ahmad Rahnama'i], *The Concept of Religion and Religious Experience*, pp. 13-14.

¹²² Dr. 'Ali Shari'atmadari is a professor of education in general and of philosophy of education in particular at Tehran University. He has been appointed as a member of *Cultural Revolution Consultation* whose major aim is to improve, elevate and Islamize educational system of Iran. He was graduated from the American Tennessee University. Dr. Shari'atmadari has published several books and articles among them: *The Principles of Education; Educational Psychology; The Philosophy of Education; Education from an Islamic Point of View; Society and Education* (all in Persian); some articles on education in English; also a translation of Dewey's *Logic* in Persian.

¹²³ Ali Shari'atmadari, *Jami'ah va Ta'lim va Tarbiyat* [Society and Education] (Tehran: Intisharat-i Amir Kabir, 1994), the author's preface, pp. ha'-waw [h-w] and pp. 120, 122.

these subject-issues, as shown in his works, for the most part based on his Islamic belief system and not on Deweyan philosophy.¹²⁴

When it comes to 'Allāma and his efforts on training and educating scholars, one can list a number of scholars and thinkers who attended his courses on philosophy. Some of his students used to participate in his scholarly sessions and discussions for a period of about thirty years. 'Allāma, except for temporary and part time summer programs, never left Qum Seminary to teach elsewhere since he regarded Qum as an appropriate, if not an ideal place for teaching philosophy. Unlike Dewey, therefore he didn't move from place to place or from one teaching environment to another. Soon after he began to teach, his expertise in and deep knowledge of philosophy, his insightful doctrines, his intelligence, his decency and his morality attracted hundreds of students of philosophy and Islamic education to his classroom.¹²⁵ After a period of time, the results of his teaching could be seen in the emergence of many scholars, philosophers and educators, among them philosophers such as Murtaḍā Muṭahhari, Jawādī Āmulī, Ḥasan-Zādah Āmulī and Miṣbāḥ Yazdī,¹²⁶ all of whom were students and companions of 'Allāma. The latter four enjoy today a great reputation and respect due to their long companionship with 'Allāma, as well as to their scholarship and the great number of philosophical and educational works they have produced so far.

Muṭahhari was perhaps the most admired philosopher and educator of the present century of Iran. He was a professor of philosophy in both Tehran University and Qum Seminary. He began to take part in 'Allāma's seminar on philosophy in 1952. As a distinguished student and companion of 'Allāma, he used to work with the latter on a comparative study of Islamic and materialist philosophies. The result of this study was a

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 98-110, 183-190.

¹²⁵ Ḥusaynī Ṭihirānī, *Mihr-i Tabān*, pp. 50-51. See also Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 301. Dabashi remarks that 'Allāma's "students draw a picture of an extremely polite and meticulously observant man." Ibid.

¹²⁶ I have been Ayatullāh Miṣbāḥ's student for a couple of years since 1980. He is a renowned Muslim philosopher and educator, attended 'Allāma's courses on philosophy for a long time and was among the latter's distinct students and companions. Among Miṣbāḥ's scholarly works are his book on the conception and method of self-realization (*Khud Shināsi*), his commentary and footnotes on 'Allāma's philosophy (*Ta'liqah 'alā Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*), as well as his ample works on Quranic and Islamic teachings, ethics, mysticism and philosophical studies. The latter won the yearly award of 1984(5) on philosophy soon after its publication. Professor Miṣbāḥ has been invited to many international conferences, institutes and academies and has given many philosophical, ethical and theological lectures and presentations. On his way to some conferences held in North America, he has visited McGill University several times.

remarkable five-volume work known as *Uṣūl-i Falsafah va Ravish-i Ri'ālism* [The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism]. Through this work both 'Allāma and Muṭahhari show, by means of philosophical methodology, the weakness and baselessness of the principles and elements of materialism. I think the survival of Islamic philosophy as opposed to materialist and Marxist philosophy is to a large extent due to the efforts made at a very crucial time by 'Allāma and his pupil and companion Muṭahhari. Their individual and collaborative efforts resulted in the publication of several works including the above-mentioned comparative work *The Principles*.¹²⁷ The latter work, however, because of its deeply philosophical language is very difficult to comprehend and is little read by anyone other than seminary students of philosophy for, as Dabashi puts it, "as an intellectual exercise, it had its inherent limitations in reaching a wide audience."¹²⁸ At any rate, Muṭahhari's extensive explanations, commentaries and footnotes compensated, to a large degree, for the "limitations of Tabataba'i's philosophical discourse."¹²⁹

The Western philosopher Henry Corbin (d. 1978), a renowned professor of Islamic Thought at Sorbonne University, had great respect for 'Allāma. Corbin visited 'Allāma in Tehran several times between the years 1958 and 1978, and discussed with him Islamic beliefs in general and Shī'i thought in particular. Corbin was warmly welcomed by 'Allāma, and the latter took great pains to explain his understanding of Islamic thought and Shi'ite theology. It was most likely due to 'Allāma's efforts that Corbin became so familiar with this field that he ushered in a new era in the teaching of

¹²⁷ Muṭahhari was assassinated in 1979 by a terrorist under the direction of a quasi-Marxist movement few months after the victory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On this regretful occasion, Imam Khomeyni, the late leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that he lost his dear son, a part of his self who was a great thinker, "philosopher, and top class Islamic jurisprudence." The Imam admired Muṭahhari as "a rare example of Islamic theologian" and as an "expert of different Islamic affairs. ..." See *Yād-nāmah-i Ustād Muṭahharī, Wizhīh Nāmah-yi Ustād Murtaḍā Muṭahharī* [M. Muṭahharī, Commemoration Volume], by the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada, (USA: Solon, Ohio, 1980), pp. 2-3, 16, 20, 154-163.

Muṭahhari left behind more than forty books and articles, few of which are translated into English, Arabic, French and Urdu. *Divine Justice: An Introduction to the Monotheistic World-View*, (7 vols. 1. *Human Beings and Faith* 2. *Monotheistic World View* 3. *Revelation and Prophethood* 4. *Human Beings in the Qur'an* 5. *Eternal Life* 6. *Society and History* 7. *Imamate and Leadership*); *Human Beings and Destiny: Woman's Rights in Islam; Islamic Movements in Twentieth Century; The Story of the Righteous Figures* (all in Persian) are among Muṭahhari's scholarly works. His *Story of the Righteous (Dāstān-i Rāstān)* won the UNESCO reward in 1965. Ibid., section on Muṭahhari's biography authored by his Son Mujtabā, pp. 19-20.

¹²⁸ Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 315.

Islamic philosophy and mysticism in his own and in other western universities. The results of their scholarly dialogue and collaboration were compiled in two volumes by 'Allāma, published in four languages: Persian, Arabic, French and English, providing an overview of the thought and teachings of the Shi'ite Islam.¹³⁰ Once exposed to the teachings of 'Allāma, Corbin found him to be a great thinker and spokesman of Shi'i Islam. On the other hand, 'Allāma expressed a positive regard and particular respect for Corbin stating that the latter was "a fair and honest man."¹³¹ Corbin, who devoted much of his career to an attempt at understanding Shi'ism, asserted that "Shi'ism is the only religion among all other world religions which is an active and alive faith. All other religions without exception, have passed their time and have no active and progressive condition."¹³² This, according to Corbin is due to the Shi'i doctrine of the living Imam, to its belief in "the Imam of the Age, the Promised Mahdi" who keeps supervising and safeguarding Shi'ism and guiding the faith from behind the curtain of occultation.¹³³ Corbin lectured extensively in Western universities in order to introduce Shi'i thought and philosophy to scholars of Islamic studies.¹³⁴

It is hoped that Dewey's and 'Allāma's writings will also come to open doors towards further investigation and provide an environment for more convenient intellectual dialogue. Today, much attention is being given to their insightful doctrines. Also, a great deal of research, commentary, and scholarly publication have appeared that examine their approaches and perspectives. Any single work about them or any references to them mirror the importance, weight and value of their writings.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Husayni Tihirani, *Mihr-i Tabān*, p. 49.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 47.

¹³² Ibid. translated and quoted by Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 316.

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 46-47; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 139-140. There are some traditions speaking about the relationship between the Christ and the Mahdi. These traditions refer to them as two great saviors who will join each other in order to establish justice. As an example found in Islamic tradition, the Prophet said: "One of my descendants is the Mahdi. When he appears, Jesus the son of Mary, will descend to him in order to aid him, then Jesus will pray behind him." See: Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 14, tradition 11, p. 349. The author narrated that all of the angels, who were sent to rise up and follow Jesus in his ascension to the heaven, will be sent to the Mahdi at the time of his reappearance. Ibid., p. 339.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 46-47. At the end of thesis I will include an appendix indicating the spiritual message of Shi'ism according to 'Allāma's doctrine. This message constitutes part of Allāma's belief and value-systems. For further information see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 215-17.

Since the task of recording their publications has already been accomplished by others, there is no need to repeat what has already been done so satisfactorily.¹³⁵ I won't therefore engage myself in providing a list of their respective works. Here I merely look at part of the themes and issues touched upon by both Dewey and 'Allāma in order to see how they parallel one another.

Common Domains and Dominant Themes

Many interesting and worthwhile themes are of the focus of both Dewey and 'Allāma. In discussing, evaluating and criticizing controversial philosophical themes, both figures contributed a great deal to the development of scholarly and cultural inquiry and established a reputation for themselves in the field.

The following table is an overview of the subjects and inquiries touched upon by both Dewey and 'Allāma. Naturally, the list below is neither comprehensive nor all-inclusive of the themes that came into the mind of our two scholars. It is instead a table illustrating a few of the major subject areas of their research. Interestingly enough, because of their philosophical-oriented conceptualizations, all topics above can logically be categorized in one way or another under philosophy as an overall category.

¹³⁵ For more on Dewey's works see Dykhizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*; Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*. The Center for Dewey Studies computerized Dewey's works. Here is more details on the Center.

The Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale was established in 1961 as the 'Dewey Project.' In the course of collecting and editing Dewey's works, the Center amassed a wealth of source materials for the study of American's quintessential philosopher-educator, John Dewey. By virtue of its publications and research, the Center has become the international focal point for research on Dewey's life and work, and its location at the University makes it possible for visitors to take advantage of the resources and professional expertise of the faculty and staff of the Department of Philosophy, the College of Education, Special Collections in Morris Library, and the Southern Illinois University Press."

See <http://www.siu.edu/~deweyctr/> p. 52, updated 03/12/97. The Center provided a long list of Dewey's works dividing in terms of his early, middle and late works published by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in America from 1882 to 1953. The list includes five volumes as *The Early Works 1882-1898*, fifteen volumes as *The Middle Works 1899-1924* and seventeen volumes as *The Later Works of John Dewey, 1925-1953*.

See <http://www.siu.edu/~deweyctr/workcon.html>, pp. 9-48.

For more on 'Allāma's works see: 'Allāma, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 17-26; Ḥusaynī Ṭihirānī, *Mihir-i Ṭābān*, pp. 40-45; 'Alī al-Awsī, *Ravish-i 'Allāma dar Tafsīr-i al-Mizān* ['Allāma's Approach to the Quranic Exegeses al-Mizān], trans. S. Ḥusayn Mir Jalili (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī, 1991), pp. 71-76.

PHILOSOPHY				
Philosophy of Ethics	Education & Philosophy of Education	Philosophical Psychology	Philosophy of Religion	Realism, Metaphysics & Materialism
Good & Bad Beauty & Ugliness	Aim(s) of Education	Human Nature & Identity Soul & Body	Knowledge of God	The Elements of Metaphysics
Construction of Good & Evil	Perfection Self-Improvement Self-Realization	Human Understanding	Pantheism & Monotheism	World-View Epistemology
Theoretical & Practical Theosophy	Purification of the Soul	Human Being as Individual & as Social Being	Religion & Culture Interaction in Society	Realism & Idealism
Human Conduct Evaluation	Resurgence of Educational Curriculum	Process of Knowledge	Spirituality & Religious Experience	Theology of Realism
The Essence of Ethics & Morality	Moral Education: How to make a moral person out of the human individual	Stages of Knowledge: Perception. Memory. Imagination. Experience. Thinking. Intuition	Communication with God: as a) the Almighty Creator b) Human Ideals	Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism
The Idea of Obligation	Values & Values Education	The Psychology of Feeling. Impulses & Emotions	Creation vs. Evolution or Evolution vs. Creation	Transcendentalism & Naturalism
The Idea of Freedom	Teaching the Virtues	Will & Volition	Prophecy & Revelation	Heavenly or Mundane Life
	Educational Principles of Civilization	Habits	Wisdom & Revelation	Experience Interaction between Human Being and Nature
		Mental Development		

Common Domain / Themes in the Writings of Dewey and Ṭabaṭabā'i

In fact, it is beyond the scope of the present thesis to deal with all the issues which are listed in the table. It is intended through the following chapters to elaborate on those themes listed below that I think are relevant to the conceptualization of self-realization or at least contribute to a better understanding of this subject. Among these themes issues like theory and practice, morality and moral values and principles, the end of education, self-improvement and self-realization; human nature and identity, and human body and soul are of more focus of the coming chapters.

Philosophical Disciplines and Methodologies

It is presupposed that philosophy, simply put, deals with general standards and instructions, whether they be eternal or temporal, whose impact is felt in other dimensions of human life including educational theories and doctrines. Each philosophy has its own logic based on what it establishes as its rational method and system of thinking and sets up reasons, principles, premises and conclusions when necessary.¹³⁶ To me, the correlation between philosophical themes and methods on the one hand and educational thinking on the other is taken for granted.

In fact, the former is viewed as a groundwork for the latter, and the latter as a product of the former. To this extent, it seems clear why I must deal with Dewey's and 'Allama's philosophies before I confront a comparative study of their educational doctrines. The sections below are intended to provide an account of their respective understandings of philosophy.

Dewey's Philosophy

Apprehending that the definitions of philosophy are disputable and that "ambiguities and complexities cannot be eliminated by definition," Dewey indicated that his discussion of philosophy "is approached with the antecedent idea that philosophy, like politics, literature and the plastic arts, is itself a phenomenon of human culture."¹³⁷ As

¹³⁶ In his chapter on *Logical Method and Law*, Dewey elaborated this point that reasons are those considerations that "have weight in reaching the conclusion as to what is to be done, or which are employed to justify it when it is questioned." If these considerations "are stated in sufficiently general terms they are 'principles.'" In this cycle, those considerations that led up to conclusion "are called the premises." Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1931), pp. 126-127.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

John J. McDermott in his commentary on Dewey's philosophy maintains, one should bear "in mind that Dewey approached philosophy contextually—that is, as inseparable from wider cultural issues."¹³⁸ Philosophy to Dewey has a historical inspiration reflecting "temporal passage and a diversity of local habitations,"¹³⁹ without reference to eternal truth or reality. In this regard, Dewey based his definition of philosophy upon its connection with social history and civilization. He maintained that the connection of these phenomena with one another "is intrinsic."¹⁴⁰

In his later comments on the definition of philosophy, Dewey blended the latter with civilization, indicating that "there is no specific difference between philosophy and its rôle in the history of civilization. ... Philosophy thus sustains the closest connection with the history of culture, with the succession of changes in civilization." Dewey goes even farther, insisting that philosophy itself is change and "not just a passive reflex of civilization that persists through changes, and that changes while persisting."¹⁴¹

In Dewey's eyes, philosophy is not identical with existence; otherwise, "idealism would be the only possible philosophy." To him, it is the doctrine of *becoming* and not of *being* that formulate the structure of philosophy. His definition is a face-value one that denies any type of constancy and stability. When seen in this way, Dewey's pragmatist philosophy suggests that *is* or *always has been* must be replaced by *should be*. He argues that intellectual reflections instead of "purporting to say that such and such is and always *has been* the purport of the record of nature, in effect they proclaim that such and such *should be* the significant value to which mankind should loyally attach itself."¹⁴²

The historic role of philosophy is not a matter of dispute from Dewey's point of view, since any philosophy is evidence of the productive force of any culture that strives to improve itself and which tries to be logically coherent and compatible with what is known in a real sense. When seen in this manner, philosophy, in its progressive sense, is a significant groundwork of civilization and the development of science.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ John J. McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey: the Structure of Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p. 1.

¹³⁹ Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, pp. 4 & 5.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 8.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

Briefly stated, the Deweyan philosophical method has its origins in Kantian and American pragmatism. The first of these systems, as Dewey himself remarked, determined to a great extent the terminology of the second. Accordingly, the term “pragmatic” was first suggested to Charles Sanders Peirce “by the study of Kant,” whereas the scope of the methods was extended by William James. Two terms are differentiated from one another in Kant’s *Metaphysic of Morals*. The term *practical* “applies to moral laws which Kant regards as *priori*,” whereas the term *pragmatic* “applies to the rules of art and technique which are based on experience and are applicable to experience.” Thinking of the experimental type of mind, Dewey insisted that he was “brought to the exact meaning given by Peirce to the word ‘pragmatic.’”¹⁴⁴

Experimentalism is another feature and ramification of Dewey’s philosophy. In his experimentalism he was to a great measure influenced by Hegel and James. Hegel is viewed by Dewey as “‘a permanent deposit’ in his thinking” and James as the one whose works gave Dewey’s thinking “a new direction and quality.”¹⁴⁵ Dewey’s inclination towards experimentalism was to a large extent due to his appreciation of experience and its role in human life development. “Respect for experience” he says “is respect for its possibilities in thought and knowledge”¹⁴⁶ Since there is much to be said about Dewey’s image of experience and its possibilities, I leave the details to the following chapters.

Darwinism is another movement that left its mark on American intellectuals in general and on Dewey’s philosophical mind in particular. This movement was welcomed by intellectuals since “it challenged old cosmological beliefs” and “brought Biblical creation into question.” The publication of the *Origin of Species* developed the idea that “[r]eality is not to be found in Being, but in Becoming.”¹⁴⁷ Dewey, who was particularly affected by his reading of this work, stated that “the greatest dissolvent in contemporary thought of old questions, the greatest precipitant in contemporary intentions, new

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-14. For more details see pp. 13-35. See also: McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 13-24 & 41-58. As McDermott figured out, “Dewey ... denies that pragmatism is simply a philosophical version of the popular American mind, seeing it rather as a method for bringing intelligence to bear on the problems of moral and social life” p. 41.

¹⁴⁵ McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. xliii, citing Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 1925.

¹⁴⁷ Ozmon and Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, p. 126.

problems, is the one effected by the scientific revolution that found its climax in the 'Origin of Species.'"¹⁴⁸

It was from these standpoints that Dewey developed his experimental humanistic philosophy of education welding it "together with naturalism in a systematic and integrated manner."¹⁴⁹

`Allāma's Philosophy

My major sources for my knowledge of `Allāma's philosophy consist of his two original volumes on philosophy namely, his *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah* [*The Beginning of Philosophy*] and *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah* [*The Finality of Philosophy*] as well as his comparative philosophical work *Uṣūl-i Falsafah* [*The Principles of Philosophy*], and some other philosophical commentaries and annotations that `Allāma left behind. When it comes to the components and elements of `Allāma's philosophy and the philosophical foundations of education as he envisioned them, one can easily see its difference from experimental naturalism and in particular Deweyan thought.

"Being" - "existence" [*mawjūd - wujūd*] is the core subject-matter of philosophy in `Allāma's eyes. To him, divine metaphysics treat of hierarchical existence, qualifications and circumstances of *being* as it is and in the sense that covers every single *thing* in existence. The end of such a philosophy is to obtain a generalized knowledge and understanding of and about all beings as well as to differentiate them from whatever is not *being* in real sense.¹⁵⁰ `Allāma explains that a human individual, through an introspective study of his/her own self, finds out that the self truly exists. Also the individual understands that there is reality beyond the self, and whenever s/he grasps that reality s/he only does so because it exists in the real world. Again the individual's escape of something fearful is not except due to its existence in reality.¹⁵¹ Muṭahhari, in his

¹⁴⁸ McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 31, 41, citing Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 1-19.

¹⁴⁹ Ozmon and Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, p. 127.

¹⁵⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah [the Beginning of Philosophy]* (Beirut: Dār al-Muṣṭafā, 1982), p. 9; *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah [the Finality of Philosophy]* With the commentary and gloss by Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbah Yazdī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i al-Zahrā', 1984), v. I p. 12.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

comment on his master's concept of reality, paraphrases it by explaining that our mental perceptions, from a philosopher's standpoint are divided into three categories:

1. The facts [*ḥaqā'iq*], i.e., those concepts that have realities in external world beyond the mind.
2. Made-up concepts [*i'tibārīyāt*], i.e., those concepts that have no realities beyond the mind, yet the mind creates meanings for them. For example, the mind invents the concept of *team* from a number of soldiers, who in a real sense exist by virtue of their single individuality.
3. Phantasms [*wahmīyāt*], i.e., those concepts that are included in neither one of the cases mentioned above. Some clear examples are imagined beings such as ghouls, giants, fairies, fabulous birds.¹⁵²

In one sense, 'Allāma's philosophy begins with the concept of being and ends with the knowledge of "the Necessary Being by His Essence (*Wājib al-Wujūd bi-Dhātihi*)".¹⁵³ In his philosophy and epistemology of *being*, 'Allāma attempted to weld his Islamic or so-called divine theosophy with a transcendentalism that put emphasis on the existence of God as the Necessary Being "that without which no other thing can be." It is from this standpoint that 'Allāma, following Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)¹⁵⁴ and Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin (Mullā Ṣadrā),¹⁵⁵ advocated that "the existence of God, as the Supreme ontological necessity of the Islamic metaphysics, is proven essentially through the famous ... argument" established by Ibn Sīnā and adopted by the latter. According to this Avicennian argument, *existence* is divided into:

1. "the impossible being (that which cannot be),"

¹⁵² Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, Muṭahhari's explanation, pp. 25-26, foot. 1.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 167-94. See also Ṭabāṭabā'i, "Risālat al-Asmā'", in *Rasā'il al-Tawḥīdīyah*, pp. 24-25.

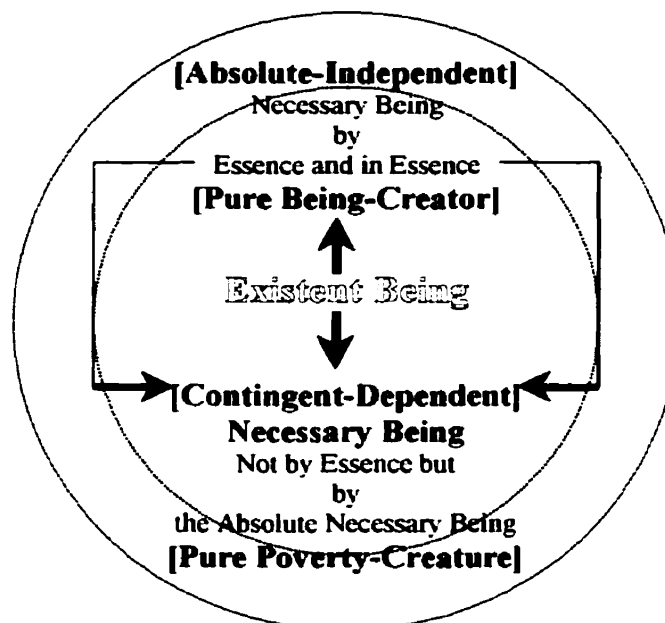
¹⁵⁴ Abu 'Alī Ḥusayn Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) was a celebrated peripatetic philosopher and physician of the tenth and eleventh century Iranian Muslim calendar.

¹⁵⁵ Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shirāzī (1571-1640) known as Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin was a great influential and original philosopher and commentator of the Qur'ān who flourished during the Safavid era of Iran. Both 'Allāma and many other Muslim philosophers have been influenced by Mullā Ṣadrā's transcendent theosophy. Mullā Ṣadrā's nine-volume work on philosophy '*al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*' is a major source of Islamic philosophy which has been included in the Islamic seminaries' curriculum. 'Allāma, like other teachers of philosophy, lectured in many seminar-courses teaching these volumes. For more on Mullā Ṣadrā in English see S. H. Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works* (Tehran: Academy of Philosophy), 1978. See also Zabihullah Mmansoori [Dhabihullāh Maṣūri], ed. & trans., *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī: The Grand Muslim Philosopher and Thinker* (Tehran: Javidan Publications, 1975). For a

2. "the contingent being (that which exists on the condition of a 'necessary being'),"
3. "the necessary being (that without which no other thing can be)."¹⁵⁶

`Allāma expressed this concept in such a way in order to prove the existence of God as the Necessary Being Who exists in and by Essence (*Wājib al-Wujūd li-Dhātihi wa bi-Dhātihi*) meaning that He has no creator and He is from nowhere. On the other hand, `Allāma's efforts are designed to establish the doctrine of relational existence (*al-wujūd al-rabū*) indicating that the existence of all human and non-human beings is from God and that in fact God is their Creator.

According to `Allāma, contingent being, when it comes into existence, becomes a necessary existent but not by or in essence as is the case with God's existence. It becomes necessary in the relational sense of existence by and through its creation by God (*wājib al-wujūd bi-ghayrihi*).¹⁵⁷ On the basis of such a division of existence, `Allāma sides with the doctrine of creation as opposed to evolutionism.



The Image of the Necessary Existent Beings & their Interrelationships

short biography of Ṣadrā in English see Fazlur Rahman, "Mullā Ṣadrā," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 10 (1987): 149-152.

¹⁵⁶ Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 285.

¹⁵⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Maqālah fi al-Tawḥīd [An Essay on the Monotheism]," in *Yād-nāmah-yi 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī* [*Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Commemoration Volume*] (Tehran: Mu'assasa-i Muṭālī'āt va Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1983, pp. 22-23.

The diagram above illustrates that all sorts of beings are included in either the second or the third categories. However, the last category belongs only to the existence of God as “the Supreme Necessary Being.” The diagram demonstrates that the relationship between the two necessary existent beings is the relationship of existence-giver (God) and existence-receiver (creatures). The idea of “necessary existent being” is attributed to both; although, not in the same way. While the Creator God is Necessary Existent Being by and in Essence, creatures are identified as necessary beings through and by being created by God. I will explore this concept when it comes to the conceptualization of God and His attributes.

The concentration of ‘Allāma’s philosophy on *being* does not suggest that *becoming* is of less importance than *being* from his point of view. To him, in the hierarchy of facts and realities the first step is to gain a somewhat precise concept and reality of *being* then of *becoming*. To this extent, both *being* and *becoming* are the major components of ‘Allāma’s understanding of reality. However, the first is the subject-matter of his philosophy, whereas the second is formed based on his epistemology of *being*. In fact, *becoming* is the subject-matter of education and ethics and not that of philosophy, though its basic elements are rooted in philosophy.¹⁵⁸

‘Allāma believed in the link between science and philosophy in view of the fact that the existence of the subject-matter of sciences has already been examined in accordance with the above-mentioned categories of *being* and beings.¹⁵⁹ For instance, when it is supposed that the major subject-matter of the humanities is the human being, first it should be approved through philosophy that this same subject is possible in existence and not merely a matter of phantasm or illusion.

The Impact of Greek Philosophy

Whether later thinkers have supported or rejected the basic ideas put forward by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, it is true that these three forerunners of Greek philosophy influenced to a greater or lesser extent all those philosophers who came after. Western and Islamic philosophers in general, Dewey and ‘Allāma in particular, were no exception.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Cf. Ṭabāṭabā’ī, “al-Insān fī al-Dunyā,” pp. 194-95.

¹⁵⁹ Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, p. 12.

One can simply acknowledge, as Alfred North Whitehead did, “that modern philosophy is but a series of footnotes to Plato.”¹⁶⁰ However, this cannot be viewed as negation of the existence of different original philosophical schools of thought either in the west or in the east. One should determine 1) whether it was only Plato’s influence or traces of it found in later philosophical trends, and 2) which school has been more influenced by either Plato or other figures of Greek philosophy. This is no easy task under any circumstances. In our case, one can posit that Dewey’s philosophy belongs to the Western tradition and ‘Allāma’s to the Islamic. This difference finds its basic roots in the different orientations that have occurred in philosophy since the 16th and 17th centuries. That is to say it was Francis Bacon’s¹⁶¹ positivism and experimentalism, followed by the subsequent emergence of naturalism, which most influenced Dewey’s thinking. Bacon “abandoned the deductive logic of Aristotle and the schoolmen, stressed the importance of experiment in interpreting nature and the necessity for proper regard for any possible evidence which might run counter to any held thesis.” He focused on the establishment of the following theories:

1. human begin is “the servant and interpreter of Nature”;¹⁶²
2. “truth is not derived from authority”;
3. “knowledge is the fruit of experience.”¹⁶³

Bacon’s methodology had its own defects since the entire role of deductive logic was ignored and replaced by that of experience. Yet, “the impetus he gave to future scientific investigation is indisputable.” Bacon, in fact, “was the practical creator of scientific induction.”¹⁶⁴

Nevertheless, Western philosophy does not restrict itself to this positivist and naturalist position. Many scholars and thinkers have in the meantime turned their attention to transcendental realm beyond the natural span. The wave of naturalism never isolated them from the various aspects of the above domain. Some physicists and

¹⁶⁰ Ozmon and Craver, *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an “English philosopher and statesman, born in London” See Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 88.

¹⁶² The term “Nature” with capital ‘N’ is an alternative to God, the Creator.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

thinkers, such as Max Planck,¹⁶⁵ Albert Einstein,¹⁶⁶ are among those whose scientific methodology was inclusive of belief in the realm beyond the natural scene and who always made room for such belief in their world-views.¹⁶⁷

The story seems different as regards Dewey's philosophy. Dewey was educated in the progressive age of American naturalism, the impact of which was unavoidable. To understand whether Dewey was inspired by Greek philosophy or not, and if so, to what extent, we should first determine what was implied by great pioneers, such as Plato and Aristotle. The philosophical foundations and elements of the philosophies of these latter do not necessarily contradict faith in the Divine. On the contrary, faith in God as a living existent that "can exist without matter," as "an Ultimate Mover, beyond all matter and form," as "the First Cause, the Final End," as "the power that holds all creation and process together," etc., all being notions, can be witnessed in Aristotle's philosophy.¹⁶⁸ As for Aristotle's teacher, Plato, "the idea of one God as pure Spirit and the Universal Good" is hallmark of his philosophy.¹⁶⁹

Of course, as we shall see in the following chapters, Dewey's notion of God and creation is much different from Plato's and Aristotle's. Not only is his final understanding of God not recognized as compatible with these two Greek philosophers' conceptualization; it may even be regarded as contradictory. By this, I draw attention to the fact that although Dewey's philosophy and logic (like those of many other philosophers) are basically derived from Greek philosophy, they were viewed from his own perspective. This distinguished Dewey as a naturalist, experimentalist and pragmatist philosopher.¹⁷⁰ Dewey, essentially, "was a leading exponent of pragmatism, in succession

¹⁶⁵ Max Karl Ernst Planck (1858-1947) a German theoretical physicist who is known as the formulator of the quantum theory which revolutionized physics. Ibid., p. 1169. Planck "rejected positivism and believed in the possibility of reconciling natural science and religion." Dagobert D. Runes, ed., "Planck, Max," *Treasury of Philosophy* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1955), p. 930.

¹⁶⁶ Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was a "German-Swiss-American mathematical physicist, who ranks with Galilei and Newton as one of the great conceptual revisers of man's understanding of the universe." Ibid., p. 469. Einstein remained "conscious of his Jewish origin." See Elizer, Israel Ben, "Einstein, Albert" in *Treasury of Philosophy*, pp. 354-359.

¹⁶⁷ Muhammad Taqi Ja'fari, "Falsafah-i Gharb az Didgah-i 'Allāma [Western Philosophy from 'Allāma's Point of View]," in *Yādnamah-yi 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'i* (1983), p. 67.

¹⁶⁸ Ozmon and Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, p. 42.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ Sidney Ranter and Jules Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, pp. 5, 9.

to Charles Pierce and William James,”¹⁷¹ and pointedly favoured this school of thought over the traditional and classical thinking of Greek philosophy. From his standpoint, in the atomic age, classical logic and philosophy were no longer appropriate means for the modern interpretation and conceptualization of philosophical or theological themes. They do not suffice to answer the questions of today. Dewey claimed that earlier “philosophers settled upon abstractions and not genuine experience.”¹⁷² Previous philosophies did not give us any guidelines as to the nature of experience or, how we think of it. “Older philosophies”, he maintains, “had taken ‘problematic situations’ and attempted to fit them to a preexisting set of abstractions.”¹⁷³ Therefore, the answer to the question whether Dewey had a positive or negative attitude towards older philosophies, including Greek, seems clear and needs no more explanation.

The originality of Dewey’s philosophy is mostly due to:

1. its focus on realistic naturalism and pragmatism and its avoidance of mere abstract thought,
2. its emphasis on the importance of the role of experience in communication with nature,
3. its touching upon a great number of philosophical, educational, and psychological themes and other various subject-matters,
4. its contribution to the improvement and development of educational curriculum,
5. its elaboration of the modernistic conceptualization of transcendence and spirituality as well as its modern approaches to religion in general and religious experience in particular.¹⁷⁴

These elements and others made of Dewey a unique, influential and original thinker of recent history. All philosophical doctrines of education, psychology, ethics, moral development, that have been flourished since Dewey’s time, both in North America

¹⁷¹ Magnusson, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 414.

¹⁷² Ozmon and Craver, *Philosophical Foundation of Education*, p. 129.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ For further information see Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 1-28; Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, pp. 77-111, 271-304; Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, pp. 172-5, 177-80.

and many other parts of the world, have been influenced by Deweyan philosophical thought.¹⁷⁵

When it comes to 'Allāma's position on the ancient philosophies, one can observe that the modification of earlier philosophies was of major interest to him yet not in the same way as it was to Dewey. For 'Allāma, every single branch of knowledge should discuss the questions and problems which are specifically related to that knowledge. In this way, sciences would never be confused nor would the scholar or his/her readers ever get lost. 'Allāma himself, according to one of his students and colleagues, was careful to observe this rule in his teaching and writing. One who reads 'Allāma's works soon realizes that the author treats every subject as is appropriate. For example, 'Allāma, when discussing topics in the field of philosophy, is a pure philosopher; it is as if he knows nothing but philosophy, whereas in the field of theology or Quranic exegesis, he may be seen just as a theologian or commentator. He entered any domain of knowledge independently of his knowledge of other fields.¹⁷⁶ Among Muslim scholars there are few if any who have entered so exclusively a subject as 'Allāma did. This distinguished 'Allāma from many other commentators and philosophers before him such as Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin and Ḥakīm Sabzivārī.¹⁷⁷ His twenty volume exegesis of the Qur'an is a good demonstration of 'Allāma's methodology. In this work, he divides his explanations and discussions into historical, philosophical, mystical and traditional categories, and for each term he presents its appropriate content.

Taking 'Allāma's methodology into consideration, one sees why he does not expect philosophy to deal, for example, with natural or scientific experiment, since the latter by itself is a subject that originally belongs to the realm of science and not philosophy. Each of these two phenomena has its own specific domains and themes, and yet they may borrow some subordinate and supplementary elements from one another.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ For more on Dewey's impact on Japanese and Chinese philosophical and educational thought see Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, pp. 193, 196, 203-4.

¹⁷⁶ Husayni Ṭihirānī, *Mihr-i Ṭabān*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁷ Mullā Ḥādī Sabzivārī (1797-1878).

¹⁷⁸ As was mentioned before, 'Allāma indicates that philosophy has its priority to science. See Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, p. 12.

Although 'Allāma shows great respect for Greek philosophy especially for its pioneers, Plato and Aristotle,¹⁷⁹ this never means that he absolutely accepted Greek philosophy. Regarding Ṣadrā's treatment of Greek philosophy in a positive light, 'Allāma agreed with the essential improvements made by the former. These improvements emerged especially in relation to such philosophical issues as the doctrines of 'reconciliation between religion and philosophy', 'substantial motion', 'fundamental reality of existence', 'mere Oneness versus numerical Oneness of God' and 'God's knowledge by presence of existent beings'.¹⁸⁰

In all, Ṣadrā's efforts, according to 'Allāma increased the possible philosophical themes from two hundred to seven hundred in number. 'Allāma believed that Ṣadrā's philosophy was more realistic and closer to reality than previous philosophies. The older philosophies he saw as more abstract. Ṣadrā's attempts contributed to reconciling rationality, religion and mysticism since he believed that all three phenomena derived from one wellspring, with each supporting the other.¹⁸¹ This position pleased 'Allāma and led him to appreciate and follow Ṣadrā in this regard.¹⁸² In fact, 'Allāma's philosophy is a continuation of Ṣadrā's philosophy, albeit featuring a new methodology and approach. The originality in 'Allāma's philosophy was mostly due to:

1. the vast scope of knowledge and specialization that he achieved by means of his philosophy and metaphysics,
2. the development and emergence of more new areas for philosophical discussion and inquiry,
3. his attempt to employ philosophy in more practical and less abstract senses,
4. his contribution to the resurgence of Islamic philosophy,
5. his efforts to initiate comparative philosophical discussions as evidenced in his *Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism* where 'Allāma and his student

¹⁷⁹ See Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, v. 1, pp. 12-13.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī, *Mīhr-i Tabān*, pp. 26-30. For more on the theory of substantive motion in English see S. Kazem Mesbah Moosavi [S. Kāzīm Miṣbāḥ Mūsawī], *Substantive Motion According to Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī* (Montreal: McGill University, Islamic Studies Institute, M.A. thesis, 1994).

¹⁸¹ Cf. Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, *Al-Ḥikmat al-Muta'aliyah [Transcendent Philosophy]*, ed. E. Amini & F. Umīd (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabi, 1981), v. 7, pp. 326-332.

¹⁸² Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī, *Mīhr-i Tabān*, pp. 26-27.

Muṭahharī comment on materialism and Marxism from the realistic perspective of Islamic philosophy,

6. his creation of an appropriate curriculum of philosophy, in addition to Quranic exegesis and moral discourses, containing all essential philosophical principles and themes in just two small volumes.¹⁸³
7. his significant role in making of the Islamic cultural and ideological revolution that prepared the way for the later Islamic Revolution.

As Miṣbāḥ, the former student of Ḥallāma, recognized, the Islamic Revolution of Iran “more than anything else was predicated on a cultural background which had already been created in this society.” The former insisted that “such a grave responsibility had to be carried out by someone who had learned the deepest and widest range of Islamic erudition from the most authentic Islamic sources.”¹⁸⁴ From Miṣbāḥ’s point of view, Ḥallāma was the first who met these qualifications.¹⁸⁵

Response to Islamic and/or Western Philosophy

It is not always necessary to propose a specific statement illustrating a scholar’s agreement with or opposition to a certain school of thought. Often in fact, a researcher, by looking at principles advocated by that scholar, can ascertain what his/her position would be in an issue even though it is not touched upon by that scholar. The case of, respectively, Dewey’s and Ḥallāma’s positions and reflections on Islamic and Western thought in general is like this. Before discussing Dewey’s position, I must first give my attention to the concept of Islamic philosophy; Dewey’s attitude will eventually become clear on its own.

¹⁸³ *Bidayat al-Ḥikmah* [the Beginning of Philosophy] and *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah* [the Finality of Philosophy] both authored by Ḥallāma in Arabic are currently studied in Islamic Seminaries in two levels in the departments of philosophy. These two volumes are the unique and most invaluable texts of philosophy which have been published so far. They make students familiar with philosophy in general and help them continue their studies in further philosophical investigation. For more on Ḥallāma’s academic contribution to the development and improvement of Islamic seminaries’ curriculum see: Miṣbāḥ, “Naqsh-i Ḥallāma Ṭabāṭabā’i dar Ma’ārif-i Islāmī [The Role of Ḥallāma in Islamic Teachings],” in *Yādnamah-yi Ḥallāma Ṭabāṭabā’i* (1983), pp. 196-203.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. For more on Ḥallāma’s contribution to the development of Islamic ideological revolution see pp. 194-95. The quoted English translation was from Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 276.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 195.

Islamic philosophy is not just the name of a discipline created or developed by Muslim thinkers and philosophers. It rather conveys Islamic conceptions and implications for the context of philosophy, and explains them in terms of Islamic philosophical understanding. Islam and philosophy in the context of an Islamic philosophy are intertwined; otherwise, there might be a misrepresentation of either one or the other element. The core element of Islamic philosophy and thought lays in its connection to divine revelation. By revelation, I mean the heavenly process through which God sent down His law to the Prophet Muḥammad or to other prophets before him.¹⁸⁶ Islamic philosophy in my understanding is a combination of Islam and philosophy; therefore, it needs to borrow its authenticity not only from reason and rationality but also from revelation. This is why according to Islamic philosophy there must be no contradiction between reason and revelation, rationality and religion.¹⁸⁷

When seen in this manner, it is not difficult to estimate Dewey's sense of Islam and Islamic philosophy, even though we find no direct analysis in Dewey's writings indicating his reaction to Islamic thought as one finds in William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*.¹⁸⁸ There is no evidence that Dewey studied Islam or Islamic thought and philosophy. Except for the following cases where Dewey uses the term "Moslemism", I could find no other account or comment by him touching Islam. Dewey,

¹⁸⁶ Revelation, as Denzinger elaborates, "is a divine communication to human beings." He paraphrases that Islam's understanding of revelation comes closer to that of the Bible. *Wahy*, or revelation, comes from God usually through the agency of the archangel Gabriel. It is concerned with God's decrees, his mysterious will, the announcement of judgment, and his commandments, the divine law (*shari'ah*). Revelation is given to the prophets and, in its definitive form, to Muḥammad (c.570-632), who received it in dreams, visions, and auditions.

Johannes Denzinger, "Revelation," trans. (from German) Matthew J. O. Connell, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 12 (1987): 356, 361.

In more religious technical concept, revelation (*wahy*) as A. J. Wensink maintains, "is distinguished from inspiration (*ilham*, q.v.) of saints, artists and others, from *tanzil*, which chiefly denotes the object of revelation and from *inzal* which denotes the sending down of revelation from heaven and from its heavenly archetype in so far as it denotes revelation as transmitted to the prophets." A. J. Wensink, "Wahy," *The First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-39* VIII (1987): 1901. See Aboulfazl Sajedi Bidgoli [A. Sajidi B.], *Revelation and Reason: In the Thought of Ṭabāṭabā'i with Special Reference to the Question of Freedom in Islam* (McGill University: M.A. Thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1995), pp. 1-2.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Husayni Ṭihirānī, *Mihr-i Ṭabān*, pp. 66-73; Miṣbāḥ, "Naqsh-i 'Allāma," p. 197.

¹⁸⁸ James in his treatment of mysticism goes into detail to expose the nature of spiritual life in Christianity. He peripherally refers to mysticism in religions other than Christianity such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam in order to explain the inwardness of these religions. For instance, James, quotes in abridged form several passages from M. Scholders' translation of the autobiography of al-Ghazzālī, the Muslim Persian theologian and mystic who lived and flourished in the eleventh century. See James, *The Varieties*, pp. 292-93; Rahnamaci [Rahnamā'i], *The Concept of Religion and Religious Experience*, p. 8

quoting the definition of “religion” expressed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, refers to an element which he calls “some unseen higher power,” variously perceived in several different religions and rites including Islam. He maintains that the above invisible power “has been conceived as the vague and undefined Mena of the Melanesians; ... the arbitrary Will of Moslemism;”¹⁸⁹ Again, describing the dissimilar ways in which obedience and sacrifice to this unseen higher power have been expressed, Dewey remarks that even sacrifice “is highly sublimated in Protestant denominations and in Moslemism.”¹⁹⁰ I am not in a position to comment on Dewey’s understanding of Islam. What is most notable about his observations, however, is his use of the term “Moslemism”. The term Moslemism may represent an attempt on his part to describe the religion at least in terms of its adherents. Does this indicate a special sensitivity or even knowledge that we are unaware of? Unfortunately, I have no information on this score.¹⁹¹

Generally speaking, Dewey’s perspective on religion and his conceptualization of religious experience give us at least a clue to help understanding his position on revelation and so-called revealed religions in general and Islam in particular. Dewey’s conceptualization, as well as his involvement and trusting in experience and naturalist wisdom led him to the development of a humanist religion or religious humanism that had nothing to do with divine revelation or any element beyond the human mind itself.¹⁹²

In the case of ‘Allāma one finds response to Western philosophy, not Western in its geographical, but Western in its theological and philosophical senses. ‘Allāma’s *Principles of Philosophy*, for example, is a reflection on the philosophy of naturalism, materialism in general and Marxism in particular, whether they be geographically labeled as Western or Eastern.

¹⁸⁹ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹¹ In Dewey’s time, it was still quite common to refer to Islam by the term Mohammadanism. The term may describe Islam in terms of its Prophet Muḥammad and his followers. It must not imply that Muslims worship their Prophet or regard their faith as having been created or invented by him. “The two leading principles of Muhammadanism” -Godfrey Dale explains in his comparative study of Christianity and Islam- “are expressed in the well-known creed: There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God.” See Godfrey Dale, *The Contrast between Christianity and Muhammadanism* (London: Universities’ Mission to Central Africa, 1913), P. 12.

¹⁹² Cf. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 1-28; Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, pp. 7-11; Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 213-15.

The renowned Iranian Muslim philosopher and writer Muḥammad Taqī Jaʿfari, in his lecture on the occasion of the first anniversary of the death of ʿAllāma, remarked that what the latter presented and published in his *Principles* has no geographical orientation. Jaʿfari lectured on the question: "Why did ʿAllāma neither develop the idea of Eastern and Western philosophies nor compare them?"¹⁹³ His answer in brief is that, regardless of its reference to either West or East, the subject-matter of ʿAllāma's discussion is whether objects have any reality beyond their existence in the human mind.¹⁹⁴

It seems that Jaʿfari confused ʿAllāma's objection to sophistry and sophism with his opposition to materialism and Marxism. One of ʿAllāma's former pupils Ṭihirani claims that ʿAllāma planned to provide a comparative study of Western and Eastern philosophy on the one hand and to reconcile them on the other. Ṭihirani himself was among the audience at ʿAllāma's sessions every Thursday and Friday night, from which ʿAllāma eventually produced the five volumes of *The Principles*. According to Ṭihirani, ʿAllāma

believed that because philosophy is based on rational arguments, whatever discrepancy exists between 'The Western' and the Islamic schools of philosophy has to be the result of a logical incongruency, thus 'we ought to search for the secret of discrepancy between philosophers of East and West.'¹⁹⁵

As Muṭahhari states, the purpose behind writing *The Principles* was to explain more definitely all deviations of dialectic materialism.¹⁹⁶ The "text became the most authoritative source in the clerical battle against the ideological domination of Marxism."¹⁹⁷ It was due to the efforts of Arānī, a prominent spokesman of dialectical materialism in Iran of the 1940s and 1950s, that materialism showed itself to be even more precise than its presentation by its original thinkers and theorists Marx¹⁹⁸ and

¹⁹³ Muḥammad Taqī Jaʿfari, "Falsafah-yi Gharb az Didgah-i ʿAllāma," pp. 59 & 80.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Husaynī Ṭihirani, *Mihr-i Tabān*, pp. 39–40; Dabashi, *The Theology of Discontent*, p. 299.

¹⁹⁶ Ṭabāṭabāʾi, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, (Tehran: Ofset, 1980), v. 1, p. 32.

¹⁹⁷ Dabashi, *Theology*, p. 313.

¹⁹⁸ Karl Marx (1818–83), a German social, political and economic theorist who helped "modern, international communism" formulated. Marx "studied at the universities of Bonn (1835–36) and Berlin (1836–41), where he associated with the radical followers of Hegel, 'the young Hegelians', who were concerned particularly with the critique of religion." Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 98–82.

Engels.¹⁹⁹ Muṭahhari goes on to state that materialists claimed that all Greek philosophers from Thales (c.624-c.545 BC) to Socrates (469-399 BC) were materialists and naturalists when in fact neither Socrates, Plato or Aristotle says any thing that leads to this claim.²⁰⁰

ʿAllāma's acquaintance with Western philosophy was mostly due to his own studies and readings. Muḥammad ʿAlī Furūghī's three-volume *Seyr-i Hikmat dar Urūpā* (*The Course of Philosophy in Europe*) was among the sources that ʿAllāma studied in order to familiarize himself with Western philosophy. Furūghī's work was published during 1938-41 and took its own position as "a classic Persian source on the history of European philosophy"²⁰¹ ʿAllāma's companionship with certain of his more outstanding pupils such as Muṭahhari and Zanjānī,²⁰² as well as his extensive association and conversations with "the French Islamicist Henry Corbin"²⁰³ helped him develop his knowledge of Western philosophy.²⁰⁴

As a matter of fact, ʿAllāma's knowledge of Western philosophy "was relatively more than most of his clerical cohorts."²⁰⁵ He felt it necessary to study and increase his familiarity with the many modern Western philosophies of his age. It seems clear that the above-mentioned sources were not alone sufficient to allow him to acquire an extensive and systematic knowledge of Western thought. In *The Principles* he concentrates on idealism, sophism, materialism and Marxism, and restricts his premises and arguments to these in particular.

What makes ʿAllāma's philosophy distinct is his insistence on rationalism and realism in an Islamic appraisal. As it will be argued later, ʿAllāma's opposition to any sort

¹⁹⁹ Frederick Engels (1820-95) a "German socialist ... and founder of 'scientific socialism'" who accompanied Marx and "collaborated with him on the Communist Manifesto (1848) ... After Marx's death in 1883, Engels devoted the remaining years of his life to editing and translating Marx's writings, including the second (1885) and third (1894) volumes of the influential *Das Kapital*, which established the materialist interpretation of history." Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 481.

²⁰⁰ Ṭabāṭabaʿī, *Uṣul-i Falsafah*, (1980), v. I, pp. 15-16, 18.

²⁰¹ Dabashi, *The Theology*, p. 314; Muḥammad ʿAlī Furūghī, *Seyr-i Hikmat dar Urūpā* [*The Course of Philosophy in Europe*] in 3 volumes (Tehran: Zuwwār, 1965). The author Furūghī was appointed as the first prime-minister of the Pahlavi regime in 1926 Iran.

²⁰² These two figures were involved in preparing *The Principles*.

²⁰³ Corbin, prior to his attraction to Islamic philosophy, was the translator of Heidegger into French.

²⁰⁴ Dabashi, *The Theology*, pp. 300, 314; Ḥusaynī Ṭihānī, *Mihr-i Tabān*, pp. 40, 46-47.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

of idealism or sophism, was meant to ground his philosophy upon realistic implications, approaches and methodologies.²⁰⁶

Authenticity and Authorities

Reviewing Dewey's and 'Allāma's philosophies, I think it is time to rediscover what kind of authenticity the latter two trusted and upon what sort of authorities they formulated and established their doctrines of self-realization. The following closing passages provide a response to this question.

Dewey's Perspective

Experience, naturalist wisdom, reformed logic and practicability are ranked at the top of Dewey's hierarchy of valid authorities. All these phenomena, conveying in themselves a natural scope and domain, are viewed in their individualistic senses. Dewey devoted several volumes among his early and later works to elaborating these themes either in their philosophical or educational senses. Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (1929), *The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), *Knowing and the Known* (1949) are some examples.

In Dewey's philosophy, naturalist wisdom and experience are of crucial importance and are seen as its basic parameters. Dewey maintains that even our judgments of values as well as our quest for security and happiness demand the use and employment of wisdom; "wisdom of the sort traditionally associated with philosophy."²⁰⁷ In his *Experience and Nature*, Dewey elaborates on the critical aspect of philosophy as wisdom. As his biographer has paraphrased it, Dewey's philosophy "is in essence criticism, concerned with the evaluation of existing goods and values so as to render them 'more coherent, more secure and more significant in application.'"²⁰⁸ Experience, for Dewey, "is not just an isolated happenstance –it has depth and reaches into nature."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ For more details see Ja'fari, "Falsafah-yi Gharb," p. 80.

²⁰⁷ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 214.

²⁰⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 408; Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 214.

²⁰⁹ Ozmon and Craver, *Philosophical Foundation of Education*, p. 129. Cf. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 1-28; Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos*, pp. 7-11; Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 213-15.

The above-mentioned authorities form, as a whole, the foundations of Deweyan metaphysics. In spite of his Christian background, it is notable that Dewey assigns no great authority to the Bible or the Christian belief system determining the virtues, a value system, moral obligation or any moral standard whatsoever. To Dewey it was left to the supervision of intellect, common sense, individual rationality, and humanistic religion to determine the belief and value systems and enunciate philosophical and religious principles.²¹⁰ This is why Dewey attempted to reconstruct moral conception, an effort he was successful in realizing in his essay *Reconstruction in Philosophy*.²¹¹ All this is in spite of the fact that Dewey in his college years, when he was an advocate of evangelicalism, must have recognized the Bible as authoritative and reliable.²¹² This gives us a clue to further avenues of investigation which will be explored in the following chapters.

Allāma's Perspective

`Allāma assigns more authenticity to philosophical, rational thinking and logical methodologies than to experience. The authenticity of experience is restricted to natural science, where all that it does is help uncover the material world. However, it cannot negate and void the divine realm. Thus, to `Allāma, it is unreasonable to allege that the only criterion for reality and truth is what which is already established through experience.²¹³

Other valid authorities in the eyes of `Allāma are the Qur'an, the Prophet Muḥammad, (as well as all other prophets of God), and the twelve Shi'i Imams as Heirs to the Messenger of Islam. `Allāma indicated "Islam is based on two realities: the divine personality of the Prophet Muḥammad, ... and the Qur'an" He maintained that Muḥammad

was chosen ... to deliver God's message and to be the leader of men; and the Qur'an, a book of divine origin which is the Prophet's enduring miracle and which

²¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 3-11.

²¹¹ Dewey, "Reconstruction in Philosophy," in *The Middle Works 1899-1924*, (Southern Illinois University Press), v. 12: 1920, pp. 172-186.

²¹² See the present chapter, pp. 40-41.

²¹³ Ṭabaṭabā'i, "Māvarā-yi Ḥess va Tajribah," p. 104.

contains God's words along with intellectual and practical teachings of a universal nature.²¹⁴

`Allāma moved forward to insist that the perfection of human life in its practical sense is to most extent due to following the two above agents.²¹⁵ Besides the Qur'ān, a great number of traditions from the Prophet and the Imams have reached us, conveying Islamic teachings, values and education. The Prophet and the Imams were the original interpreters of the Qur'ān. `Allāma, referring to the Qur'ān and a Prophetic tradition, explains that there are two stations held by the Imams that are the most important. He indicates that

1. ... they [the Imams] hold the station of purity, and accordingly no sin can arise from them. 2. ... these Heirs are always at one with the Noble Qur'ān and never depart from God's Book. Accordingly, they are never in error about the meaning of the Noble Qur'ān and the Plain Religion.

These two stations imply that the words and deeds of the ... Messenger's ... Heirs are as authoritative as his own. This is the belief of Shi'a Muslims.²¹⁶

`Allāma's doctrine of the authenticity of the Qur'ān, the Prophet and the Imams is basically founded upon the premise that the Qur'ān is a book of revelation revealed by God to the Prophet's heart. To this extent, revelation is free from any error and falsehood because of the three authentic agents involved in the process of divine revelation: 1) the One Who sent it down, i.e., God the Almighty and absolute knowing; 2) the one who conveyed it to the Prophet, i.e., the angel Gabriel; 3) the one who received it, i.e., the infallible and the guided one, the Prophet who was possessed of an extraordinary spiritual character.²¹⁷ Like all other Shi'i theologians, `Allāma believes in the infallibility of the Imams who were purified by God as the twelve guided ones.<sup>218</sup> These premises are matters of belief that `Allāma held and never departed them. A reconciliation of these authoritative sources is suggested in an Imāmi tradition to the effect that

God has given two proofs for the guidance of mankind - the explicit and the implicit. The explicit and the external proof is in the form of prophets, divine

²¹⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Muḥammad in the Mirror of Islam*, trans. S. H. Naṣr (Qum: Darut Tablighil Islami [Dar al-Tabligh al-Islami] Press. ?), p. 1.

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

²¹⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 108.

²¹⁷ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *The Qur'an in Islam*, pp. ; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 86-89.

²¹⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 108, 115-16.

messengers and the Imāms (divinely appointed guides); and, the implicit and the internal proof is in the form of reasoning and understanding.²¹⁹

The above passages display why rationality, reason and revelation, all together, form Ḥ Allāma's valid authorities.

Summary Comments

The present study is intended to disclose Dewey's and Ḥ Allāma's respective approaches to the concept of self-realization, as well as to indicate their purposes in dealing with this topic. We have seen that due to his originality and academic authority, Dewey may be regarded as representative of the school of American pragmatism as well as one of the most influential figures in modern American humanism. For the same reasons, Ḥ Allāma may also be considered as representative of the mainstream of Islamic philosophy and the Shi'ī Muslim world-view. I have indicated several characteristics and particularities that qualify our thinkers and their philosophies as original. Among these characteristics, their concern to employ philosophy in a more practical and less abstract sense is particularly noteworthy.

To gain a clearer sense of the positions adopted by each of the two scholars, one may reflect on the question of their consistency (or lack of the same) in privileging certain belief or values systems. Dewey's biography shows him to have held various positions, especially on the problem of religion and spirituality. Ḥ Allāma on the other hand is portrayed as having been a practicing Muslim believer who never gave up his Islamic ideology or epistemology for non-Islamic ones. When seen in this manner, Ḥ Allāma may be said to have maintained since the earliest period of his research in philosophy, theology, juridical studies and Quranic exegesis the same mentality and character, as well as the same sense of religion.

Each of the above tendencies results in a different orientation or alignment. While one is striving to naturalize all aspects of human life including spirituality and the journey of the self, the other is attempting to direct and link all these aspects including the natural domain, to the divine realm.

²¹⁹ Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, trans. S. M. Hasan Rizvi (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1978), v. I, part I, pp. 41-42.

Through the coming chapters, I will examine the correlation of the philosophical roots of both systems of thought with their products and implications. It is my contention that one must concentrate on Dewey's and 'Allāma's philosophies before touching on any other area of their thought.

It is not my intention to indicate which of the above philosophies might be the more scientifically valued one. All that I allude to are the criteria for such an evaluation. I think the only reliable criterion giving philosophy its scientific validity is its product, i.e., the thoughts and ideas raised by the advocates of that philosophy. The more a philosophy is espoused, the more it is a scientifically valued one.

Different philosophies lead to different conceptualizations of self-realization. Philosophy from Dewey's point of view is expected to give much credit to natural experiment. Due to its focus on experience and naturalistic wisdom, Dewey's philosophy gives no credit to any element or agent beyond the experimental and natural realm. This in turn contributed to the development of a humanist religion that envisages no step further than the natural span of human life. 'Allāma thinks otherwise. The latter attempted to differentiate the realm of science from that of philosophy. This is why he did not expect philosophy to deal, for example, with natural or scientific experiment. Although philosophy and science are usually distinguished from one another in terms of their different domains and themes, they do borrow some subordinate and supplementary elements from one another.

Dewey's insistence and focus on experience and naturalist experiment differentiates him and his philosophy from 'Allāma and his thought. This position, as S. Ratner and J. Altman explain, made out of Dewey an experimental naturalist.²²⁰ 'Allāma's insistence on philosophical rationalism and religious realism in an Islamic appraisal on the other hand renders his philosophy distinct from that of Dewey. These are some of the structural and functional elements and components of Dewey's and 'Allāma's thought.

In subsequent chapters I will focus on some of the themes touched upon by both Dewey and Ṭabāṭaba'i to show how their ideas, for example, parallel one another. At first,

²²⁰ Cf. Ratner & Altman, *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley*, pp. 5-24.

their careful studies of human nature will be evaluated and compared to see if their perspectives may contribute to a more balanced view of self-realization.

PART III

Chapter 2

Human Nature

Chapter 2

Human Nature

Introduction

“Lack of understanding of human nature is the primary cause of disregard for it. Lack of insight always ends in despising or else unreasoned admiration.”¹

(Dewey)

“Whoever forgets his/her self ... s/he will go astray and fall into perdition Such a person in fact sinks into a darkness from which there is no escape.”²

(‘Allāma)

There are many theories about human nature in both Western and Islamic scholarship. In the history of Western philosophy of education, the story of human nature has its background in ancient Greek philosophy. One may claim that there is a wide range of theories of human nature, as numerous as philosophies of education themselves, presented by many thinkers from different cultures, periods and schools of thought. Philosophers such as Socrates (469-399 BC), Plato (428-348 BC), Aristotle (348-322 BC), Epicurus (341-271 BC), Plotinus (205-270) were among the early Western thinkers who included in their philosophical discussions distinct theories of human nature or at least some important aspect of the latter. In the last two centuries, besides Christian thought on human nature, the West has witnessed the emergence of the theories of Marx (1818-83), Freud (1856-1939), Lorenz (1903-89), Sartre (1905-80), Skinner (1904-90), Maslow (1908-70) each featuring a different perspective. Regardless of some similarities which may be found in structure, each of the above is representative of a specific position

¹ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 5.

² Ṭabaṭaba‘ī, “al-Insān fī al-Dunyā,” p. 202.

on human nature.³ In Islamic thought, on the other hand, Fārābī (872-950), Avicenna [Ibn Sina] (980-1037), Bīrūnī (970-1048), Ghazzālī (1057-1111), Suhrawardī (1155-1191), Averroes [Ibn Rushd] (1126-98), Ibn `Arabī (1156-1240), Mir Dāmād (d. 1631) and Mullā Ṣadrā (1571-1640) are among those thinkers who dealt with the problem of human nature and tried to present their philosophical or mystical theories of human nature through an Islamic orientation. In a particular sense the idea of the perfect human being and the doctrine of self-realization have opened new approaches to the study of human nature and conduct.⁴

The clarification of the concept of self-realization as the cornerstone of the present study demands a clear image of human nature. On the one hand, the *self* to me is identified as circulating all elements by which a human person is a human person. And on the other, the most obvious elementary component by means of which a human being is distinguished from a non-human being is human nature. On the level of philosophical discussion, it seems difficult to indicate which one of these two proceeds the other. All that one may say is to notify that human self and nature are intertwined in reality and in discussion. Therefore, I feel necessity to devote a chapter to the issue of human nature in order to enrich and develop my inquiry of self-realization.

Dewey and `Allāma on Human Nature

Each of our thinkers devoted a distinct work to the theory of human nature. However, while `Allāma's work on human nature appeared years before his examination of the concept of self-realization, Dewey's appeared years after his evaluation of the

³ For a summary of Plato's theory and some recent theories on human nature see Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature: Christianity, Freud, Lorenz, Marx, Sartre, Skinner, Plato* (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). To understand Maslow's position see Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Research of Human Nature* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973). For information about other theories see Tom Campbell, *Seven Theories of Human Society* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). The volume discusses the issue of human nature and society from different points of view including Aristotle, Hobbes, Adam Smith, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Schutz.

⁴ Among the Western works see for example the following accounts on the idea of the perfect human being: William James Heaps, *The Perfect Man* (New York: Neale, 1918); Robert Thomas, *The Man Who Would Be Perfect: John Humphrey Noyes and the Utopian Impulse* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977).

On Islamic part in English see for instance Arba'iyah Yusuf, *Ibn Sīnā's Thought on the Perfect Man: the Role of the Faculties of the Soul* (M.A. Thesis: Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1994); Mastaka Takeshita, *Ibn `Arabī's Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought* (Tokyo: University of Foreign Studies, 1987).

belief.⁵ As was mentioned above, I must first try to arrive at a clear understanding of human nature, then examine the doctrine of self-realization as a correlative component of human nature. In either case, my major references for Dewey's and 'Allāma's theories will be their respective original works on human nature.⁶

Dewey's major concern in writing on human nature was to emphasize that "an understanding of habit and of different types of habit is the key to social psychology, while the operation of impulse and intelligence gives the key to individualized mental activity."⁷ Drawing attention to the idea that impulse and intelligence "are secondary to habit," Dewey insisted "that mind can be understood in the concrete only as a system of beliefs, desires and purposes which are formed in the interaction of biological aptitudes with a social environment."⁸ As he himself indicated by his choice of the subtitle to his *Human Nature and Conduct*, the volume is in fact an introduction to social psychology.⁹

'Allāma on the other hand, looked at human nature first and foremost in terms of its link to the Cause of the causes, the Creator. His concern was human nature from the very outset of the creation of human soul and before its inherence in human body to the end of physical life on this earth, and even into the soul's life after death and finally at the Resurrection.¹⁰ Although the social aspects of human life and human beings' intercommunication are 'Allāma's focus, they are secondary to the perfection of the human individual and self-actualization.¹¹ What follows gives us direction to attain a better understanding of Dewey's and 'Allāma's positions on human nature.

⁵ Dewey's account on the concept of self-realization is listed among his early works (1893-94), whereas, his work on human nature is among his middle works (1922). See Dewey, "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal" in *The Early Works 1882-1898*, v. 4: 1893-94, pp. 42-53; Dewey, "Human Nature and Conduct," in *The Middle Works 1899-1924*, v. 14, 1922. Dewey's *Human Nature* was originally presented by him in the format of lectures "upon the West Memorial Foundation" when he "was invited by Leland Stanford Junior University" in 1918 to give a series of lectures. See Dewey's preface (1921) to his *Human Nature*, p. ix.

⁶ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* (New York: The Modern Library, 1930); Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān Qabl al-Dunyā"; "al-Insān fī Dunyā"; "al-Insān Ba'd al-Dunyā," pp. 165-314.

⁷ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. ix, Dewey Preface, 1921.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See the subtitle of Dewey's *Human Nature*.

¹⁰ See Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān," pp. 165-314.

¹¹ Cf. Ibid., p. 194.

The Emergence of Human Beings on the Earth

This section will attempt to answer some major questions that have occupied the minds of many who have studied human nature and human existence. The structures and bodies of the questions were arranged by me while providing their contents as well as their responses from within Dewey's and 'Allāma's texts.

1. Whence did human beings derive their existence?
2. How did it happen that human beings come to have life on this earth?
3. What was the seed and origin of human beings? Was it a human male or female or a couple of the same species or was it an animal, albeit close to humans in nature?
4. What is the foundation of morals and morality?
5. What is (are) the aim(s) of either education or human life?
6. How will human beings be resurrected?

I may assume that I will find the appropriate answers to these questions, in spite of the distinctly opposite attitudes towards human nature held by the two thinkers. On the one hand, the doctrine of evolution is the basis of Dewey's thought,¹² whereas for 'Allāma, the doctrine of creation seems fundamental. These two propositions, as will be explored in the following pages, can obviously never be reconciled. The different outcomes of these two opposing attitudes are inevitable and undeniable.

I have selected two passages in order to mirror the thought of the two philosophers so that I may have some guidelines for further study and commentary. On the part of Dewey, I quote from *Humanist Manifesto I*, which was signed by a group of thirty-four liberal humanists, including Dewey. As Paul Kurtz, the editor of the *Manifesto* remarks, these American humanists "defined and enunciated the philosophical and religious principles that seemed to them fundamental. They drafted *Humanist Manifesto I*, which for its times was a radical document."¹³ The *Manifesto* includes fifteen principles in all, and are described by Kurtz as "concerned with expressing a general religious and philosophical outlook that rejected orthodox and dogmatic positions"¹⁴ The first two

¹² As it will be clarified, one should differentiate Dewey in his early writings (1880s) from Dewey in his later works.

¹³ Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, p. 3.

¹⁴ Ibid.

principles of the first *Manifesto* (as shown in the following chart) represents Dewey's thinking on the origin of the universe and humankind.

"First: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process."¹⁵

The above principle indicates clearly the divergence between Dewey's and 'Allama's thought on the origin of humankind.

In 'Allāma's case, his faith and belief in a Creator led him to support the doctrine of creation versus evolution. Elaborating on the impact of faith on human conduct and behavior, 'Allāma focuses on the fact of creation as well as on the link between human nature and its Creator. Looking at creation from this standpoint, he emphasizes that

[b]elievers do not give up on themselves or feel abject under any circumstances, because they know themselves to be attached to the limitless power of the Creator of the universe. They are mindful of Him and sheltered by Him in all circumstances; their hearts are calm, clear, and strong.¹⁶

The particular aspect that distinguishes 'Allāma's position from that of Dewey is the former's insistence on the notion of causality, according to which there must be a Creator Who is the Cause of causes and all intermediary causes.¹⁷ It is clear from the first passage that 'Allāma also studied human nature as a part of an all-encompassing nature which is not excluded from the general rules of the universe. In order for me to understand the difference between these two positions, I should review the above presuppositions and compare each of them. This will function as my starting point, summarizing and anticipating what I will be elaborating in order to shed light on the cornerstones of their respective theories of human nature, and ultimately their respective and distinct doctrines of self-realization.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 20.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Evolution Versus Creation; Dewey's Position

We have seen that Dewey used to believe in Evangelical Protestantism during his youth, before beginning his studies at university. During his early academic efforts, he used to believe, as Dewey himself states, that

the evangelist, ignorant though he be, who is in constant contact with the needs, the sins, the desires and aspirations of actual human nature is a better judge of religious truth than the man of science, if a truly speculative life has shut him off from sympathy and living intimacy with the fundamental truths of the common nature of man.¹⁸

However, after developing his theory of secularism and experimental instrumentalism, Dewey did not continue to hold to any such belief-system and its implications. He came to desert his evangelical faith, with the result that "all vestiges of evangelicalism" disappeared.¹⁹ He proposed his own understanding and interpretation of any issue he touched upon including the concept of human nature. In his *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey begins his discussion with a comment on the Christian interpretation of human nature. According to him, theologians have shown "a gloomier view of man than have pagans and secularists."²⁰ They have regarded human nature with suspicion and have blackened it in process.²¹ They have seen "human nature as evil" and "as a hopeless mess of contradictory forces." This is to Dewey an approach to "degrading human nature."²²

The emergence of Darwinism motivated Dewey to take his position against the Christian understanding of human nature. The publication of *The Origin of Species* (1859) "challenged biblical creation."²³ However, this was not the only reason behind Dewey's rejection of the doctrine of divine creation. In fact, the Biblical image of human nature itself discouraged Dewey from advocating such an interpretation. As depicted in the Bible and Christianity, the human being at the beginning was an innocent creature by nature

¹⁸ Dewey, "The Obligation to Knowledge of God," *Monthly Bulletin* (November 1884): 24 and in *The Early Works*, v. 1, p. 62. See also Dykhvizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 8.

¹⁹ Dykhvizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, p. 8.

²⁰ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³ Ozmon and Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, (1995), p. 128.

which was created in the image of God.²⁴ However, the disobedience of Adam and Eve introduced sin into God's unblemished creation and had eternal consequences. Thereafter, human nature was no longer innocent. A human being was by nature a sinner such that "every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."²⁵ It was therefore, "just as through one man [that] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned"²⁶ Accordingly, human beings are not born sinful or with inherited guilt, but are born into a sinful world with an inherited tendency to sin. The natural inclination of the human heart is to disobey and sin. Human beings are condemned before God as law-breakers and "convicted by the law as transgressors." This is the case even if they break just one part of the law. "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."²⁷

Dewey could not remain faithful to these elements of the Christian position on human nature and it caused him to voice his criticism of such a doctrine. As we will see below, Dewey indicated that the image of human nature understood and proposed by both the Catholic Church and Protestantism has resulted in a moral system that professedly holds negative regard for human nature.²⁸

Dewey, however, did not restrict his criticism to the Christian conceptualization of human nature. He also, in attempting to avoid the Marxist position on the concept of human nature and society, argued that "[t]o say that accident produced social conditions is to perceive they were not produced by intelligence."²⁹ Dewey, objecting to both definitions, developed his own position and tried to present a better alternative to these two schools of thought. Generally speaking, Dewey's solution reflects the effort he devoted to the scientific study of physical human nature where intellect and reasoning are involved. In Dewey's eyes, "a decline in the authority of social oligarchy was accompanied by a rise of scientific interest in human nature." In his work on human

²⁴ *The Bible*, Genesis 1: 26-27; 2: 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Genesis 6: 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Roman 5: 12 & 13-21.

²⁷ *The Bible*, James 2: 8-11.

²⁸ Cf. Dewey, *Human Nature*, pp. 6-7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

nature, Dewey discusses “some phases of the ethical change involved in positive respect for human nature when the latter is associated with scientific knowledge.”³⁰

Seeking a scientific approach to his study of human nature, Dewey was directed to the theory of evolution. Discussing the influence of Darwin on philosophy and supporting the new philosophy of pragmatism or instrumentalism, Dewey found the orientation of this new movement “in Darwin’s *Origin of Species*.” Dewey maintained that an intellectual revolution is needed to revise classic philosophies “because they must be squared up with the many social and intellectual tendencies that have revealed themselves since those philosophies matured.” He recalled that the history of philosophy is witness to the occurrence of many intellectual developments such as “the experimental method of inquiry” that conquered the sciences; the “evolutionary ideas” that were injected “into the study of life and society”; “the historic method” that was applied to religions and morals, as well as to various other institutions; and finally, to “the creation of the sciences of ‘origins’ and of the cultural development of mankind.”³¹

Dewey argued “how can such intellectual changes occur and leave philosophy what it was and where it was?” He maintained that philosophy cannot “remain an indifferent spectator of the rise of what may be termed the new individualism in art and letters”³² Dewey declared that Darwin’s *Origin of Species* left its impact not only on philosophy and the logic of knowledge but also on “the treatment of morals, politics, and religion.”³³

The cycle of life in Dewey’s mind was interpreted in accordance with the theory of evolution. Elaborating on the facts of life, he made some distinction between the changes that occurred in living beings and those in inanimate things. Accordingly, changes that under certain circumstances happen to many non-living things are rapid, extensive and most often passive.

But the changes in the living thing are orderly; they are cumulative; they tend constantly in one direction; they do not, like other changes, destroy or consume, or pass fruitless into wandering flux; they realize and fulfill. Each successive stage,

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, pp. iv, v, Dewey’s preface.

³² Ibid. p. v.

³³ Ibid., p. 2.

no matter how unlike its predecessor, preserves its net effect and also prepares the way for a fuller activity on the part of its successor.³⁴

In any case, the earlier changes in living beings happen as correspond to later results and seem to be regulated in this view. Dewey was mindful that there must be a true final term for such a progressive organization. He stated that this process “does not cease till there is achieved ... a completed perfected end.” Dewey speculated that this achievement is a product of what he called “self-fulfillment activity.”³⁵

However, the story of the life cycle from Dewey’s perspective has not yet come to its end. There is still another feature behind the facts of life “whose miraculous tale,” as Dewey himself referred to it, “is not yet told.” This feature he found in the term “species.”³⁶ “The force of this term”, Dewey indicated, “was deepened by its application to everything in the universe that observes order in flux and manifests constancy through change.” Looking at it from this standpoint, Dewey insisted that the conception of species as “a fixed form and final cause, was the central principle of knowledge as well as of nature.”³⁷

To this extent we have seen what the concept of evolution of species was on Dewey’s mind. We see no link in the realms of both inanimate and living things and beings to the office of a divine creation. Every single movement and change occurs based on “the same cycle of self-fulfilling activity” that directs towards the fulfillment of ends.³⁸ Generally speaking, this idea could be elaborated as it relates to self-realization although Dewey himself did not notify this point. I found Dewey took it for granted that “[t]he process of natural evolution is conceived as the exact model of human endeavor.”³⁹ Criticizing the misconception and misconstruction of the theory of evolution, Dewey remarked that “evolution” in fact, “means continuity of change; and the fact that change may take the form of present growth of complexity and interaction.”⁴⁰ Dewey considered the theory of evolution a scientific doctrine.⁴¹ To him, *The Origin of Species* left its

³⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

³⁹ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 273.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 262.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 264.

impact on philosophy through its insistence on “the principle of transition” in the cycle of life, “and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life.”⁴²

Creation Versus Evolution; ‘Allāma’s Position

Criticizing the theory of evolution, ‘Allāma argues that the theory does not encompass all cases of existence and therefore cannot be relied upon. “Struggle for existence” and “selection of the best,” two major principles of the theory of evolution of species, are not universally true, according to ‘Allāma, although they may be so in some cases.”⁴³ One can observe “many lower species among animals or plants that have managed to preserve their existence even alongside the existence of higher species.”⁴⁴ One may furthermore observe “many wild plants or animals which have been trained and transformed into a higher state while others of their species are still sustaining their lives.”⁴⁵ Speaking on the social and moral levels, the author maintains that the above principles lead to unpleasant consequences. The principle of “struggle for existence” naturally allows and justifies an eternal conflict among humankind. The principle of “selection of the best” negates the right to life of the lower and weaker classes of human society and considers the stronger classes to be justified in their transgressions against the weak.”⁴⁶ In ‘Allāma’s mind the fundamental principle involved in all material change and evolution in beings, as well as in their existence, is the principle of causality.⁴⁷ He developed his doctrine of creation to a large extent on the basis of the doctrine of causality and with the support of the following verses of the Qur’ān.

Surely your Lord is Allah. Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, and He is firm in power. He throws the veil of night over the day, which it pursues incessantly and (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command; Surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.⁴⁸

⁴² Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, pp. 8-9.

⁴³ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Qur’ān va Qānūn-i Tanāzu‘-i Baqā’* [*The Qur’ān and the Doctrine of Struggle for Existence*] (Qum: Ahlulbayt Publications, 1981), pp. 5-9.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ *The Qur’ān*, 7: 54.

And certainly We created man of an extract of clay. Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place [womb]. Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.⁴⁹

`Allāma placed more emphasis on the fact that the relationship between cause and effect requires that any effect should stand by its own cause either in terms of its existence or in terms of its primary and secondary perfections. On the basis of reasoning, Quranic proofs and a religious world-view and belief-system, `Allāma observed the Islamic notion of creation both in his epistemology and his ontology of human nature and conduct. The originality of the creation was `Allāma's focus. Elaborating on this doctrine, he maintained "that any two things are different from each other in their respective particulars even if they are united in their common and general characteristics."⁵⁰ `Allāma concluded "that every being is different in its own self from all other beings. It follows that every thing is unique; and does not have any similarity or likeness to any other thing. And it is Allāh who has given things its uniqueness, distinction and originality, as He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth."⁵¹

Another passage by `Allāma demonstrates his seriousness on the establishment of the doctrine of creation.

Our minds and hearts tell us that this world of being with its wondrous system did not come about by itself; such an astonishing world of creation could not arise without being arranged by someone. There must certainly be a Creator who has brought about this vast and glorious universe through His limitless knowledge and power.⁵²

In his commentary on some Quranic verses touching on the existence of the human species, `Allāma insisted on the truth of divine creation versus evolution. He stated that as various verses indicate, the present human species was generated from the same Adam and Eve and were never the product of any other species of animals, such as chimpanzees, etc. Indeed, human nature is a unique species among creatures which God

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23: 12-14.

⁵⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān: An Exegesis of the Qur'ān*, trans. Rizvi, v. 2, pp. 63-64. `Allāma's commentary on verses 116-17 of chapter 2 of the Qur'ān.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 20. The underlines are mine.

brought into existence, having created them from the earth (dust, clay).⁵³ We as wise beings are equipped with a "God-given instinct" by means of which we seek for the cause of every occurrence we witness. According to the law of causality, there can be found no single thing that can come into being without cause, of itself and by chance.⁵⁴ In expressing himself thus, 'Allāma draws our attention to an inner perception of our existence and the existence of the universe by the help of what he called "our instinctive realism."⁵⁵ 'Allāma's conclusion is clear. He remarks that according to this instinctive realism, it is not accepted that the system of being came to the existence by itself and without any support. It has not arisen willy-nilly. It rather "proclaims that the world of being certainly has a support that is the Source of being and the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and that this limitless Being and source of knowledge and power is God from whose oceanic being the system of existence springs."⁵⁶ He stands by the Quranic verse which states: "Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal)."⁵⁷

Also, 'Allāma indicates that the existence of a material and corporeal world is related to an incorporeal universe where there is no matter, yet the traces and precepts of matter are present. This second universe is in fact the cause of the material world. Again, the material world is preceded by a universe where there is found neither matter nor its traces or precepts. The latter is considered the cause of the cause of the material world. These two pre-existent worlds are respectively called the World of Form⁵⁸ or Limbo ('*al-*

⁵³ Ṭabaṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 2, p. 112 (Beirut). 'Allāma's commentary on chapter 2 of the Qur'an, verse, 213; v. 16, pp. 255-60 (Beirut), his commentary on chapter 32 of the Qur'an, verses 6-9.

[He] made good everything that He has created, and He began the creation of human being from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract, of water [life-germ] held in light estimation. Then He made human being complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks.

⁵⁴ Ṭabaṭabā'ī, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 43-44.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 44.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 44-45.

⁵⁷ Ibid. *The Qur'an*, 20: 50.

⁵⁸ 'Allāma's consideration on the World of Form (*Ālam al-Mithāl*) is not the same as Plato's theory of Forms although one may find some similarities. These two different types of forms may resemble one another in the sense that neither of them is "in space or time" nor is "perceivable by any of the senses" since both theories are viewed in terms of their realities beyond, yet in connection with material world. Nevertheless, while Plato's Forms, to his understanding, has to "do with what is ultimately real," 'Allāma's theory of Form has to do with what is between pure spiritual and pure material worlds, and functions as a connecting link among them and not as an ultimate reality in this cycle. For more about Plato's theory of

*Barzakh*⁵⁹ -the connecting link) and the World of Wisdom or Spirit.⁶⁰ Hence 'Allāma drew an image of human beings in terms of their existence in three realms, i.e., the world of matter, the world of form or imaginative faculty that belongs to angelic realm, and the world of wisdom or spirit.⁶¹

These three realms may be seen separately in discussion, yet they are intertwined in a real sense when attributed to human nature. The components of the nature of human beings are neither purely material nor are they purely angelic or spiritual. What constitutes the components of human nature is rather a complex of material, angelic, rational and spiritual elements. These elements are present in every single individual; however, based on the dominant element among these three there may be found three types of human beings. There are in reality those individuals whose main desire is to satisfy their material appetite, neglecting their spiritual nutrition. They seem strong in their material gain, but weak in their spiritual success. Then there are those whose major ambition is to degrade their material longing and isolate themselves from human society lest their spirits are hurt. There is still another group whose main aspiration is to stay in an imaginary world of the representative faculty. None of these three groups represents a perfect image of a human being. In order for an ordinary person to move forward towards self-realization and perfection, the basic task is to reconcile these three realms and provide a state of internal justice and peace among them.⁶²

At any rate, the human body corresponds to the material world, the human imaginative faculty⁶³ to the world of form and human wisdom to the world of spirit. All

Forms see Plato, *Republic*, trans. H. D. P. Lee (Penguin, London, 1955), pp. 485, 507, 526-27, 596; Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature*, pp. 28-30.

⁵⁹ In Islamic theology there is found another concept for the term "*al-Barzakh*" which is different from the above-mentioned interpretation. This theological concept having been used by 'Allāma and other Muslim theologians describes "the period between one's death and the Day of Resurrection." It is *barzakh*, i.e. it is the connecting link between mundane and heavenly lives. It is "the world of the grave, ... where the dead person is rewarded or punished until the Day of Resurrection." Quoting Quranic verses and numerous Islamic traditions about *al-Barzakh* and the soul's life after death, 'Allāma concluded that "the life of *al-barzakh* is an immaterial one." For more on the theological concept of *al-Barzakh* see: Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mcān*, v. 1 (Beirut), pp. 347-50, 362-364 and its English translation, v. 2, pp. 197-201, 217-221.

⁶⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "*al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā*," p. 165.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² The above passage is my explanation of 'Allāma's thought.

⁶³ 'Allāma in his treatise "*al-Wasā'iṭ* [the Intermediaries]," employed the term "imaginative faculty" (*'alam al-khiyāl*) to describe the world of Form. See Ṭabāṭabā'i, "*Risālat al-Wasā'iṭ*," in *Rasā'il al-Tawhīdīyah*, pp. 103-104. The notion of imaginative faculty was first used by the Muslim philosophers al-Fārabi (872-950) and Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) in order to describe the office of prophecy in some sense. Fārabi does not suggest

these elements, in `Allāma's eyes, originate in God's command and His creation. Hence, human beings have been created from the very beginning of their mundane life with a connection to the Eternal Being and with a potentiality that helps them make contact with the Highest Celestial Realm (*al-Malakūt al-A`lā*). The latter, to `Allāma, is the "World of Divinity" (*`Ālam al-Lāhūt*).⁶⁴ In their virtually hierarchical level the other three are respectively called:

1. the world of almightiness (*`ālam al-jabarūt*)—the realm of the spirit or abstract wisdom,
2. the world of the heavenly kingdom (*`ālam al-malakūt*)—the realm of form or the imaginative faculty—the world of angels,
3. the earthly world of human nature (*`ālam al-nāsūt*).⁶⁵

Accordingly, every single human person lives continuously in all three of these realms and conditions, whether s/he recognizes all of them or not. As was mentioned earlier, these three realms are not attributed to all human individuals to the same degree or extent. Human nature came into the existence accompanied by the latter three. At the very level of its existence, human nature is more material than intellectual or spiritual.

that the imaginative faculty is the unique perfect agent in divine prophecy. In fact, when Fārābī remarks that the imaginative faculty in God's prophets is in its highest position, he does not mean that they are weak in their intellect. He indeed takes for granted that God's prophets not only were in higher position than philosophers and had stronger wisdom but also had a more perfect imaginative faculty. See Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Arā'u Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah* [The Idea of Utopia City] (Beirut: Dār al-Sharq, 1982), pp. 108-105.

Ibn Sina in his part, discusses two types of prophetic knowledge: imaginative and rational. The first type refers to the knowledge which is received by a prophet's imaginative faculty from the celestial soul, as distinct from the celestial wisdom. The second type, representing a higher form of prophecy, related to what a prophet receives by his prophetic rational faculty of the universal intelligibles from the active intellect, the last of the celestial intellects emanating successively from God. The prophets of the first type receive the particular knowledge possessed by the celestial souls as impressions on their imaginative faculty. Ordinary people may also receive this knowledge, usually in dreams, where it is mixed with other somatic imagines. The prophet, however, is endowed with a strong imaginative faculty that enables him to receive the celestial impressions in his waking hours. Concerning the second type of prophetic revelation, Ibn Sina speaks of the existence of the angelic intellect. This angelic intellect to him is the holy faculty or holy intellect, by which the second and higher type of prophecy comes to reality. See M. E. Marmura, ed., *Proof of Prophecies: Fi Ithbat al-Nubuwwāt (Ibn Sina)* (Beirut: Dār al-Nashr, 1968), English Preface.

I assume the above-mentioned explanation of imaginative faculty shows why `Allāma maintained that human beings with all essential characteristics, when qualified and abstracted from matter, live in peace, ease and happiness in the world of form among the angels and righteous human beings and take pleasure from their friendship and communication with the chastes. See Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān Qabl al-Dunyā," p. 166.

⁶⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "Risālat al-Wasā'it," pp. 103-104.

⁶⁵ Ibid. See also Ḥusaynī Tihirānī, *Mihr-i Tabān*, pp. 71-72.

However, the groundwork of the development of the two other stages and faculties is still there.⁶⁶ This kind of development occurs in accordance with the aforementioned principle of substantive motion.

Body and Soul

For the sake of a better understanding of human nature and the self, one's knowledge of the human body and soul seems inevitable. Again as was mentioned in the case of human nature, one's conceptualization of self-realization depends to a large extent upon one's understanding of the nature of body and soul and their interrelationship. Looking at body and soul as two material and organic manifestations of human nature results in a naturalist conceptualization of self-realization, whereas seeing them as separate - one material and organic (body) and the other immaterial and everlasting (soul) - brings forth another interpretation.⁶⁷

Dewey's Position

Dewey held two positions on the issue: the earlier one (1882) was presented as a soul-body relationship, while the later one (1925) was described as a mind-body relationship.⁶⁸ Dewey arrived at his earlier interpretation of soul and body by studying their physiological and psychological relationship. He elaborated more precisely and accurately on the same notion when he came to his discussion of the mind-body relation. The question of the connection between body and soul by itself suggests some sort of dualism, i.e., that there is soul and there is body. This dualism in its early Deweyan perspective was never clearly opposed to the idea that human beings were of a two-sided nature, composed of both material and immaterial (spiritual) substances.⁶⁹

Dewey's notion of a body and soul dualism appears in his early explanation of the body and soul relationship. To him, "material" and "physical" were attributes of the body, whereas the "psychic" aspect of human nature is attributed to the human soul. In this

⁶⁶ Larijani, ed. & trans. *Insān az Āghāz tā Anjām*, pp. 218-19, editor's note and explanation.

⁶⁷ It will be clarified that the first position was taken by Dewey and the second by 'Allāma.

⁶⁸ Dewey in his later revised perspective changed his discussion of soul-body relation to that of mind-body relation. See Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago; London: Open Court Publishing Company, 1926), pp. 248-97.

⁶⁹ Cf. Dewey, "Soul and Body," in *The Early Works*, v. 1, pp. 114-15.

regard, the body is the universal organization and localization of the psychic function. The degree of the localization depends upon "the cell's connections through its fibres" as well as the levels of functions. Breathing, digesting, swallowing, etc., as lower functions "have very definite and thoroughly localized centres," whereas walking, talking and reading as higher activities, "have less and less definite local centres." This to Dewey means that there exists no definite locality for the higher intellectual powers at all.⁷⁰

When it comes to the conception of the soul, Dewey maintained that the soul is immanent in the body because the soul "has realized itself in the body."⁷¹ Moreover, "the soul is immanent in the body, not by the virtue of the body as mere body, but because, being transcendent, it has expressed and manifested its nature in the body." The following passage shows clearly Dewey's position on the reality of soul and its functions. "The soul, accordingly, is not a powerless, impotent something, so transcendent that it cannot be brought into relation with matter. It is a living and acting force which has formed, and is constantly forming the body, as its own mechanism."⁷²

Dewey, without delving into the inner of nature of the body and soul, elaborated on some physiological and psychological qualities that human nature has been equipped with under the control and supervision of the soul and body. Dewey, explaining his objective, stated, "I hope it will be understood that the object is not to get into the inside of nature and behold with mortal eyes what is going on there, ..." What he intended instead was to realize "[h]ow shall the facts of physiological psychology be interpreted?"⁷³

These psycho-physiological facts, as seen in Dewey's initial remarks on soul and body, include the nervous system and fundamental nervous activity. Dewey maintained that fibers and cells are the constituents of the nervous system. The following table provides an abridged image of the three-dimensional function of the fibres, as well as the role of the cells. These presuppositions are taken for granted by Dewey. "In short," Dewey explained "the fibres conduct the nervous energy; the cells produce it and regulate its distribution." The distinction between the functions of the two elements "introduces a

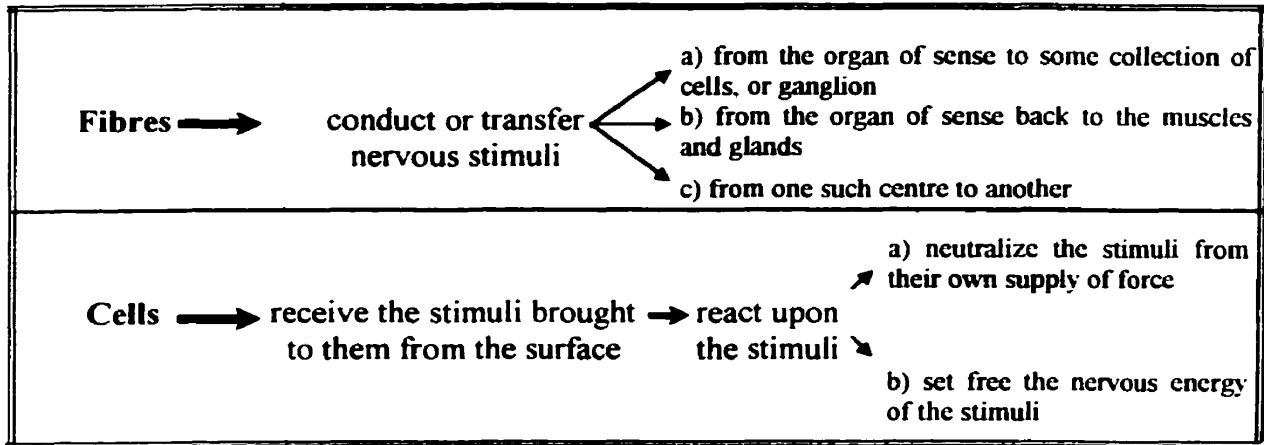
⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 109-110.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 112. See also p. 113.

⁷² Ibid., p. 113.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 94

dualism into the action of the nervous system at the start.” However, this distinction “is a relative one.” The fibre is in fact “a series of nervous elements each reacting upon the stimulus of the one before ... It is, in effect, a connected series of cells.” To this extent, it is not correct to state that some particular set of cells “alone is the organ of the soul.”⁷⁴



Three-Dimensional Function of the Fibres and the Role of the Cells

Regarding the life of the soul, Dewey placed emphasis on the status of the brain among the other parts of the nervous system, i.e., the spinal cord and the peripheral endings of the nerve fibres. The brain, as the central organ to the nervous system, “is undoubtedly most closely and most influentially connected with the life of the soul, but its connection is of the same kind as that of every other part of the nervous system.”⁷⁵ We see how the issue of the soul-body has been examined in terms of its physiological or neurological sense. The importance of the process of the neurological functions of the brain and of other parts of the nervous system never escaped Dewey’s attention. However, the question of how they function and provide the life of the soul seems to have posed a dilemma for him. In order to avoid making “a miracle of the whole matter” or to evade calling “in some utterly foreign power,” Dewey took into consideration that “[t]he psychical is *homogeneously* related to physiological.” Furthermore, Dewey indicated “that the psychical is immanent in the physical.” This same immanence is the major concern Dewey expressed in his discussion of the connection between soul and body. To him, since all elements which are involved in the nervous system act in concert, “if any

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 94-95.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

part of the nervous system has any connection with the soul which is not supernatural in character, every part must have in kind the same."⁷⁶

In his later writings on the psycho-physiological relationship between mind and body, Dewey rejected the Christian and Aristotelian dualism of soul and body. In his eyes there is no room for mind-body dualism in terms of earthly or fleshly body and Godlike or everlasting spirit.⁷⁷ Differentiating living things from the non-living, Dewey focused on three characteristics found in the activities of living things. Needs, demands or efforts, and satisfactions are the major character components of human psychophysical activities. The following table indicates these three elements as well as their descriptions from Dewey's point of view.⁷⁸

<i>Characteristics of Living Beings' Activities</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
Need Demand or Effort Satisfactions	By need is meant a condition of tensional distribution of energies. For example, the body is in a condition of uneasy or unstable equilibrium. The state of unstable equilibrium is manifested in movements which modify environing bodies and lead to an active equilibrium pattern. A recovery of the equilibrium pattern occurs when the environment changes due to interactions with the active demands of the organism.⁷⁹

Characteristics of the Activities of Living Things

Biologically and empirically speaking, Dewey said that the difference between living animate things and non-living inanimate things "is not that the former has something in addition to physico-chemical energy; it lies in the *way* in which physico-chemical energies are interconnected and operate, ..."⁸⁰ He employed the term "psycho-

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 96-97. I think the term *homogeneous* suggests that both psychical and physical are of the same nature. They are not heterogeneous identities containing dissimilar elements and parts.

⁷⁷ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 249-252. See also Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 252.

⁷⁹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 252-53.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 253-54.

physical” in order to explain “the conjunctive presence in activity of need-demand-satisfaction in the sense in which these terms have been defined.”⁸¹

Touching upon the issue of the fundamental nervous activity, Dewey focused on the “process of adjustment.” He maintained that stimulation and reaction or inhibition to the stimuli create the process of adjustment. Dewey came to this conclusion, elaborating on “a fundamental mode of nervous activity” that leads to “an adjusting activity.” This process results in the immanence of the psychical “in the physical in a teleological”⁸² manner as “directing it toward a given end” by means of:

- a) “selecting some activities,”
- b) “inhibiting some” other activities,
- c) “responding to some,”
- d) “controlling others,”
- e) “adjusting and co-ordinating the complex whole.”⁸³

Ambiguity and dilemma in Dewey’s words and comments show themselves when one compares Dewey’s early essay on “Soul and Body” and his later writings on “Nature, Life and Mind-Body.”⁸⁴ In the former, he did not express any negative regard for Aristotelian or Christian interpretations of the soul-body relationship. On the contrary, opposing materialism and the materialistic notion of body and soul,⁸⁵ he paid in his conclusion more attention to what Aristotle developed and to what Christian scholarship transformed it into.⁸⁶ Looking critically at the materialist’s position on body and soul, Dewey recognized the lack of self-sufficiency of matter and maintained that in “a verbal or pictorial conception of matter” the matter is only “the principle of physical causation; the constant and invariable relation of antecedent and consequent To attempt to include more is to destroy the principle without reason, and to introduce unbounded

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 254.

⁸² The term “teleology” is derived from its original Greek terminology *telos*, *teleos*, meaning an end, and *logos*, discourse. Teleology as explained by Webster is “[t]he science or doctrine of final cause; the science treating of the end or design for which things were created.” See S. Thatcher, ed. in chief, *The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of English Language* (Chicago: Consolidated Book Publishers, 1967), s.v. **teleology**, p. 861.

⁸³ Dewey, “Soul and Body”, p. 98, 100.

⁸⁴ Dewey in his *Experience and Nature* devoted a chapter (Ch. 7) to nature, life and mind-body relation. Ibid., pp. 248-97.

⁸⁵ From a materialist’s point of view, every thing including body and soul is either material or “entirely determined by material events.” See Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature*, p. 61.

⁸⁶ Cf. Dewey, “Soul and Body,” pp. 114-15.

confusion.”⁸⁷ In Dewey’s eyes, the materialist’s conceptualization of matter is a self-contradictory one. Making “teleological action an attribute of matter, and intelligent purposiveness a function of the material,” the materialist “is giving up all that characterizes matter as matter, and is, in effect, recognizing the primacy of spirit.” In this manner, the materialist unwillingly regards matter and material as being “the hiding places (which are the dwelling places) of spirit and the psychical.” Dewey continued, “the psychical always revenges itself by encroaching upon the material, and when we finally look for some independent speck of matter, there is none there. It has all been spiritualized.”⁸⁸

To this extent, all power and activity derive from the soul and it is the soul that can know and act by means of body which has been constantly formed by the soul as its own mechanism. When seen in this manner, the supremacy of the soul over the body, as which goes against the grain of materialist thought, was recognized by Dewey. He, commenting on materialism, indicated that the interpretation of all physical, intellectual and mental activities of the soul has been

the farthest removed from evidence of materialism. They are but the conclusive evidence of the thoroughness with which the soul has done its work, has formed its mechanism. They are all evidence that the soul is not hanging helpless in the air, but has made the body its home, and has realized itself so effectually in this body as its mechanism, ...⁸⁹

In short, the materialist’s cry “Lo, see what the body can do.” was transformed into the true cry in Dewey’s mind, “Lo, see what the soul *has* done.”⁹⁰ In his perspective, the soul “has tabernacled in the flesh and transformed that flesh into its own manifestation. The body is the bodying forth of the soul.”⁹¹

Finally, Dewey sided with the Aristotelian and Pauline⁹² notions of the body and soul relationship and gave much credit to Aristotle’s understanding of the issue on the one hand and St. Paul’s confession on the other. Dewey remarks:

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 100-101.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 101-102.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 113-14.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 114.

⁹² Pauline refers to St. Paul “(1st century), the Apostle of the Gentiles, born of Jewish parents at Tarsus in Cilicia (now in Turkey).” On one of his missions to Damascus “a vision of Jesus Christ converted him into

It was the 'master of those who know' [Aristotle] that said that the soul was perfect realization or expression of a natural body, and at the same time, not the product of body, but its very life, its essence, its truth and reality -at once its final and efficient cause.⁹³

Dewey's opinion in this regard does not resemble what he advocated in his middle and later researches and works. Here Dewey gave credit to God as the Originator and Creator of body and soul, as well as the One Who raises the spiritual body on its resurrection. It seems that Dewey was not only interested in the Christian Biblical understanding of human body and soul but that he also accepted its notions when he narrated the Biblical verses indicating that God gives to the human being and to each seed its own body "as it has pleased Him."⁹⁴ I will continue Dewey's elaboration of the appropriate Biblical verses when I come to discuss the issue of death and resurrection.

Dewey terminated his essay on "Soul and Body" with the following passage. These final words, which are absent of commentary, demonstrate his final position on the concepts of soul and body, as well as their relationship. "Let it be no surprise that physiological psychology has revealed no new truth concerning the relations of soul and body. It can only confirm and deepen our insight into the truth divined by Aristotle and declared by St. Paul, and with good reason."⁹⁵

To solve the dilemma and ambiguity in Dewey's words, one must distinguish between his earlier and later thought due to his intellectual evolution. We have seen that Dewey's essay on "Soul and Body," among his earliest works, appeared between 1882-1888. In this period of time, Dewey continued to adhere to Christian evangelicalism⁹⁶ according to which the office of divine creation is not negated. In the same period, he wrote his essay on "The Obligation to Knowledge of God," elaborating on his evangelical faith in God, and indicating that one's knowledge of God must not be considered "as a faculty apart, separate from our will and our desire."⁹⁷ It was also noticeable when he

a fervent adherent of the new faith." For more on St. Paul see *The Bible*, Acts 9: 1-22; 13: 16-41; 16: 23-40; 17: 22-34; 26: 1-29; and 27, pp. 788-805. Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 1133 s.v. PAUL.

⁹³ Dewey, "Soul and Body," p. 114. For further information on Aristotle's position on the soul-body relationship see Aristotle, *Aristotle on the Soul (De Anima)*, trans. -with commentaries and glossary- Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell, Iowa: The Peripatetic Press, 1981), pp. 19-20.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: *The Bible*, 1st Corinthians 15: 37-38.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁹⁶ Cf. Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of Dewey*, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁷ Dewey, "The Obligation to Knowledge of God," in *The Early Works*, v. 1, p. 62.

published his essay on "The Place of Religious Emotion," where he maintained that religious emotion "alone can call us out of the kingdom of drudgery and routine, and introduce us to the joy of the kingdom of God."⁹⁸ At that time, Dewey recognized these notions as the major principles of evangelical faith. Nor had he by then expressed any opposition to the ancient philosophies. This is most probably why he finalized his understanding of the soul and body by advocating an Aristotelian or Pauline alternative as was mentioned above.⁹⁹

Dewey, in his middle and later works and especially in his *A Common Faith*,¹⁰⁰ and *Human Nature and Conduct*,¹⁰¹ as well as his *Experience and Nature*,¹⁰² negates any divine notion attributed to human nature. This notion, however, is not thoroughly rejected in his essay "Soul and Body." He just said that the soul lives "... down here in the world of matter"¹⁰³ Dewey's negative position on any sort of divine transcendent is apparent in his later works where he verifies Darwinism and the theory of Evolution.¹⁰⁴ One would realize that the Darwinist theory of evolution by itself from the very start point disconnects human beings from any agent as Divine Creator.

`Allāma's Position

To understand `Allāma's position on the soul and body is to appreciate his understanding of the Quranic verses that served as his reference. `Allāma's philosophy in this regard goes hand in hand with his Quranic studies. His philosophical and psychological knowledge of the soul and body depends for the most part on his understanding of the Qur'ān's position on the soul and body. The following verse, for example, is the key one upon which `Allāma founded his idea of the soul and its nature. "And they ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little."¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Dewey, "The Place of Religious Emotion," in *The Early Works*, v. 1, p. 90.

⁹⁹ Dewey, "Soul and Body," pp. 114-15.

¹⁰⁰ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 27; Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, pp. 101, 107 and 109.

¹⁰¹ Dewey, *Human Nature*, pp. 270-71, 301.

¹⁰² Dewey, "Nature, Life and Body-Mind," *Experience and Nature*, pp. 249-254.

¹⁰³ Dewey, "Soul and Body," p. 113.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Dewey, *The Influence of Darwinism*, pp. iv, 2, 4-6, 8-9; Dewey, *Human Nature*, pp. 262, 264, 273.

¹⁰⁵ *The Qur'ān*, 17: 85.

Unlike the philosophers who went before him,¹⁰⁶ `Allāma did not begin his study of human body and soul in terms of their physiological or psychological functions and perceptions. He rather studied the nature of these two phenomena in terms of their originality and their creation by the Creator. As we have seen, however, in Dewey's earlier writings, in `Allāma's mind too the dualism of corporeal body and incorporeal soul has been taken for granted.¹⁰⁷

However, `Allāma insisted on the process of transformation which almost takes a four-month period of time since the rest of the life-germ in the womb to the appearance of the fetus.¹⁰⁸ He, following the influential master of Shī'ī transcendental philosophy Mullā Ṣadrā, came to believe that the human "soul is corporeal in its occurrence and spiritual in its permanence."¹⁰⁹ The latter established this doctrine on the basis of his fundamental principle and theory of "substantive motion."¹¹⁰

Furthermore, when `Allāma was asked if there is any Quranic proof for the two above-mentioned different conditions of human soul, his response was positive. In his eyes, the following verses not only prove the above-mentioned process of transformation but also link all stages of the perfection of human soul to the existence of God as its Creator, Who is present in any single stage:

And certainly We created human being of an extract of clay. Then We made him/her a small life-germ in a firm resting-place. Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.¹¹¹

`Allāma explains that the above verses demonstrate the originality of both body and soul. As `Allāma mentions, there are six verses in the Qur'an indicating that human

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Sīnā for instance is one of the Muslim philosophers who studied human nature in length and detail in terms of its physiological and psychological aspects. See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā'*; *al-Ṭabī'iyyat* (Qum: Maktaba Ayatullah Mar'ashī, 1983), v. 2, part 3, pp. 428-433.

¹⁰⁷ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 2 (Beirut), p. 113.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 15, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹ "*al-nafs-u jismanīyat-ul ḥudūth ruḥānīyat-ul baqā'*." Cf. Ḥusayni Ṭihirāni, *Mihr-i Ṭabān*, p. 71.

¹¹⁰ According to the theory of substantive motion, Mullā Ṣadrā "examined exhaustively the question of motion and its relation to the natural world While other philosophers restricted motion to accidents, he enunciated a theory of 'substantive motion' according to which not only is natural substance in motion, but substance as such is principle basis for accidental changes." Mesbah Moosavi [Miṣbah Musawī], *Substantive Motion According to Mullā Ṣadrā*, p. 1

¹¹¹ *The Qur'ān*, 23: 12-14.

beings were originally created from the earth. For instance, "Allāh created you of dust"¹¹² Or as in the case of Adam, "... He created him from dust, then said to him Be, and he was."¹¹³ The creation of Adam from pure dust and clay, and of his descendants who were generated from him demonstrates that the creation of human beings is certainly of corporeal substance. Moving forward from the first stage, according to the theory of substantive motion, we find that corporeal substance is transformed into something else. The same process of transformation continues in the intermediary stages when a human being is first in the form of a clot, then a lump of flesh, then a collection of bones and finally bones clothed with flesh. At all stages of this wonderful process of creation one sees that something corporeal is transformed into another corporeal object. This, according to the above-mentioned doctrine, suggests that the human soul is corporeal in its occurrence [*jismāniyat al-ḥudūth*]. After God covered the bones with flesh, He "caused it to grow into another creation" which is to 'Allāma a transformation from a corporeal stage to spiritual one [*rūḥāniyat al-baqā'*]. This is the point where these material objects grow into 'human soul'. This same soul is no longer material. It is then an abstract immaterial and spiritual being which belongs to the corporeal body and resides there until the death of the body. At that point the soul departs from the body and the latter perishable object remains in its earthly station without the soul. The soul, after the death of the body and after it is abstracted from matter, departs for God.¹¹⁴ These phenomena all occur in accordance with substantive motion. This innate motion of substance occurs both in corporeal objects and immaterial human soul.¹¹⁵ This shows us how the doctrine of substantive motion functions as a fundamental premise and basic principle in 'Allāma's position on the journey of the body and soul.¹¹⁶

When seen in this manner, 'Allāma's interpretation of dualism is a developmental transformation of several sequential corporeal objects into an incorporeal existent being. This dualism does not suggest that human nature at the very outset of its existence begins as a composite of body and soul.¹¹⁷ On the contrary, 'Allāma's dualism is translated in

¹¹² Ibid., 35: 11.

¹¹³ Ibid., 3: 58. Husyani Tīhrāni, *Mīhr-i Tābān*, p. 153.

¹¹⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 2, p. 113.

¹¹⁵ Husyani Tīhrāni, *Mīhr-i Tābān*, pp. 151-154.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 152.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

terms of a permanent and active transformation from a lower corporeal form to a higher one, when the soul appears in the fetus and human nature achieves its incorporeal state.¹¹⁸ It is permutation and transformation but not composition and combination. At its origin a human being is a pure material (dust, life-germ) but perfectible object, which becomes immaterial in its journey towards its perfection and becoming soul.¹¹⁹ In this sense, 'Allāma believed that body and soul should be seen in terms of the process of transformation according to which the material portion of human nature is transformed into immaterial human soul and becomes spiritual.¹²⁰ 'Allāma maintains that human body "is continuously undergoing change and transformation," yet "the reality of 'I' remains fixed. It does not undergo any change or transformation."¹²¹

One could find ambiguity in 'Allāma's words when one studies another part of 'Allāma's Quranic works where he, elaborating on the originality and creation of a human being, emphasized that the human species is a combination of two parts or substances, corporeal body and incorporeal soul. This combination is implanted within human nature at creation. 'Allāma explained that these two components are united and accompany one another till the end of mundane life and the occurrence of bodily death. Here 'Allāma's emphasis on combination (and not transformation as it was expressed above), as well as his focus on body-soul dualism are obvious.¹²²

'Allāma's doctrine of body-soul transformation can be perceived through his extensive remarks on human soul and body found in his writings on human nature and in his commentary on some Quranic verses. In this regard, the unification of the soul and body in their mundane life is of significance in 'Allāma's mind. He, elaborating on some Quranic verses, emphasizes the notion of this kind of unification. Accordingly, there is no doubt that this visible body which is called a human being contains within itself the origin

¹¹⁸ 'Allāma did not mention when this transformation occurs. However, it is clear, as depicted in the Qur'an ("... We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of creators." 23: 14), that this process appears after the body of fetus is shaped by getting flesh and bones in its 4th month of life. See Miṣbah *et al*, *Ravānshinās-i Rushd*, pp. 289-90.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Ḥusaynī Tīhrānī, *Mīhr-i Tabān*, pp. 152-54.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

¹²¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, p. 163.

¹²² Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 2, p. 113.

and wellspring of life to which all human features, including our consciousness, will, and feelings are attributed. The origin of life is what God refers to as spirit or soul.¹²³

‘Allāma explained that a brief look at the Qur’ān indicates that in a real sense soul and body are distinguished. He gives the example of paste which is a combination of water and flour. To this extent, whenever the soul is with body the human individual is alive and as soon as it leaves the body the latter dies. However, a closer look at the particular Quranic verses helps us discover a richer concept of soul-body relationship. God says: “... I have made him [Adam - human being] and breathed into him of My spirit, ...”¹²⁴ According to ‘Allāma’s interpretation, the inhaling of the divine spirit into the human body is in fact to make the body itself more human, and not to add something to the body which contradicts it in essence.¹²⁵ Thus, a human being is one actuality, one fact, and not a combined being made of two opposite substances. A human being is one both when the soul is breathed into the body and when it is separated from it.¹²⁶

‘Allāma suggested that one may take the pronoun ‘you’ in the following verses into consideration. This ‘you’ which occurs three times in each, corresponds to three occasions in a human being’s life as follows: 1. ‘you’, as regards a human being at the time of creation; 2. ‘you’, as regards a human being after death and 3. ‘you’, as regards a human being on the Day of Resurrection, when he or she returns to God. The verses in question are: “From it [the earth] We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it will We raise you a second time”,¹²⁷ and “He (also) said: Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised.”¹²⁸

‘Allāma indicated that in spite of the fact that the soul in its essence differs from the body, it is, however, unified with the body in its earthly life to the extent that both are considered the same and are viewed without being separated from one another. In the above-mentioned verses the repeated pronoun ‘you’ constitutes the basic element of ‘Allāma’s argument. This ‘you’ is not something other than the unified soul and body. As

¹²³ Ibid., v. 20, pp. 138-39 (Beirut). See also *The Qur’ān*, 15: 29 and 32: 9.

¹²⁴ *The Qur’ān*, 15: 29.

¹²⁵ The assumed contradiction is in the sense that body is corporeal, perishable and mortal; whereas, soul is incorporeal, imperishable and immortal.

¹²⁶ Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 20, pp. 138-39 (Beirut).

¹²⁷ *The Qur’ān*, 20: 55.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 7: 25.

was mentioned earlier, it is not the soul but the corporeal body, which is created from the earth and lives and dies in the material world. Furthermore, it is not the body but the soul that is imperishable and everlasting. This is in spite of the fact, as it is implied in the aforementioned verses, that both body and soul are included in the pronouns 'you.' How then are they present in each other's positions, when each one has its own characteristics and attributes? The only explanation is that the soul and body are unified in a way in this mundane life and that the body in turn becomes a human being by receiving the soul.¹²⁹

ʿAllāma insisted that a human being is one real being from which all functions of a natural organism and immaterial soul are derived. He put emphasis on the fact that it is the soul and not body that makes a human being human. And this is what is meant by pronoun 'you'. He confirms the idea of soul-body unification, relying on an Imami tradition narrated from the sixth Imam of the Shi'a, Imam Ṣādiq, who was asked,

'Why does a human person feel the departure and separation of the soul from the body, whereas he feels no such a feeling when the soul resides in the body?' The Imam answered: 'It is because the body grows up and develops itself side by side with the soul [in this mundane life]'.¹³⁰

On the basis of certain other Quranic verses,¹³¹ ʿAllāma maintains,

the soul after its unification with the body and its organs acquires the powers of hearing, seeing and thinking ... These powers are among the corporeal actions which cannot be performed without the intermediary of bodily organs and faculties.¹³²

But what is the reality of the soul that resides in the body and is unified with it? ʿAllāma gave the answer in accordance with his understanding of the Quranic verse that addresses the same question one which was put to the Prophet himself. "And they ask you about the soul [*ruh*]. Say: The soul is from my Lord's command, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little."¹³³ He explained that the soul in its verbal sense means the source of the life by means of which an animate being receives the power of feeling and motion. In its Quranic

¹²⁹ Ṭabaṭābā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," p. 173. Ṣādiq Lārijāni, ed., *Insān az Āghaz tā Anjām*, p. 20 and p. 226, editor's note.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Such as "Say: He it is Who brought you into being and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts: little is it that you give thanks." *The Qur'ān*, 67: 23. Also, "Then He made him [human being] complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts: little is it that you give thanks." Ibid., 32: 9.

¹³² Ṭabaṭābā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," p. 173.

¹³³ *The Qur'ān*, 17: 85.

sense, the soul is considered a command of God. God's command is described in at least one other verse thus: "His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: "Be," so it is."¹³⁴ `Allāma proposes that this is an answer to the true nature of all types of soul, whatever form the question may take.<sup>135</sup> `Allāma's interpretation suggests that while human body is originally made of matter, human soul is originally from God. In this way, the corporeal part of human nature comes into the existence gradually and in different stages, whereas the other part is blown into the physical body from the realm of the Divine at once, by God's command, and without the intermediary of any material involvement, condition or requirement.¹³⁶

Another point which is focused on by `Allāma is the immortality of the soul. The soul is the part which every human person refers to with the pronoun *I*. "It is a conception which we are never oblivious of – as long as we are alive and conscious."¹³⁷ It is the true element of humanity that makes us human and this is the only substance which one recognizes as *I*. This is the element by means of which one is able to understand, to perceive, to intend and to act. In these processes, the body functions as an instrument for the activities of the soul.¹³⁸ `Allāma argues that one may become oblivious to one of one's organs or limbs and "even of the whole body." However, one is never neglectful of the "I".¹³⁹ As was mentioned earlier, this is the cornerstone of the knowledge by presence.

Furthermore, `Allāma believed in the immaterial soul. He maintained that our soul "is not like our external limbs which we feel with our senses of sight or touch, etc., nor is it like our internal organs which we know by senses or experiment." The soul is immaterial since "it is neither divisible nor governed by time or space." Moreover, there is no doubt that our body and its limbs and organs, "as well as the faculties and characteristics found in it, are all material." They are material because they are subject to

¹³⁴ Ibid., 36: 82.

¹³⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 13, pp. 208-214: "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," p. 172.

¹³⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," p. 167; Khusraw Bāqiri *et al.*, "Pishfardhā-yi Ravanshināsi-i Islāmi," [Presuppositions of Islamic Psychology] *Hawzeh [Hawzihi] and University Quarterly* 2 no. 5 (Qum: The Centre for Hawzeh and University Cooperation, Winter, 1996): 26-27.

¹³⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, English translation, v. 2, p. 221.

¹³⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 10, pp. 120-21.

¹³⁹ Ibid., English translation, v. 2, p. 221.

all characteristics of matter such as “gradual change, dissolution and divisibility”. These phenomena are not seen in the case of the soul; therefore, the soul is not material.¹⁴⁰

The above discussion demonstrates a two-sided image of human nature, one material and the other spiritual. Thus considered, human beings are equipped with two opposite inclinations either to the material world or to the Divine immaterial sovereignty.¹⁴¹ What follows is a further discussion found in ‘Allāma’s writings which complements his perspective of human soul, and provides us with a clearer understanding of him.

A Major Distinction between the Human Soul and Angels

The unification of the soul and body described above is the major distinction between the soul on the one hand and angels on the other. They both are abstract beings, having the same origin, beyond time and space, and lacking the defects of the corporeal and material world. However, the soul moves downward from its celestial realm to the scope of material dimension of human nature since it is impossible for it to execute any action without the help and intermediary of human corporeal body. Hence it resides in a human body and through interconnection with that body finds its way to perfection and fulfillment. The angels on the other hand stay in their heavenly rank and in their position of angelic intellect.¹⁴²

Two other differences between human soul and angels are found in ‘Allāma’s explanation. Due to its descent to the realm of matter and its residence in the mundane life of human body, the soul finds two ways opening towards its journey: one directs it to destruction and devastation, while the other guides it to the exalted ranks, to eternal happiness, to heaven where it shall abide. Depending on which path of the two the soul willingly chooses and based on the type of actions performs in concert with the body, the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ For more details on ‘Allāma’s thesis on soul and body see Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 369-74 (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyah, 1970) and pp. 364-69 (Beirut: al-A’lami, 1970); *Al-Mizān*, English translation, v. 1, pp. 221-28; *Al-Mizān*, v. 2, p. 116 (Tehran) and p. 113 (Beirut); v. 10, p. 121 (Tehran) and p. 118 (Beirut); v. 12, p. 161 (Tehran) and p. 154 (Beirut); v. 13 pp. 203, 208, 212 (Tehran) and pp. 195, 189, 199 (Beirut).

¹⁴² Ṭabāṭabā’i, “al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā,” p. 173.

soul journeys towards either its adversity or its happiness. This is while the angels have only one way to follow, which is the path of happiness and prosperity.¹⁴³

The notion of the ways of misguidance and guidance, as well as the concept of adversity and happiness find their origin in the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. As depicted in the Qur'an, human beings are advised to reflect on whether someone has power over them, and if this someone sees them. He is the One Who created human beings and has given them two eyes and a tongue and two lips, and pointed out to them "the two conspicuous ways."¹⁴⁴ In other verses, God says: "(I Swear by) the soul and Him Who made it perfect. Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it. He [she] will indeed be successful who purifies it. And he [she] will indeed fail who corrupts it."¹⁴⁵

'Allāma pointed also to a third difference, one that lies in the hierarchical level of existence, where the position of the soul is higher than that of the angels to the extent that the soul has power over them. According to the Quranic verses describing the Divine Light or Holy Soul, as well as Prophetic or Imāmi traditions interpreting these verses, this same soul coming from the highest celestial realm (*al-malakūt al-'lā*) is with the Prophets and with the Imams, the Prophet Muḥammad's successors. This holy soul, or as Aveicenna refers to, this holy reason¹⁴⁶ always assists the Prophets and Imams as the Guides of human beings.¹⁴⁷

'Allāma's Division of the Soul; a Hierarchical Conception

Relying on an Imāmi tradition narrated from the Sixth Imam of the Shi'a, Imam Ṣadiq, 'Allāma presents his division of the soul in terms of three respective hierarchical levels as shown in the following table. Accordingly, "the soul of faith [*ruh al-imān*] accompanies a human being's body until s/he commits a great sin then it departs from the body"¹⁴⁸ 'Allāma indicated that 'the soul of faith' has been devoted to the faithful

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 175.

¹⁴⁴ *The Qur'an*, 90: 4-10.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 91: 1, 7-10. See also 2: 38; 7: 29-30. Ṭabaṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," pp. 174-75.

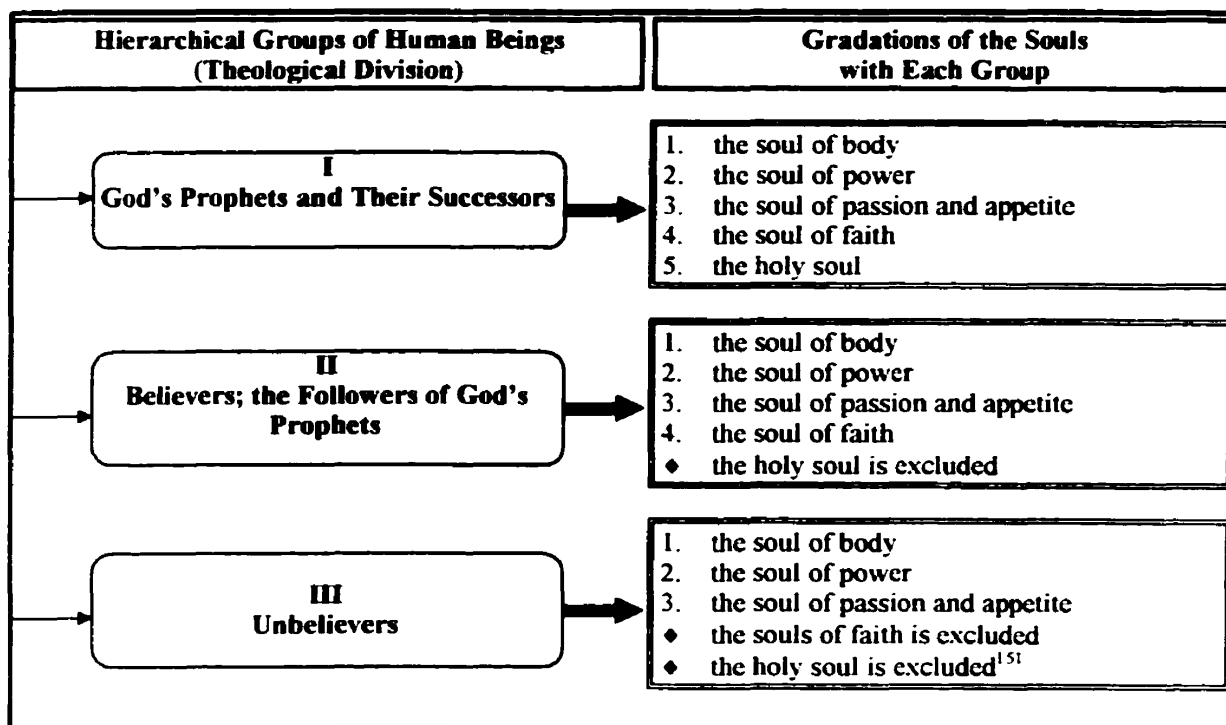
¹⁴⁶ Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, edited and commented on by Ibn Sīnā's pupil Ṭūsī, v. 2, pp. 364-367; Marmura, ed., *Proof of Prophecies*, English preface by the editor.

¹⁴⁷ See Ṭabaṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," pp. 177-79; Ṭabaṭabā'i, *al-Mizān* (Tehran), v. 15, pp. 152-53, the author's interpretation of the 'Verse of Light' in the Chapter of Light' in the Qur'an, 24: 35.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.; Abu Ja'far Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Qummi (d. 903), *Basā'ir al-Darajāt fī Faḍā'il al-Muḥammad* (Qum: Maktaba Āyatullāh al-Mar'āshī, 1983), p. 447: 3.

believers. From his point of view, this division has been more or less depicted in the Qur'an where, describing the believers, it says: "These are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him"¹⁴⁹

`Allāma, describing the holy soul, which is with the Prophets and their successors, remarked that this soul is considered the light of guidance by means of which God's servants have been guided to the right path.¹⁵⁰



A Hierarchical and Theological Division of God's Servants Seen in Terms of Their Respective Soul-Gradation

Finally, in `Allāma's eyes, the above-mentioned hierarchical levels of the soul are not but different manifestations of the one soul, the soul which springs forth at the command of God. He came to the conclusion that these levels in fact originated from the same essence and root, but they differ from one another in an analogical sense and division. This means that they represent different gradations of the same soul and not different sorts of the soul. Looking from this standpoint, the soul of God's prophets or

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 176; *The Qur'an*, 58: 22.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 176-77.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 177-78.

their successor for instance is much stronger and more enlightened than the souls of their followers. Furthermore, even the souls of the prophets, as well as those of their followers and ordinary people are not in the same rank among themselves.¹⁵²

Death: Finality or Beginning; Resurrection of Soul and Body

Certainly, those who hold a divine world-view, propose a notion of self-realization other than that which has been drafted by non-believers and secularist thinkers. One of the fundamental pillars of a divine theology is belief in life after the death and in the resurrection of soul or of both soul and body. According to a secularist system of thought, human life is restricted to its mundane realm. Thus, it is declared that human life will come to an end by and through the individual's death.¹⁵³ Generally speaking, these two groups, thinking along different lines, demonstrate different attitudes towards understanding self-realization and show effectively dissimilar approaches and inclinations to the actualization of the self.

Moreover, one's interpretation of death depends upon one's understanding of human life, just as how one sees the reality of death springs from how one views human life and the reason behind human life. To the materialist who thinks of human nature as something merely organic and material or as a manifestation of matter, human death has no reality beyond the annihilation of the body. To the evolutionist who denies any link between human nature and the Creator, though confirming spirituality, death must be considered the death of body and soul with all their implications and faculties leaving room to the emergence of other existences through a continuous evolutionary process.¹⁵⁴ According to those who believe in spiritual and not bodily resurrection, death occurs to the body alone and causes its annihilation, whereas the soul/spirit returns to its original orbit whence it came. According to this model it is the soul and not perishable body that

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Materialists, Marxists, naturalists and secular humanists are among those thinkers who advocate no resurrection for human beings after death. These groups share each other in holding an organic view of human life and in rejecting the traditional and theological dualism of soul and body. Also they believe that human beings have "emerged as the result of a continuous process." Accordingly, there must be no resurrection of either body or soul after death. See Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 8.

will receive rewards or punishment depending on what merit the human individual acquired in his/her mundane life. Now, bearing this variety of interpretations in mind, I will turn my attention to the theological beliefs of our thinkers and their interpretation of death and resurrection.

Dewey's Position

In Dewey's case, I have found no substantial discourse by him on the issue of death and resurrection except for what he elaborated on in the final lines of his essay on Soul and Body. This early piece of writing reflects the evangelical faith of his youth. At that time in his life he clearly believed in the resurrection of both body (spiritual body) and soul. To this extent, in Dewey's mind, body "is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."¹⁵⁵ The following quotation by Dewey from St. Paul's letter gives more weight to the early theological concepts of body and soul and their resurrection. These Pauline words are depicted in the Bible. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body ... Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual."¹⁵⁶ Dewey's remarks on the resurrection of the body demonstrate his agreement with St. Paul. Dewey, honoring the teachings of Jesus Christ and his disciple St. Paul ("the great disciple of the great teacher"¹⁵⁷), quoted verses of the epistle addressed by the latter, as depicted in the Bible, in St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians. Here I quote from some of the earlier verses in the epistle:

But some one will say, 'How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?' ... That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; ... and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Dewey, "Soul and Body," p. 114. The verses that explain the doctrine of the resurrection are: "But God gives it a body as He wished, ... it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." *The Bible*, 1st Corinthians 15: 38, 44, p. 826.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. This Biblical verse goes like this: "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural: then the spiritual." *The Bible*, 1st Corinthians 15: 46, p. 826.

¹⁵⁷ Dewey, "Soul and Body," p. 114.

¹⁵⁸ *The Bible*, 1st Corinthians 15: 35-37; Dewey, "Soul and Body," p. 114.

Dewey goes even further, saying “[i]t is by no accident or meaningless chance that we read in the Apostle’s Creed those sublime words: ‘I believe in the Resurrection of the Body.’”¹⁵⁹

From this standpoint, death should be the end of human mundane life but not the end of human spiritual life. It is a transitional point from the process of sanctification during human mundane life to the soul’s spiritual perfection and actualization. The belief in such a kind of resurrection of the soul suggests that the doctrine of self-realization must not restrict its domain to the earthly life of human nature alone. It rather has to be studied in a greater scope including both the material and immaterial, mundane and heavenly, as well as mortal and immortal dimensions of human life. When resurrection is seen in this way, the supremacy of the soul over the body, spiritual over material, and imperishable over perishable body can be justified.¹⁶⁰

The major problem that remains is that one finds no harmony between Dewey’s position on the doctrine of evolution and morals on the one hand and his belief in the resurrection of soul and spiritual body on the other. The problem with Dewey is that one cannot determine for certain whether he maintained such an idea once he turned to pragmatism, evolution, secular humanism and empiricism. To the contrary, there are signs indicating that Dewey could not have retained his belief in resurrection in the hereafter. For instance, the eighth principle of the *Humanist Manifesto I* signed by thirty four liberal humanists including Dewey “considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man’s life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now.”¹⁶¹ This at least separates the Dewey of the 1880s from the later version, for it was in the 1890s that Dewey emerged as a humanist empiricist thinker and remained no longer as a Christian Evangelist believer.¹⁶² Logically, the latter interpretation renders the former one unstable and controversial. This suggests that Dewey abandoned his earlier beliefs. Perhaps, one could say that the ultimate resurrection from the Deweyan perspective is a

¹⁵⁹ Dewey, “Soul and Body,” p. 114.

¹⁶⁰ This is my own understanding and evaluation.

¹⁶¹ Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 9.

¹⁶² A brief look at both Dewey’s earlier essay on “Soul and Body” (1882-86), and his work on *Human Nature and Conduct* (1918-29) helps us understand the dissimilar positions which were taken by Dewey on human nature, resurrection, morality and morals. The most crystal image of later Dewey is manifested in *Humanist Manifesto*. See Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, pp. 7-11.

worldly actualization of one's ideals and precepts. However, this is an idea for which I have found no reference within Dewey's works and writings.

`Allāma's Position

`Allāma's position on death is based on his studies and interpretation of the Quranic passages. Accordingly, for everything on earth, including human beings, there is a death [*mawt*] and an appointed term [*ajal*]. "Do they not reflect within themselves: Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two but with truth, and (for) an appointed term? And most surely most of the people are deniers of the meeting of their Lord."¹⁶³ No single being may live on the earth beyond its appointed term, nor may it die before that.¹⁶⁴ The appointed term [*ajal*] of a living object is the time when its period of life and activity terminates. And only God knows when this appointed term, this terminating time will be. Just as the soul resides in the body by and through the command of God, so does the appointed term exist in everyone.¹⁶⁵ The separation of the two poles of human life, the earthly and heavenly substances of human nature, is called death, just as their togetherness is called life. After this kind of separation, the soul returns to its original source, to the world of light and sacredness, whereas the body remains in its earthly world which is its origin.¹⁶⁶

Death, in `Allāma's view, is not a simple experience, such as the absence of feeling, motion and life that happens at the time of death. It is rather a returning to the One Truth that occurs through exodus from material life and admittance into the spiritual realm.¹⁶⁷ Human life is eternal, and never comes to an end even when death overtakes our body. This is because, in `Allāma's mind, death causes nothing but a transformation from one place to another. Relying on a Prophetic tradition, `Allāma indicated that we human beings are created for eternity and not for annihilation.¹⁶⁸ In this way, our present life in the mundane world is considered an introduction to future life after and a bridge to the Hereafter. In their worldly lives human beings consciously or unconsciously, rightly or

¹⁶³ *The Qur'ān*, 30: 8.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 7: 34.

¹⁶⁵ Tabātabā'i, "al-Insān ba'd al-Dunyā," p. 204; *The Qur'ān*, 6: 2.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 206, narrating a tradition from the sixth Imam of the Shi'a, Imam Ṣādiq.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

wrongly, advocate a world-view or cling to a belief-system and act accordingly. These beliefs and actions provide the *how* of their future when they die and after their departure to an unearthly and eternal life. Then, their tranquillity and happiness or misfortune or grief will be actualized in accordance with what they believed and how they acted in the earthly life. As depicted in the Qur'ān, we shall receive nothing except what we strive for and we will be fully rewarded for our striving.¹⁶⁹ Or, as the Qur'ān says: "Whoever does good, it is for his[her] soul, and whoever does evil, it is against it; and your Lord is not unjust to the servants."¹⁷⁰ `Allāma explained that what we are supposed to receive in the Hereafter is generally called reward, which may be either good or bad, depending. He maintained that one's earthly life is in fact an investment by means of which one is able to prepare and provide the requirements and facilities for his/her life in the world of the Hereafter.¹⁷¹

`Allāma, insisting that human death is in God's hands and occurs by His permission, elaborated on the inevitability and predestination of death. He pointed out that there is no way to escape from death and that death leads us to our Lord.¹⁷² God is the One Who "takes the souls at the time of their death."¹⁷³ However, when He intends to take those souls, He merely commands the Angel of Death and other angels who are the latter's companions and helpers.¹⁷⁴

What is taken at the time of death is the soul and not the soul and the body together. When death occurs, it occurs to the corporeal body, then the soul is separated and disconnected from the body and begins its journey to its Lord. The body now is left without any spirit and motion and without any life. In one sense, death and sleep resemble one another and can be an analogy to each other in the sense that in both cases, it is soul which is taken and it is body which is left. After death, the soul begins its new life in a situation that has none of the material and perishable qualifications and descriptions of the earthly life. This is why death is considered "a minor resurrection."¹⁷⁵ `Allāma came to

¹⁶⁹ *The Qur'ān*, 53: 39-41.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 41: 46.

¹⁷¹ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 20, pp. 356-57 (Beirut).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, v. 4, p. 55; v. 15, p. 22; v. 17, pp. 268-69; v. 19, p. 132; v. 20, p. 113. `Allāma's words in this regard are depicted in his commentaries on the following Quranic verses: 3: 156; 39: 42; 75: 26-30, etc.

¹⁷³ *The Qur'ān*, 39: 42.

¹⁷⁴ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 17, pp. 268-69 (Beirut); "al-Insān ba'd al-Dunyā," pp. 208-209.

¹⁷⁵ Ṭabaṭabā'i, "al-Insān ba'd al-Dunyā," p. 212.

another conclusion, noting that the soul and body are recognized as two distinguishable substances, separable from one another.¹⁷⁶

`Allāma went into some detail and touched upon many issues in relation to the question of death, such as the life between the period of death and the major resurrection. However, I need not expand any further my discussion of `Allāma's position on death.¹⁷⁷

Summary Comments

Both Dewey and `Allāma studied human nature as a part of an all-encompassing nature. While the former studied both nature and human nature from a naturalist point of view, the latter linked both nature and human nature to somewhere beyond the natural span of life.

Dewey's choice of the subtitle to his *Human Nature and Conduct* indicates that he saw the volume as in fact an introduction to social psychology.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, from Dewey's standpoint, human nature may be seen as a channel to social psychology. This does not mean that the personal side of human nature was not a focus of Dewey's mind. However, as will be made clear, social norms and standards were of the first importance from Dewey's point of view.

`Allāma on the other hand, looked at human nature first and foremost in terms of its relation to the Creator at all stages of human life. His concern was with human nature from the very outset of the creation of the human soul and before its inherence in the human body to the end of physical life on this earth, and even into the soul's life after death and finally at the Resurrection.¹⁷⁹ For `Allāma, the doctrine of creation seems fundamental, whereas in Dewey's thought, the doctrine of evolution is the basis. Although the social aspects of human life, as well as human beings' intercommunications are `Allāma's focus, they are secondary to the perfection of the human individual and self-actualization.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 17, pp. 268-69 (Beirut); "al-Insān ba'd al-Dunyā," pp. 207-209 `Allāma's commentary on The Qur'an, 39: 42.

¹⁷⁷ For more details on the issue of death from `Allāma's point of view see his extensive work on the problem of death "al-Insān ba'd al-Dunyā," pp. 203-314.

¹⁷⁸ See the subtitle of Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct*.

¹⁷⁹ See Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Rasā'il*, pp. 165-314.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

As one discovers a kind of inconsistency in Dewey's belief-system and world-view, one may easily understand the same inconsistency in the implications of Dewey's thoughts and concepts. It seems that the emergence of the theory of evolution persuaded Dewey to reject the doctrine of divine creation. Moreover, the Biblical image of human nature discouraged Dewey from advocating the Christian interpretation of human nature. Seeking a scientific approach to his study of human nature, Dewey was directed to the theory of evolution.

The above is sufficient to help us understand the subject in question, and can direct us to our major inquiry into self-realization. We should now be somewhat clearer as to our thinkers' attitudes towards the concept of self-realization, as well as to the presuppositions and fundamental elements of their respective interpretations of self-realization. The time has come now to consider their respective doctrines of human conduct, morals and morality, especially in light of their understanding of human nature. I have chosen to explore these themes in particular, because, as will be explained, morality in general forms the cornerstone of any discussion of self-realization. In the following chapter I will look at morality from the standpoints of both Dewey and 'Allāma, both of whom articulated the instrumentality of morals for self-realization.

PART III

Chapter **3**

Moral Experience and Human Character

Avenues towards

Self-Realization

Chapter 3

Moral Experience and Human Character

Avenues towards Self-Realization

Introduction

I will assume that, from an hierarchical perspective, morality is a crucial vehicle if it is not the most refined means of self-realization. In one respect, self-realization has to do with human conduct and implies a relationship to human ethical and moral character. As we will see later, self-realization is a twin process which, on the one hand, deals with the theoretical or ideological aspect of human life and, on the other, concerns moral practice and practical conduct. Morality and ethics may be viewed as the most direct and closest avenue to the actualization of the self. It will be pointed out that a concept such as self-actualization can be a subject-matter of the moral and ethical domain or applicable therein. This section of the study is intended to elaborate the essential elements and principles of both Dewey's and 'Allama's comments on morality in order to examine the extent to which they placed emphasis on its instrumentality for self-realization.¹ The term "moral" is an adjective comparable to "ethical, virtuous, righteous, noble." It means "conforming to a standard of what is right and good."² Within the range of terms, "moral" is being taken as "the most comprehensive term ... in all of its pertinent senses it implies a

¹ Although the terms 'moral' and 'ethical' are comparable and can be used interchangeably, the latter "primarily implies a relationship to ethics, the branch of philosophy which deals with moral principles" yet "characteristically gives a slightly different impression owing to certain subtle connotations...." Depending on the context, ethical principles are in relationship to those elements "derived from a certain school of ethics, or of a formulated code behind them, or of an idealistic quality; an action is often described as ethical rather than moral when it accords with what the writer or speaker believes to be a higher or finer standard of morality than the one generally accepted" for further information see Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary Synonyms*, s.v. **moral**, p. 547.

² Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, s.v. **moral**, p. 547.

relationship to character or conduct viewed as good or bad or as right or wrong.” The sense of human character and its conformity “to the accepted standard” is strongly implied in all features and applications of moral and morality.³ This standard determines the rightness or goodness of human conduct. With this in the mind, I embark on my studies of Dewey’s and ‘Allāma’s attitudes.

Moral Principles and Self-Realization

Both Dewey and ‘Allāma have written substantial works on morals and morality, human character and values identity that derived from their respective philosophies of ethics and values. They also to a good extent touched upon the important issue of theory and practice and their relationship to one another. At the same time, as their companions, colleagues and biographers have indicated, they possessed personal morality and character, and thus they were not just men of words. Their character indeed spoke louder than their words and sayings. Dewey’s biography shows him to have possessed good conduct and behavior even when he was in his early schooling.

Persons who knew Dewey during these early school years have said he was quiet and reserved, but liked fun and was always ready to participate in the play and games of the playground and neighborhood. Shy with strangers, he was friendly and companionable with those whom he knew well. His teachers found him courteous, well-mannered, conscientious, and likable; ⁴

A “devotee of books,” a “bookworm,” and possessing a “love for nature”—these are the qualities by which Dewey has been recognized.⁵ Humbleness, righteousness, assurance, perseverance and encouragement in seeking knowledge, confidence, were qualities by which ‘Allāma has been introduced and recognized by his pupils and companions.⁶ His erstwhile student, Miṣbāḥ, wrote of ‘Allāma as “an example of gravity, dignity, peace, self-respect, trust [in God], sincerity, meekness, affection, and other moral excellences.”⁷ In short, both Dewey and ‘Allāma were much admired not only for their messages of morality but also respected as messengers of their moral principles.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, pp. 4-5.

⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶ For more on ‘Allāma’s character see Guli Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 14-21, 90.

⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

The moral principles of Dewey and 'Allāma were derived from two different philosophical, ontological or epistemological positions. I shall examine whether these principles led to two different moral systems. In the second part of this chapter, I concentrate on our thinkers' comments on the importance and justification of the doctrine of "theory and practice." Ultimately, I aim to analyze the possible link between moral principles and the process of self-realization.

Dewey's Position

My knowledge of Dewey's position on and interpretation of morals and morality is derived from his numerous writings. In his earlier work on *Moral Philosophy* (1894), Dewey paraphrased a number of philosophies and doctrines of ethics and morality including those advocated by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Christianity, and modern English and German philosophies. In this essay, Dewey limited himself to exposing these doctrines without personally commenting.⁸

In another essay on morality written during the same period, Dewey elaborated on moral consciousness, focusing on the subject and the predicate of moral judgment.⁹ He asserted "that either conduct or character is the subject to which we attach moral predicates."¹⁰ Reading the predicate of moral judgment, when we attribute goodness or badness to a specific character or conduct we, in fact, form the predicate of the moral judgment.¹¹ From Dewey's view, the role of impulse in moral predication as "a native or spontaneous way in which the self act," is significant. "The expression of impulse" according to Dewey "is thus a process of self-realization."¹²

Dewey's copious volume on ethics and morals was written in 1908 and has been listed among his middle works as an ample independent volume.¹³ The volume is in fact a history and a philosophy of ethics that begins with the early growth of morality, especially that of group morality.¹⁴ In his definition of ethics, Dewey indicated that it "is

⁸ For a good summary of moral philosophies see Dewey, "Moral Philosophy," in *The Early Works 1882-1898*, v. 4, 1893-1894, pp. 132-151.

⁹ Dewey, "The Moral Consciousness," in *The Early Works 1882-1898*, v. 4, 1893-1894, pp. 240-46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 243-44.

¹³ See Dewey, "Ethics," in *The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, v. 5, 1908.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-183, 187.

the science that deals with conduct, in so far as this is considered as right or wrong, good or bad. A single term for conduct so considered is 'moral conduct,' or the 'moral life.' It is worth noting that the terms "ethics" and "moral" mean the same thing in Dewey's thought. The difference is in the root of these two terms. The terms 'ethics' and 'ethical' derive from a Greek word *ethos*, which originally meant customs, usages and so on, while "moral" derives from Latin *mores*.¹⁵ Summarizing the moral situation and its criteria, Dewey concluded that every moral situation or experience has two distinct components, as demonstrated in the table below.¹⁶

<i>Moral Situation</i>	<i>Defining Criteria</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
<i>Involving Voluntary Activity</i>	I. "a matter of conduct, behavior"	- "activities which are called out by ideas of the worth, the desirability of results"
	II. "that kind of conduct in which there are ends so discrepant, so incompatible"	- one is required to be selected and the other to be rejected

The Defining Traits of a Moral Situation

Having in mind to establish a social psychological¹⁷ and natural¹⁸ framework of morals and morality, Dewey gave no credit to the religious commands as manifested in either the Catholic or Protestant understanding of morality. His sharp reaction to Christian moral thought was due to its abject image of human nature. Having adopted a negative attitude to this image, Dewey wrote, "moralists were led, perhaps, to think of human nature as evil because of its reluctance to yield to control, its rebelliousness under the yoke.... Why did morality set up rules so foreign to human nature?"¹⁹ Dewey maintained that this attitude has led to "the separation of morals from human nature." This to him is the reason why some people "hold that all morality is a conventionality hampering to the development of individuality."²⁰ Dewey did not mention the names of those who advocated this idea. The framework within which Dewey established his theory of morality was never so extreme, although he was raised and grew up in such an

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁶ For more on the contents of the table see Ibid., pp. 187-195.

¹⁷ For more on social psychological dimension of morality see Dewey, *Human Nature*, pp. 4-8, 271-77.

¹⁸ For more on natural perspective of morality see Dewey, "Moral Approbation, Value and Standard," in *The Early Works 1882-1898*, v. 4, 1893-1894, p. 247.

¹⁹ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 4; see also pp. 4-8.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 8.

atmosphere. Morality to him is originally a human-made structure; it is not a theological, divine one that causes separation of morals from human nature.²¹

This is one of the places where Dewey expresses his anti-Christian (or perhaps anti-religious) understanding of human nature and its moral system. Dewey came to this negative conclusion due to two basic elements in this interpretation. These two elements explain the separation of morals and morality from human nature.²² The first element refers to the Biblical passages, which indicate that although human beings were created in accordance with God's image, human nature became evil and sinful due to Adam's and Eve's disobedience of God. Thus, people debased the original divine image, transforming it into something evil.²³ This understanding of human nature seems to Dewey nothing but "degrading human nature" and treating "it as a hopeless mess".²⁴

Dewey's pessimism was also due to a second element to be discovered in Christian faith that can be easily identified in Biblical passages where they acknowledge the supernatural roots of Christian morality and morals. "For Christendom as a whole, morality has been connected with supernatural commands, rewards and penalties." This connection with supernatural commands is viewed in Dewey's mind as irrational and superstitious.²⁵ Joseph Ranter, one of the editors and commentators of Dewey's philosophy, elaborated on this position of Dewey, who remarked, "[t]hose who have escaped this superstition have contented themselves with converting the difference between this world and the next into a distinction between the actual and the ideal, what is and what it should be."²⁶ Based on this ontology and epistemology, Dewey, rejecting divine intervention or, as he put it, supernaturalism and disregarding its moral commands, established his own theology of "self-realization as the moral ideal."²⁷ Looking at it in

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, 271.

²² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-9.

²³ For more on human nature and sin see: *The Bible*, Genesis 1: 26-27; 2: 7, 9, 18-25; 15-17; 3: 1-3, 8-13, 22, 24; 6: 5. Isaiah 59: 1-2. Jeremiah 17: 9. John 8:7. Roman 3: 10-18, 23; 5: 1, 12; 7: 15. Ephesians 2: 1-5. James 2: 8-11.

²⁴ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

²⁶ Joseph Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1928), p. 320, from Dewey, *Human Nature*, pp. 295-96.

²⁷ See Dewey, "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal," in *The Early Woks 1882-1898*, v. 4, 1893-1894, pp. 42-53.

this manner, Dewey came to his own conclusion according to which morality never finds its roots or authenticity anywhere other than in human nature.²⁸

But in fact morals is the most humane of all subjects. It is that which is closest to human nature; it is ineradicably empirical, not theological nor metaphysical nor mathematical. Since it directly concerns human nature, everything that can be known of the human mind and body in physiology, medicine, anthropology, and psychology is pertinent to moral inquiry. Human nature exists and operates in an environment. And it is not "in" that environment as coins are in a box, but as a plant is in the sunlight and soil.²⁹

The humane aspect of moral theory, in Dewey's mind, is considered elementary to all modern students of ethical discussion. Accordingly, the bases and sanctions of morals are found in human relations and their bearing upon human welfare."³⁰

Another significant feature of Dewey's theory of morals is his insistence on the reconciliation of moral knowing and scientific knowledge. In his response to Dr. Stuart, a critic of his "theory of moral judgment and action," Dewey indicated that he disagreed with Stuart because the latter set up a rigid dualism between scientific knowledge and moral knowing. Dewey found the features of moral knowing "to be implicit, or involved, in all inquiry whatever."³¹ Intending to present a harmonized theory of moral knowing, Dewey argued that all branches of knowledge, and science "are a part of disciplined moral knowledge so far as they enable us to understand the conditions and agencies through which man lives, and on account of which he forms and executes his plans."³²

Dewey's argument and justification of moral judgment as "body of systematized knowledge," rests upon his conceptualization of knowledge and science "as an act."³³ Elaborating on the different conceptualization of knowledge and science, Dewey maintained that knowledge, in the first instance, "may designate a property which resides inherently in arranged facts...." In the second instance, knowledge "may mean the

²⁸ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 271.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 271-72.

³⁰ Dewey, "The Case for Bertrand Russell," in *The Later Works*, v. 14, p. 232.

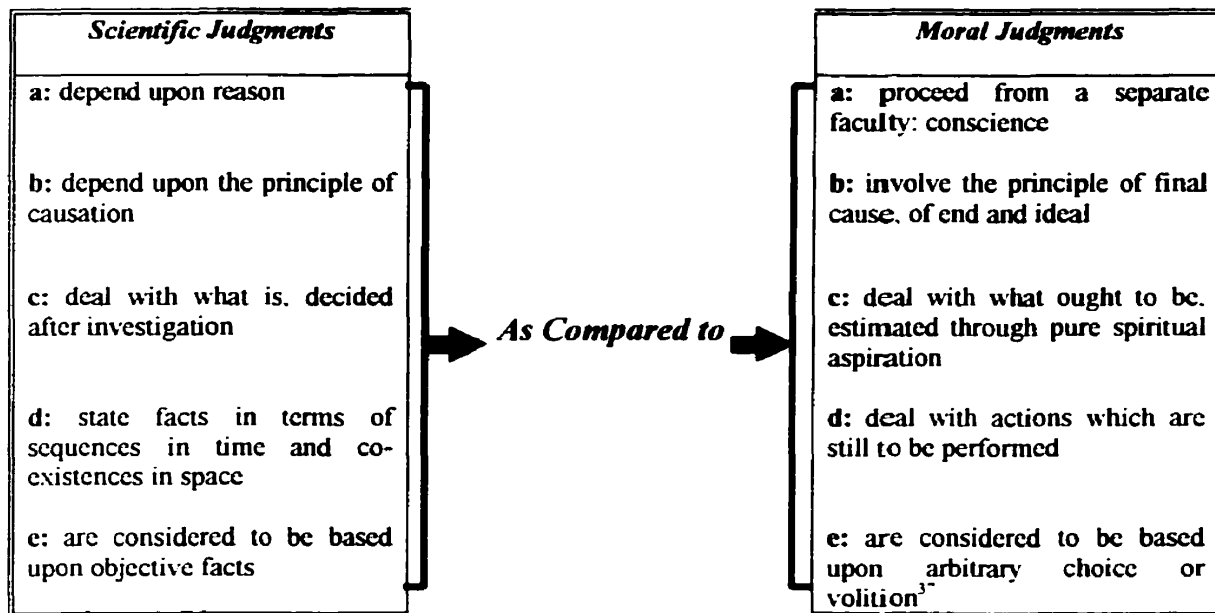
³¹ Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder," in *The Later Works*, v. 14, pp. 62-63.

³² Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 272; Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 321.

³³ Dewey, *Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1903), pp. 3, 13 (115, 125); Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 321, 326.

intellectual activities of observing, describing, comparing, inferring, experimenting, and testing, which are necessary in obtaining facts and in putting them into coherent form.”³⁴

Distinguishing between scientific and moral judgments (as shown in the following figure), Dewey devoted his effort to the removal of the presupposed antinomy between them.³⁵ He proposed the possibility of a science of morals that can be justified on the basis of knowledge identification in accordance with its second interpretation, as well as by the acceptance of moral experience continuity. He maintained that the denial of this continuity is rooted in the belief in transcendental conceptions of the ethical judgment. It is because transcendental principles “do not flow from the course of experience as that is judged in terms of itself, but ... have a significance independence of the course of experience as such.”³⁶



Scientific Judgments When Seen Versus Moral Valuations

Dewey attempted to remove or, at least, reduce the logical gulf separating moral and scientific judgments. He maintained that such a gulf

³⁴ Ibid., p. 3 (115); Ibid., pp. 321-22.

³⁵ Dewey, *Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Modernity*, p. 5. For more on this comparison see pp. 4-14. See also Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 324-26.

³⁶ Ibid., 4. Ibid., p. 324.

³⁷ For more on the contents of the table See Dewey, *Logical Conditions*, pp. 4-6 (116-18). See also: Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 324-26.

reduces itself to an assertion of two antinomies; one, the separation between the universal and the individual; the other, between the intellectual and the practical. And these two antinomies finally reduce themselves to one: Scientific statements refer to generic conditions and relations, which are therefore capable of complete and objective statement; ethical judgments refer to an individual act which by its very nature transcends objective statement.³⁸

Dewey finally insisted that when “the scientific judgment is identified as an act, all *a priori* reason disappears for drawing a line between the logic of the material of the recognized sciences and that of conduct.”³⁹

Dewey’s remarks on the nature of morals and the moral situation have also been paraphrased and described by Ranter. The latter maintained that “the nature of the moral situation” could be identified through the “mutual modification of habits by one another.” However, the operation of the habits by itself “is not a matter of moral judgment.” In order to recognize morals, the cultivation of the moral “or priggish posing” seems of necessity. As Ranter explains, the belief in moral facts and realities as fixed and absolute principles did not escape Dewey’s attention.⁴⁰

The serious matter is that this relative pragmatic or intellectual distinction between the moral and non-moral, has been solidified into a fixed and absolute distinction, so that some acts are popularly regarded as forever within and others forever without the moral domain.⁴¹

I will now discuss the validation of moral concepts and its criteria. It should be emphasized that moral concepts are never found or discussed free of any value and validation. The criteria of each valid moral concept depend upon the value-system ascertained and approved by the holder of that concept. This issue is worth discussing and investigating. Dewey insisted that categories of terms like “the natural and spiritual, the sensuous and the ideal, the standard and the right, obligation and duty, freedom and responsibility,” are samples of the criteria by which moral concepts may be judged as valid. However, these categories emerge and function within a context and a situation. Thus, the estimation of the value and import of these categories must be studied in

³⁸ Dewey, *Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Modernity*, pp. 5-6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13. *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴⁰ Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 318-19, from Dewey, *Human Nature*, pp. 278-80; 39-40.

⁴¹ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 40. Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 320.

reference to their specific situation.⁴² In his *Theory of Validation* Dewey placed emphasis on the fact that moral judgments cannot be understood “apart from the contexts or situations in which they are made.”⁴³

Dewey attempted to establish a naturalistic doctrine of morals that defines value in terms of the operation of human interests and intelligence within the world.⁴⁴ There remains the question whether moral principles are objective moral truths or nothing more than subjective phenomena—human invention. The answer to the above question may be inferred from Dewey’s *Theory of Valuation* where he showed that none of these two reflections is completely satisfactory to him. In Dewey’s eyes the answer is rather something in between. He maintained, “we oscillate between a theory that, in order to save the objectivity of values, isolates them from experience and nature, and a theory that, in order to save their concrete and human significance, reduces them to mere statements about our own feelings.”⁴⁵

‘Allāma’s Position

In his definition of the term ethics, ‘Allāma used the expression “science of ethics” which deals with human traits as are related to vegetable, animal and human faculties. The science of ethics “differentiates the good traits from the bad ones.” Thus, a person may acquire good traits and practice accordingly and properly in order to achieve happiness. The good traits thus acquired and the good actions emanate from the person and attract general praise from the human society. From ‘Allāma’s point of view, there are three comprehensive faculties of the human soul upon which the basic elements of ethics are established. “These faculties lead the psyche to acquire practical knowledge, from which emanate all actions of the human species.” These three faculties and their functions and influences upon ethical theory and practice are demonstrated in the following table.

⁴² Dewey, *Logical Conditions*, pp. 129-30. See also Ranter, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 332-34.

⁴³ James, *New Studies in the Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by Steven M. Cahn (Hanover, New Hampshire: the University of Vermont and New England, 1977), pp. 154-55, from Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 33.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁴⁵ Dewey, *Quest for Certainty* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), p. 263.

<i>Basic Faculties of Human Morality</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Descriptions and Functions</i>
The Origins of Ethics	1. Desire	Those human actions which "are intended to gain some benefit, for example: eating, drinking and wearing clothes, etc.
	2. Anger	Those actions which "are aimed at protecting, or repulsing harmful effects from, one's person, honour or property, etc."
	3. Rational Faculty	Those actions which "are related to mental conception and proposition, for example, arranging syllogism, preparation of argument, etc." ⁴⁶

Faculties of Human Soul as the Basis of Human Morality

'Allama indicated that human personality "is composed of these three faculties, and they, by joining together, emerge as a composite unit and become the source of all human activities and actions." The final cause of such a composition is human beings' felicity and happiness—which is attainable whenever these faculties go in their middle courses. The deviation of any of these faculties "from the middle path to either the right or the left," or to either the extreme or the deficiency "would disturb the ratio of that particular ingredient, which would result in changing the entire nature of the composite unit, that is, man himself."⁴⁷

Two characteristics distinguish 'Allāma's interpretation of morality and morals from both Christian and Deweyan positions. 'Allāma placed emphasis on the divine transcendental aspect of human nature on the one hand and on the human character of morals and morality, on the other. The first aspect never negates or opposes the second one, while the second, which is in fact related to human effort, is never separate from the first one. The identification of the two in 'Allāma's eyes is anything but the result of a collision; rather, they are intertwined.

In any event, from the time of the first human beings to the present, people have ceaselessly used their God-given nature to strive for better means of life. One who does not employ his vital powers or his external or internal organs - his eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet, or his brains, heart, lungs and liver - will be nothing but a

⁴⁶ For more on the contents of the table see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 370-71 (Beirut); English translation, v. 2, pp. 228-29.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

corpse. Thus man works and acts in various ways not just because he is compelled to do so but because he is human, and because he perceives through his innate intelligence that he must struggle to realize his wishes and to secure his happiness by any means available.⁴⁸

Duties and responsibilities are of great significance in 'Allāma's understanding of morals. Human beings are created as responsible beings who "must carry out a set of appointed tasks whatever their manner of life or environment – religious or secular, under the rule of law or under tyranny, urban or rural."⁴⁹ The realization of their true aims as human beings depends to a great extent upon their fulfillment of the many tasks they carry out. 'Allāma insisted, "the value of these tasks, which constitute the sole means to happiness, is the value of humanity itself, which is the most precious commodity conceivable, and which we would exchange for nothing else."⁵⁰

'Allāma did not build his image of morals on the basis of so-called ideology of sinful nature or "spiritual death." First of all, it is because, according to him, Adam's and Eve's disobedience of God was not a sin in the sense of rebellion against a divine obligation. It was rather a kind of disregard by them of the privilege that God intended to bestow upon them, whereby they would have found their eternal happiness in Heaven had they not disobeyed Him. In other words, what Adam and Eve did was in fact against their own welfare.⁵¹ In this sense, their sin was not considered a major sin and therefore did not introduce sin into God's creation of human beings. It was indeed a spiritual sin whose reality was Adam's fall from Heaven to earth and his departure from the universe of light and eternal happiness to that of darkness, difficulties and obligations.⁵²

'Allāma's commentator Lārījānī explains that sin in its nature is that kind of disobedience towards God which works against the individual's worship of Him. But the case of Adam and Eve was not like this, since God did not tell them not to eat from the tree in any specific way. True sin happens when God's servants disobey Him in ritual and sacred obligations derived from either His commands or His warnings and prohibitions.

⁴⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 149-150.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 150.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 281 (Tehran).

⁵² Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," pp. 183-184.

After all, as it is stated in the Qur'an,⁵³ earthly life is the appropriate scene, time and context for ritual and religious obligations and prohibitions.

In short, divine obligations were imposed on Adam and Eve after they fell and came to dwell in the material world.⁵⁴ This is why Adam and Eve came to utter words revealing their respect for God: "Our Lord! We have done injustice to ourselves, and if You do not forgive us, we shall certainly be of the losers."⁵⁵ In either case, God was merciful towards Adam and his wife,⁵⁶ and purified them as they were created. By the mercy of God, they were spiritually revived and there was nothing to separate them from God, from each other or from nature. Afterwards, Adam, according to Shi'i theology (as presented by 'Allāma and others), was not only the origin of the human species but also God's first prophet, as well as His first representative [*khalifah*] on earth.⁵⁷ "Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him)."⁵⁸ In Shi'i traditions, one finds words that exalt Adam and describe him as highly-ranked among humankind. Adam is recognized as God's unparalleled proof and an evidence of His might, as well as the first one who was appointed prophet.⁵⁹ Moreover, it is believed that all prophets, including Adam, were infallible.⁶⁰ This, in its turn, introduces purity and sinlessness into God's first representative on earth, and justifies the fact that Adam's disobedience cannot be seen as contradicting his sinlessness and infallibility.⁶¹

The following example may help us understand 'Allāma's interpretation of Adam's and Eve's treatment to God's command (prohibition). A teacher invariably asks his or her students to study well, to do their assignments carefully and to be prepared for the exams; otherwise, they will fail. Those students who pay no attention to their teacher's admonition will fail. Yet, they are not considered sinful or evil simply because they disregarded what was recommended to them for their own sake and benefit. In this way,

⁵³ *The Qur'an*, 2: 35.

⁵⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," pp. 183-84; Lārijāni, ed., *Insān az Āghāz tā Anjām*, pp. 32, 33, 250-51.

⁵⁵ *The Qur'an*: 7: 22; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 6, p. 281 (Tehran).

⁵⁶ *The Qur'an*, 2: 37.

⁵⁷ *The Qur'an*, 2: 30. See also translator's comment on the same verse in Shakir's translation of the Qur'an, p. 7.

⁵⁸ *The Qur'an*, 20: 122.

⁵⁹ Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 85, p. 216: 1; 'Abbās Qummī, "Jāmi'ah A'immat-il Mu'minin," *Mafātih al-Jinān*, p. 1069.

⁶⁰ Muẓaffar, *The Faith of Shi'a Islam*, pp. 21-22; Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," p. 183.

⁶¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," p. 183.

they may be seen as being unjust towards themselves. This same idea is implied in the Qur'ān's accounts of Adam's and Eve's disobedience towards God. "And (We said:) O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden; so eat from where you desire, but do not go near this tree, for then you will be of the unjust."⁶²

Moreover, in its Quranic concept of responsibility, every human being is responsible for his/her destiny and the actualization of his/her happiness, both in mundane life and the hereafter. Like all other creatures, the human being was created in the best image and form, and has been guided to its perfection and fulfillment. "Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal)."⁶³

This is general guidance shown by God to all beings which allows them to find their appropriate path towards perfection. This point is stated in two other verses, "Who creates, then makes complete. And Who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal)."⁶⁴ Allāma explains that God creates a being, bestows upon it a proper measure of its required characteristics, then guides it towards what its nature or essence demands. This is the same real discipline which is found in every particular being and in all existence, including human beings.⁶⁵ Human beings, in addition, were created with an innate potential towards good or evil. It has been left to them to decide. This concept of divinely-given freedom, responsibility and guidance is clear on every page of the Qur'ān. In the following verses, for instance, two different groups of human beings are distinguished in terms of the path and the deeds they have chosen.

Blessed is He Who created death and life that He may try you – which of you is best in deeds; and He is Mighty, the Forgiver.⁶⁶

There surely came over man a period of time which he was not worth to be mentioned. Surely We have created man from a small life-germ uniting (itself): We mean to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing. Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful.⁶⁷

⁶² *The Qur'ān*, 2: 35.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20: 50.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 87: 2-3.

⁶⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "al-Insān qabl al-Dunyā," pp. 197-198.

⁶⁶ *The Qur'ān*, 67: 1-2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 76: 1-3.

Certainly We created man in the best make. Then We render him the lowest of the low. Except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward never to be cut off.⁶⁸

Insisting that all existential dimensions and elements of human nature are created in the best shape and measure,⁶⁹ 'Allāma indicates that all human beings (based on the divine rule of creation) have been rendered "the lowest of the low"—in other words, existence at a material and mundane level. Among human beings, only "those who believe and do good" will be exalted and enter the highest of the high, whence their innate nature originally comes, after having spent their lives in the lowest realm possible.⁷⁰

Hence, human beings are divided into two different groups in terms of their actions in the mundane realm. "So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it."⁷¹ Accordingly, one group loses out, while the other is successful. "Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth and enjoin on each other patience."⁷²

This does not suggest that human beings are left without divine support and guidance; this is depicted in the religious and ritual commands that have reached them through and from God's prophets. The office of divine prophecy in 'Allāma's mind is a blessing from God conferred on His servants. In his response to the question whether human beings with their "God-given mind, can distinguish good from evil and avoid the pitfalls", 'Allāma held,

[i]t must be realized, however, that our minds alone cannot untie this knot and guide us to realism and right action. All undesirable qualities and actions that we see in human society stem from persons who have minds and the power of discernment. Because of egotism, greed, and passion, however, their minds have been overcome by emotions and put at the service of desire.⁷³

Such persons, according to 'Allāma's concept of morality, have gone astray. He concluded that besides their internal wisdom, human beings are in need of another means of support "that will never be overcome by desire or err in its guidance." This support is,

⁶⁸ Ibid., 95: 4-6.

⁶⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 20, p. 319 (Beirut), and p. 455 (Tehran).

⁷⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān fi al-Dunyā," pp. 197-98; Lārijāni, *Insān az Āghāz tā Anjām*, pp. 259-60; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, pp. 318-321 (Beirut).

⁷¹ *The Qur'ān*, 99: 7-8.

⁷² Ibid., 103: 2-3.

⁷³ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 57-58.

as was mentioned in the first chapter, that of external wisdom, i.e., the office of divine prophethood and messengership, by which we are summoned and guided to happiness.⁷⁴

However, people are free either to accept and support this divine and prophetic guidance or reject them thoroughly. The following verses of the Qur'an show that there must be no compulsion in religion and religious commands, and that even the Prophet Muḥammad himself was never expected by God to oblige people to accept his message or messengership.

There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; ⁷⁵

Say: O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship. Nor am I going to worship that which you worship. Nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship. You shall have your religion and I shall have my religion.⁷⁶

These repetitions make it clear that the emphasis is placed on human freedom of choice in terms of religion and religious belief.

`Allāma's doctrine of morals and morality finds its originality in the above-mentioned passages which at the same time point towards the fundamental elements of his doctrine of self-realization.⁷⁷ The idea that the individual is duty-bound: a) toward God, b) toward himself or herself, and c) toward others is the focus of `Allāma's discussion of morals and moral education.⁷⁸ This, in its turn, requires self-actualization and depends upon how the individual discovers one's self first and how one interacts with the Creator, with him/her own self, with fellow human beings and even with nature in general.⁷⁹

In a relatively long discourse on ethics, `Allāma indicated that acquiring and improving the morals and the traits of the self in theory and practice depend upon the continuous performance of good deeds. Such an approach "etches its particular

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ *The Qur'an*, 2: 256.

⁷⁶ Ibid., Chapter 109.

⁷⁷ This will be explored in the final chapter.

⁷⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 150-74.

⁷⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān fi al-Dunyā," pp. 201-202.

knowledge on the psyche. Gradually, a picture is engraved on the mind which becomes impossible –or extremely difficult –to erase.”⁸⁰

Moreover, ‘Allāma elaborated then commented on the two universally recognized systems of morals and morality; each in turn calls for the improvement of ethical manners explaining how and in what sense one may acquire high moral standards and noble conduct.⁸¹

1. Secular-oriented System: According to this system, the ultimate goals of morals have a distinctly mundane orientation. Basically, the major function of morals is to lead to the acceptance of social norms and standards, and foster respect for public order. Chastity, contentedness, and all moral virtues are good traits which must be acquired, since they lead to the enhancement of one’s public standing and encourage a sense of respect and honour in society. This system was favored by the ancient Greek philosophers.⁸²

2. Next World-oriented System: This system obliges people “to keep in sight the other worldly goals.” These unearthly goals are enunciated in the Qur’ān in many verses. One such verse is, “Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their properties for this, that they shall have the garden”⁸³ From ‘Allāma’s point of view, such a verse and others like this

create high morals by pointing to the sublime goals of the next world. These otherworldly goals are real, not imaginary, perfections. These verses reform the human character by fixing man’s attention to the real already existing causes like the Divine measure and decree, adoption of the Divine characteristics and remembrance of the good names of Allah and His sublime attributes.⁸⁴

This system as shown by the Qur’ān and found in other divine books and scriptures is the one followed and used by God’s prophets.⁸⁵

The Quranic-oriented System: ‘Allāma pointed to a third system which is exclusively recognized by the Qur’ān. As the author says, this system is found only in the

⁸⁰ Ṭabaṭaba‘ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 354 (Beirut); English translation, v. 2, pp. 206-207.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 354-58, 370-73; English translation, v. 2, pp. 206-12, 228-32.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 354-55.

⁸³ *The Qur’ān*, 9: 111.

⁸⁴ Ṭabaṭaba‘ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 356, English translation, v. 2, p. 209.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 358.

Qur'ān. It is not found in other divine scriptures, for none of God's prophets, believing philosophers or theosophers have originally mentioned it.⁸⁶ This system, based on 'Allāma's words, is entitled by 'the Quranic-oriented system'.

It is held that through this system human beings are to be "trained in character and knowledge" so as to leave no "room for base and low traits." This system seeks to remove vile traits from the very outset (*al-raḥ*), rather than to repulse them once they exist (*al-daf*). To clarify his point, 'Allāma explained that the motive of a work may be something other than God as it may be nothing other than Him. The doer may seek the respect and honour that might confer on him or her. One may have a true knowledge of God and understand the Qur'ān which declares "... surely might is wholly Allah's; He is Hearing, the Knowing."⁸⁷ Or we read "Verily the power is wholly Allah's"⁸⁸

As a result, "there will remain no question of doing any deed for letting others see, or hear about it; nor will there be any reason why he should fear, or look forward to, or rely on anyone other than Allāh."⁸⁹ Once the human individual firmly knows these attributes of God, coloring his or her mind, then s/he will be cleansed from evil, both in theory and practice. As a result, the self will rather be embellished by divine and virtuous characteristics like piety, godliness, reliance on God, might, self-respect and self-sufficiency.⁹⁰

The following table gives a comparative view of the three above-mentioned moral-systems and clarifies in what sense the third system is distinct from the other two.⁹¹ The third moral system is 'Allāma's point of departure to his discussion of the realization and love of God. Distinguishing this system from the other two, 'Allāma maintained that God's servant whose "soul is attracted towards meditation about" Him, goes through even higher stages until he/she "feels the Divine presence in his/her attraction, meditation and love."⁹²

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ *The Qur'ān*, 10: 65.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 2: 165.

⁸⁹ Tabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 1, p. 359, English translation, v. 2, p. 212.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ For more on the contents of the table, Ibid., pp. 355-360, 373, and English translation, v. 2, pp. 207-215, 232.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 373-74; English translation, v. 2, p. 232.

<i>Moral Systems</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
1. Secular-oriented	praiseworthy ideas and ideals in the eyes of people and society	summons to the sociological truth; to a reality of low grade	the doer is recommended to obtain the approval of social wisdom
2. Next World-oriented	the acquisition of the sublime goals of the next world is the core element	calls to the actual truth and real perfection by which the eternal bliss in the life hereafter may be acquired; towards a real but average perfection	the doer has been continuously encouraged to practice religious and ritual commandments in order for him to find good rewards or to avoid punishment in the next world
3. Quranic-oriented	eliminates all motives other than God	invites to the highest perfection; calls to the Absolute Reality; aims at seeking the pleasure of Allāh	the doer who is indeed a servant of God has been advised to love the Lord God: s/he is taught to give preference to the Lord's wishes over her or his own

Moral Systems: Description, Message, and Outcome

Theory and Practice

One of the significant themes touched on by both Dewey and 'Allama is the relation of theory and practice. This issue is considered either separately or as a component theme of their respective studies of ethics or human nature.⁹³ Theory and practice go side by side with one another. Practice is derived from theory; the latter is considered the former's principal element.⁹⁴

⁹³ For more on the question on the part of Dewey see Dewey, "The Quest for Certainty. A Study of the Relation of Knowledge & Action (1929)," in *The Later Works 1925-1953*, v. 4, pp. 1-250; Dewey, "Ethics," A. Edel's & E. Flower's Introduction, in *The Later Works*, v. 7, pp. xxxii-xxxiv; Dewey, "Moral Theory and Practice," in *The Early Works*, v. 3, pp. 93-109. And on the part of 'Allāma see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 114-16 (Beirut).

⁹⁴ Cf. Ja'far Subḥānī, "Irtibāṭ-i Ḥikmat-i 'Amali bā Ḥikmat-i Nazari: Shīvāh-i Irtibāṭ-i 'Hastihā' bā 'Bāyadhā' [The Relationship between Practical and Theoretical Theosophy: The Relationship between 'Is' and 'Should']," *Kayhān-i Andīshah* 9 (Tehran: 1986): 32.

Dewey's Perspective: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Practice

Dewey's more detailed thoughts on the theory-practice relationship are found in his *The Quest for Certainty*, as well as his essay on "Moral Theory and Practice." These studies, listed by Dewey's editors among his later works,⁹⁵ consist of ten lectures which Dewey delivered twice weekly between April 17 to May 17, 1929. His major concern in these studies is to bring the traditional distinction between theory and practice into sharper terms than in any of his other books.⁹⁶ Dewey's discussions for the most part turn upon an analysis of knowledge. He concludes that knowledge forces a change in the idea with respect to action.⁹⁷ To Dewey the supposed need of reconciling, or of somehow adjusting the findings of scientific knowledge with the validity of ideas concerning value, is an artificial problem which modern philosophy has inflicted upon itself.⁹⁸

While the problem of knowledge and science pertains to the "is," that of duty, action and practice pertains to the "ought." However, for the sake of reconciling knowledge or theory with practice, Dewey limited the question, saying:

(first) that the "ought" always rises from and falls back into the "is," and (secondly) that the "ought" is itself an "is," —the "is" of action.

The "ought" is never its own justification. We ought to do so and so simply because of the existing practical situation; because of the relationships in which we find ourselves. We may, by an abstraction, which is justifiable enough as a means of analysis, distinguish between what is and what should be; but this is far from meaning that there is any such separation in reality.⁹⁹

The logical consequences of the separation of the "ought" from the "is" is worshipping blind impulses, labeled love of justice, of truth, of humanity.¹⁰⁰

Elsewhere, in his account of the interaction of knowledge and practice, Dewey suggests that the question of knowledge is question of what *to do*, and the problem of practice one of what do we need *to know*. With respect to practical and experimental

⁹⁵ Dewey, "Moral Theory and Practice," in *The Early Works*, v. 3; "The Quest for Certainty," in *The Later Works*, v. 4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. viii, ix.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39-40.

⁹⁹ Dewey, "Moral Theory and Practice," in *The Early Works*, v. 3, p. 105.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

inquiry, Dewey attempts to show that the actual procedures of knowledge can cancel the isolation of knowledge from overt action, although the roots of the traditional conception of philosophy lie in the distinction between knowledge and action, between theory and practice.¹⁰¹

Dewey assumes that regarding knowledge and practice, philosophical tradition is not original and primitive. Philosophy developed in a social atmosphere and, reflecting upon it, gave it a rational formulation and justification.¹⁰² Where knowledge itself is concerned, two sorts of it are explored by Dewey. One sort, *science*, the core of the present discussion, alone may be regarded as knowledge in the full sense. It has a rational, necessary and unchanging form. It is *certain*. The other sort, dealing with change, is belief or opinion; empirical and particular; it is contingent, a matter of probability, not of certainty. Dewey goes further, saying that knowledge is superior to practical doing or making. Inasmuch as it is eternal and unalterable, human knowing is unaffected by the latter.¹⁰³ It seems that, due to the scientific evolutions and discoveries of his time, Dewey went to the above extreme evaluation of science.

Dewey notes the distinction made in the classic tradition between knowledge and belief, or, as John Locke put it, between knowledge and judgment. According to this distinction, certainty and knowledge are co-extensive. In contrast with this identification, the very word "belief" eloquently expresses uncertainty. The quest for certainty, Dewey explains, has always been an effort to transcend belief. All matters of practical action involve an element of uncertainty. We can ascend to knowledge from belief only by isolating the latter from practical doing and making. Dewey then turns to the effect of ideal certainty, as something superior to belief, upon the conception of the nature and function of philosophy. He maintained that according to classical philosophy, experience cannot furnish us with anything more than contingent probability. Experience cannot deliver to us necessary truths, truths completely demonstrated by reason. The whole classic tradition down to our day has continued to hold a slighting view of experience as such. It holds that true knowledge of realities, even if they are located in empirical things, cannot be obtained by experimental methods. In methodological terms, this tradition

¹⁰¹ Dewey, "The Quest for Certainty," pp. 38-43

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

possesses a method issued from reason and having the warrant of reason, independently of experience.¹⁰⁴

In its most liberal sense, practice to Dewey is the only means by which whatever is judged to be honorable or admirable can be subject to concrete experience. In this realm experience and empirical methodology are Dewey's main concerns.¹⁰⁵ In another sense, practice or exercise gives shape and firmness to habit,¹⁰⁶ which is considered a "second nature."¹⁰⁷

Whether or not any mode of action can give anything approaching absolute certitude, Dewey's response is negative. He insists that action provides insurance but no assurance. To him, the chief consideration is achieving concrete security of values which lies in perfecting the *methods* of action. Intelligent direction, cognizance of conditions, relations of sequence are the major factors which should be examined in action. Dewey acknowledges that the experimental procedure is one that installs doing as the heart of knowing. Such a view renounces the traditional notion that action is inherently inferior to knowledge and expresses a preference for the fixed over the changing; action involves the conviction that security attained by active control is to be more prized than certainty in theory. But it does not imply that action is higher and better than knowledge and practice inherently superior to thought.¹⁰⁸

According to Dewey, modern philosophy attempts to adjust two systems of belief to each other, one relating to the objects of knowledge and the other to the objects of ideal value. This comparison of traditional and modern philosophies reveals a conflict between the latter two. Dewey maintains that Greek science was mistaken in its idea of the good and the method of scientific inquiry. Greek thought never made a sharp separation between the rational and perfect realm and the natural world. Thinkers who remained within the framework of the classical tradition held that moral perfection, which is the inherent property of ultimate being, prescribes the law of human action. Greek and medieval science made an art of accepting things as they are enjoyed and suffered,

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22, 26.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Dewey, "Ethics," pp. 204-205.

¹⁰⁷ Dewey, "Freedom and Culture," in *The Later Works*, v. 13, p. 108.

¹⁰⁸ Dewey, "The Quest for Certainty," pp. 29-30.

whereas modern experimental science is the art of control. The attitude of control looks to the future, to production. Modern thought started its career with an accentuation of the gap which exists between ultimate values and natural objects and goods; between the values which are intrinsic to the real, and hence not dependent upon action and those goods which, being merely instrumental, are the objects of practical activity.¹⁰⁹

Dewey accepts the intermediary role of religion. However, deeply influenced by modern science, he ceased to believe in divine revelation as supreme authority. Instead, he put natural reason in the place of revelation. In his chapter on "Conflict of Authority," Dewey uses "authority" in the sense of a fixed set of doctrines by which to settle mechanically problems as they arise. Such authority to him is dogmatic, not intellectual. Dewey explains that he means methods congruous with those used in scientific inquiry and adopting their conclusions; methods to be used in scientific inquiry in directing criticism and in forming the ends and purposes that are acted upon. Thus, Dewey takes seriously into consideration the significance of the scientific method for the formation of the theory of knowledge and of mind. He comes to the conclusion that an experimental model is a way of operating upon, and with, the things of ordinary experience, so that our control of the ideas of things, our ability to change them and direct their changes as we desire, is indefinitely increased. The experimental method divests the things experienced of their qualities. It is a condition of control that enables us to endow the objects of experience with other qualities which we maintain. Our thoughts, conceptions and ideas, are designations of operations to be performed or already performed.¹¹⁰

Mathematical conceptions and ideas, from Dewey's point of view, are expressions of pure thought whose applicability to natural existence should be taken into account in any physical research; otherwise, the research cannot be completed. The nature of knowledge is studied through the explicit consideration of the historic philosophies of empiricism and rationalism. Dewey's attention is mostly directed to:

- 1) the active and productive character of ideas, of experimental thought,
- 2) ideas as hypotheses, not finalities,
- 3) action as the heart of ideas.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 57, 65, 86, 110.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 133-137.

Briefly, the experimental practice of knowing eliminates the age-old separation of theory and practice. Dewey considers sensational empiricism, rationalism and Kantianism to be three doctrines of knowledge. He indicates that theories about the mind, sensation, reason, conception and perception cannot constitute the subject-matter of knowing although formed and established in philosophy before the rise of experimental knowing, and although of immense importance in obtaining new knowledge.¹¹²

Regarding the process of the naturalization of intelligence, Dewey explains that the value of any cognitive conclusion depends upon the method by which it is reached, so that perfecting the method, or perfecting the intelligence, is the thing of supreme value.¹¹³ The supposed certainty in the process of knowing is acquired through methodology. Dewey does not take certainty in its metaphysical or spiritual aspect, but in its naturalistic philosophical scope. This is, as Herber Schneider in his introduction to "Dewey's Quest for Certainty" says, John Dewey's fundamental position.¹¹⁴ Dewey states: "This, then, is the relation of moral theory and practice. Theory is the cross-section of the given state of action in order to know the conduct that should be; practice is the realization of the idea thus gained: it is theory in action."¹¹⁵

'Allāma's Perspective: A Study of the Relation of Theoretical and Practical Theosophy¹¹⁶

Since the beginning of philosophical discussion among Muslim philosophers, it has been believed that there is a very strong connection between the theoretical and practical aspects of theosophy. In his *al-Ishārāt*, Ibn Sīnā, dealing with the faculties of the soul, remarks that one faculty of the soul controls and leads the physical functions of body. He refers to this faculty as the practical intellect (*al-'aql al-'amali*). Commentators on *al-Ishārāt* like Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, as well as Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin speak of two kinds of theosophy which are in fact two aspects or two functions of the intellect.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 141-149.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 160. The idea of perfecting intelligence seems to be of great significance in the process of self-realization.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. viii.

¹¹⁵ Dewey, "Moral Theory and Practice," p. 109.

¹¹⁶ Theoretical and practical theosophy or intellect. Hereinafter I make no difference among the two expressions translated respectively from the Arabic expressions *al-ḥikmat al-naẓariyah* versus *al-ḥikmat al-'amaliyah* or *al-'aql al-naẓari* versus *al-'aql al-'amali*.

According to them, the practical intellect is aided by premises recognized by the theoretical intellect. Also, all ethical commands and prohibitions are derived from the practical intellect on the basis of the theoretical intellect, which is said to function as the basis of the former.¹¹⁷ The theoretical aspect of a thought includes in itself the concept of epistemological and ontological orientations of a world-view, whereas the practical aspect of a thought deals with ideological orientations of a world-view.¹¹⁸

The inquiry into the general principles (ontology) is the proper domain of theoretical philosophy, while matters of politics, family management, and ethical principles come under practical philosophy. In reality, however, there are not two distinguished philosophies, theosophies or intellects, but two kinds of intelligibles and perceived objects with the same quiddity. Thus, there is just one faculty, which due to its two different perceived objects (*mudrakāt*) is called theoretical intellect on some occasions, and practical on others.¹¹⁹

Theoretical theosophy explains the cognition and knowledge which retains to the problem of existence (*wujūd*) including the whole hierarchy of existence from the necessary to the possible and from the non-material to the material. Acquired cognition here helps us to know beings as they are and guides us to recognize the general rules and laws that governs them.¹²⁰

Practical theosophy, on the other hand, is a sort of knowledge that bears a direct relation to practice and deed. Here the perfection is due to human individual's deeds themselves and not to his or her mere cognition. All religious and moral duties, and all obligations in law and politics, etc., fall under practical philosophy.¹²¹

An overview of 'Allāma's *Al-Mizān* shows that the latter likewise takes the same doctrine into consideration. Accordingly, beliefs or opinions originally have been divided into two categories. This suggests that human knowledge from 'Allāma's point of view is

¹¹⁷ Subḥānī, "Irtibāṭ-i Hikmat," p. 32.

¹¹⁸ The two aspects and orientations are in fact the two faces of one coin. The philosophical harmony between the two intellects is the main characteristic discovered in the connection of the theoretical intellect to the practical. There should be no contradiction between them. As a result of this integration, a theoretician cannot be a materialist in his world-view but a monotheist metaphysician in his ideology. He should be on the same attitude and position in both dimensions. See Subḥānī, "Irtibāṭ-i Hikmat," p. 33.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 32.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

the manifestation of human belief-system in both its theoretical and practical kinds. With this in mind, 'Allāma indicates the extent to which the *ought* and the *is* are interconnected.

Opinions and beliefs are of two kinds, which we shall call theoretical and practical knowledges. The theoretical knowledge is the one not directly related to action, for example, theorems of geometry, propositions of physics and issues of metaphysics. Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is directly related to action, for example, the moral teachings concerned with what to do and what not to do.¹²²

Like other philosophers who divide human beings' knowledge and perceptions into two groups, 'Allāma, maintained that theoretical knowledge has no direct bearing on a human person's actions. To acquire this kind of knowledge, one needs not to perform any other action rather than the perception of perceivable and intelligible objects through the five senses, or the five faculties of the mind, or through the power of thought. Practical knowledge on the other hand, in 'Allāma's words, is limited to those opinions and beliefs which are "directly related to action." In another section of his Quranic exegesis, 'Allāma insisted that in the case of practical knowledge, the individual's "thoughts and precepts have a direct bearing on his actions and activities." In fact, intentional actions all depend on one's perceptions and knowledge. For example he says: "This is good; this is bad; this should be done; that must be avoided; justice is good; injustice is evil,"—these moral precepts "have no value unless and until they are acted upon. As mere ideas they are worthless. Therefore, we may call them practical knowledge."¹²³

'Allāma clarified the criteria for both kinds of knowledge and explained how to acquire them.

The only way to acquire the theoretical knowledge is through rational proofs or the senses. The only way to get the practical knowledge is to follow that which leads to man's felicity, and to refrain from that which leads to infelicity or hinders the felicity. Apart from that, it is merely a superstition to believe in what is not known to be the truth and fact (in theoretical knowledge) and what is not known to be good or evil (in practical knowledge).¹²⁴

¹²² Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 421 (Beirut); English translation, v. 2, p. 304.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, v. 2, pp. 114-16 (Beirut); English translation, v. 3, pp. 171-72.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 421 (Beirut); English translation, v. 2, p. 304.

In this respect, 'Allāma advocated the Quranic point of view, just as he did in many of his other discourses and comments pertaining to self-realization as a means towards God-realization. As far as the theoretical field is concerned, the Qur'an asks the believers to follow Allah's commandments and not to speak without knowledge or not to follow what they have no knowledge of.¹²⁵ In practical affairs, the Qur'an directs the individual to pursue what is pleasing to God. Accordingly, if the pleasing action at the same time satisfies one's personal desires, one has obtained a pleasing life in the mundane life and will achieve happiness in the Hereafter. In the event that following God's commandments does not tally with one's desires, requiring sacrifice for the sake of God, then greater rewards will be given in the world after, "and what is with Allah is better and more lasting; do you not then understand?"¹²⁶ When seen in this manner, the individual's felicity is intertwined with God's pleasure in the sense that one is really interested in obtaining God's pleasure. It is due to the fact that recognizing God as the source of all happiness, one finds one's pleasure in God's pleasure and realizes that one's happiness is to be actualized through God's pleasure.¹²⁷

Moreover, the maintenance of excellent morals can be secured through faith in one God and in His excellent names. It is warranted by means of the belief that God created human beings so that they strive for perfection and happiness, that He loves good and purity and hates evil and corruption and that the final reward or punishment will be in the Day of Resurrection.¹²⁸

Good and Evil

Human conduct in general is the only predicate of moral good and evil. No other object or impulse can be referred to as either morally good or morally evil. This is not to deny, however, the idea of natural good and evil in describing an object as naturally good or naturally evil. Normally good and evil are thought of in a moral, not a natural context. These two theoretical categories are not necessarily interconnected one to another. In order for one to distinguish between these two types of meaning, let us take the following

¹²⁵ *The Qur'an*, 7: 3; 17: 36 and 24: 15.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 28: 60 and 42: 36; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 423 (Beirut).

¹²⁷ My own explanation.

¹²⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 4, p. 111 (Beirut).

example for consideration. Once it is said that water is good but a flood is evil,¹²⁹ water and a flood no longer have anything to do with morals and moral acts. They are viewed in terms of their benefit, welfare or unfavorable results. By contrast, the conceptualization of self-realization has everything to do with moral good and evil. The clarification of moral good makes the definition of evil much clearer. The opposite of what one may regard as a component of good character helps to specify what bad character is. With this in mind, I propose to compare Dewey's and 'Allāma's notions on the question of moral good and evil.

Dewey's Doctrine

Remarking on morality and moral values and standards, Dewey touched upon good and evil in both their natural and moral conceptualizations. "The satisfaction which any impulse affords in its expression" from Dewey's point of view, is an identification of natural good, which "may be termed its natural value." Dewey explained that this terminology "is equivalent to the economists term "value in use"—value which is directly enjoyed, but not measured. He gave as an example of this the fulfillment of hunger or of thirst. Here the satisfaction that comes after this kind of fulfillment may be termed its natural value. When seen in this manner, good and evil can be attributed to the primitive satisfactions of early childhood when the child is in "the state of *knowing* neither good nor evil, but simply enjoying suffering[?] good or suffering evil as they come."¹³⁰

Natural good in any case is neither a matter of debate nor a matter of focus in the present study. What is intended instead is to rediscover Dewey's formulation of moral good and to realize how he elaborated it according to his own understanding of a moral system. In his early works, Dewey maintained that moral good, as contrasted with natural good, "is presented to consciousness."¹³¹

Sometimes one's impulses are not immediately satisfied. They in fact can be satisfied in their relation to one's self and through reflection upon their nature. This, for Dewey indicates the structure of "moral satisfaction or moral value." This, however, is

¹²⁹ As it will be mentioned, the question of natural evil is a controversial issue in Islamic theology. Most often it is argued that there exists no natural evil whatsoever.

¹³⁰ Dewey, "Moral Approbation, Value and Standard," in *The Early Works*, v. 4, p. 247.

¹³¹ Ibid.

not considered the closing point in the process of moral good constitution. As Dewey himself pointed out, the “process of reflection evidently sets up a standard or criterion for the value of the original impulse.” All worth that it has is in its relation to further impulses, as well as “in its relation to the whole set of desirable experiences which it will occasion.”¹³² Dewey states that there are two sides or two standpoints in the process of mediating the impulse or impulses. The process in itself is one, yet the mode of stating it is different “according as we look at it from the standpoint of the inducing impulse or of the impulses and experiences induced.”¹³³

The impulse, its expression and the experiences which are involved in the meantime, function as the character components of moral good. The role of experience in the formulation of moral good is shown in the following passage.

But the experiences thus reflectively brought forward, while they may transform the original impulse, they also reinforce it. They have their own impulsive quality, or urging for expression. Thus they constitute the *ideal*; what is desired; the *reflective good*.¹³⁴

The above passages from Dewey seem to be more philosophical and complex, and harder to understand than his other studies and remarks on moral good and bad. In his middle works, Dewey, reflecting upon moral judgment, indicated that human conduct in all its features and implications including its disposition, motive, intent is judged good or bad based upon the outcome it tends to produce. Good and bad should be defined and judged “as terms of voluntary behavior.” Looking at it in this context, Dewey elaborated the happiness and misery theory of good and bad, according to which good is described as happiness and bad as misery. The good in general “is happiness, well-being, pleasure; the bad is misery, woe, pain.”¹³⁵

Dewey then challenged the theory of happiness, noting the extreme opposition to it. “In striking contrast to this view of the self-evident character of happiness as the all-desirable, is the view of those to whom it is equally self-evident that to make pleasure the end of action is destructive of all morality.”¹³⁶ It is in fact an insisting “upon the

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 248.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 249.

¹³⁵ Dewey, “Happiness and Conduct: The Good and Desire,” in *The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, v. 5, 1908, p. 241.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 243.

fundamental opposition of virtue and happiness.” The result of this challenge, as Dewey points out, is a division of happiness and consequently of good into two sorts, i.e., real and apparent happiness and good. The real or right good is “the good which being formed after and upon the basis of consideration of consequences” What is meant by right good is “that it has authority over the end which first appears; and hence has supreme claim over action.” As a result, happiness is not necessarily the same as the moral good. It is so “after the right kind of happiness has been distinguished; namely, that which commends itself after adequate reflection.”¹³⁷

Although Dewey did not go on to define bad or evil as he did in relation to right and good, his definition of the latter suggests the opposite character with respect to the definition of bad and evil. It is almost clear that Dewey expressed his notions of good and evil in relation to one’s values and value-system.¹³⁸

‘Allāma’s Doctrine

In his definition of the good and bad, ‘Allāma indicated that those personal or social events or deeds that suit human beings’ goals and desires and promote their happiness in both individual and social aspects of life are considered good. On the other hand, those events that do not correspond to the above-mentioned parameters are seen as bad and evil.¹³⁹

‘Allāma divided good and evil into two types: *takwīnī* or *tashrī‘ī*. The former corresponds to something that is good or evil by nature and essence (perhaps somewhat equivalent to natural good and evil.), while the latter corresponds to something which is considered good or evil according to moral, ethical or religious norms and standards. Explaining these two types of good and bad, ‘Allāma points to glory and contempt as examples, respectively, of *takwīnī* good and bad on the one hand, and to worship and disobedience of God as examples, respectively, of *tashrī‘ī* good and bad on the other.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

¹³⁸ Cf. Dewey, “Values, Objective Reference and Criticism,” in *The Later Works 1925-1927*, v. 2, pp. 83-84, 92-94. Cf. Dewey, “The Construction of Good,” in *The Later Works 1929*, v. 4, pp. 227-28.

¹³⁹ Ṭabāṭaba‘ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 5, p. 11 (Beirut). Allāma’s commentary on the verses 78-79 of the Chapter 4 of the *Qur’ān*.

¹⁴⁰ Ṭabāṭaba‘ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 3, p. 134 (Beirut). Allāma’s commentary on the verse 26 of the Chapter 3 of the *Qur’ān*.

Tashrī'i good and bad, from `Allāma's perspective, may be attributed to those optional deeds which are performed by human beings of their own choice. Free-will in this case is the major criterion for an action to be considered *tashrī'i* good or bad. Therefore, unlike the *takwīnī* type, this sort of good and bad cannot be ascribed to inanimate objects or non-human beings.¹⁴¹

The above criterion constitutes the character component of `Allāma's definition of moral good. Accordingly, the term *al-khayr*, meaning *good*¹⁴² originally implies a concept of selection and preference. We may select or prefer an action because it contains what we intend to achieve. Then what is in our intention is the real good. If it is intended for the sake of the achievement of something further, this same further goal in turn is the real good. Thus, the real good is something desired and sought by nature,¹⁴³ while the real evil is something rejected and avoided by nature.¹⁴⁴

From `Allāma's point of view, human beings intrinsically like the good and reject that which is evil. Thus, they always express their tendency towards the good even though they may consider wrongly something to be good when it is not really so.<sup>145</sup> Psychologically speaking, `Allāma indicated that usually whenever people are afflicted by an evil event, they become disappointed, and pray and ask their Lord to save them from that bad situation. They, however, usually forget their Lord when they are at ease and enjoy good fortune. Whatever the circumstances, people always tend to seek the real good and avoid evil. Good accordingly is that which is seen as useful in their lives.¹⁴⁶ Finally, Allāma noted that Allah is the Absolute Good and the source of all good. According to

¹⁴¹ Ibid., v. 3, p. 134 (Beirut).

¹⁴² The term *al-khayr* is usually defined as a comparative adjective meaning *better than*. `Allāma however argued that the term is a simple adjective that means good. Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 3, p. 134 (Beirut).

¹⁴³ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 11, p. 174 (Beirut).

¹⁴⁴ In fact, `Allāma like many other philosophers before him advocated that evil (*sharr*) is non-thing and non-existential (*'adamī*). It corresponds to non-existential aspect of a phenomenon. When seen in this manner, the relation between good and evil is like that between knowledge and ignorance. While the first is existential (*wujūdī*), the second is non-existential (*'adamī*) due to the lack of knowledge. This in turn suggests that the evil is not an absolute nothingness; it is rather a relative nothingness, the nonexistence of something. For instance, the badness is attributed to lying not because of the words or of the tongue spoken with. It is rather due to *honesty* or to *righteousness missing* in the part of lying. Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 13, pp. 187-188 (Beirut).

¹⁴⁵ See Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 20, p. 347 (Beirut). Allāma's commentary on the verse 8 of the Chapter 100 of the *Qur'ān*.

¹⁴⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 17, p. 402 (Beirut). Allāma's commentary on the verse 49 of the Chapter 41 of the *Qur'ān*.

Allāma's monotheistic theology, everything good has come from God and returns to the same source. This is in fact a Quranic image of God.¹⁴⁷ It is with God's favour that human beings are always inspired through their rational faculty towards understanding the good and bad. Moreover, He sent His prophets to teach people the divine laws in order for them to understand good and evil accordingly.¹⁴⁸

The Wisdom behind Morality and Conduct

To the insightful individual, nothing in the world happens in vain or without logical end. The diversity of theories of perfection¹⁴⁹ and the diverse images of perfect human being¹⁵⁰ effectively demonstrate the reason why we exist, why we live on the earth and what our destiny is.

Dewey's Interpretation

Dewey maintained that aims are neither "things lying beyond activity" nor "ends or termini of action."¹⁵¹ Rather they "arise and function within action."¹⁵² In Dewey's mind, a moral aim exists as an "end-in-view" that arises and functions within and not beyond action.¹⁵³ Employing such a terminology, Dewey avoided looking at aims as fixed ends of natural actions or, in other words, as something beyond the natural capabilities of human beings. Indeed, they are seen as "consequences which arise in the course of activity and which are employed to give activity added meaning and to direct its further course."¹⁵⁴ Dewey opposed the Machiavellian theory "*the end ... justifies the means*,"¹⁵⁵ only because "there is no such thing as the single all-important end."¹⁵⁶ From his point of

¹⁴⁷ Ṭabaṭaba'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 3, pp. 133-34 (Beirut). *The Qur'ān*, 20: 73.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 11, p. 173.

¹⁴⁹ For instance see Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature*, also Campbell, *Seven Theories of Human Societies*.

¹⁵⁰ For instance see W. James, *The Perfect Man*; R. Thomas, *The Man Who Would be Perfect*, and Muṭahharī, *Insān-i Kāmil*.

¹⁵¹ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 207.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁵ This famous theory finds its originality in Niccolo Machiavelli's (1469-1527) book *The Prince* whose "main theme is that rulers must always be prepared to do evil if they judge good will come of it." Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, s.v. **Machiavelli**, p. 940.

¹⁵⁶ Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 212.

view, the doctrine of fixed ends is an idealistic and not a scientific view of the nature of aims, since it distracts us from examination results and consequences, prevents our minds from creating intelligent purpose, and renders us careless in our "inspection of existing conditions."¹⁵⁷

In fact, Dewey's notion of aims has something to do with the fulfillment of human desires, as well as the existing human conditions of such fulfillment which are altogether involved in the actualization of conduct and self-realization. Desire, pleasure and present conditions are to be employed as means of aim-realization,¹⁵⁸ and through such a realization they provide the groundwork of self-realization. I agree with Robert Roth that Dewey's dominant interest is the individual's fulfillment in the natural world through conduct and interaction with nature.¹⁵⁹ However, regarding the Deweyan notion of aims, the more significant element is those present conditions which help the human personality accomplish its supreme fulfillment.¹⁶⁰

Discussing "the place of the self in the moral life," Dewey reviewed the conceptions which find morality in several arenas, including that of self-realization. Regarding "the good as self-realization" and the end of moral acts, he was never satisfied to establish a theory of self-realization as the ultimate and unique aim of a moral act. "This realization of selfhood in the right course of action is, however, not the end of a moral act—that is, it is not the only end." Dewey insisted that the aim or aims of morality should ensure comprehensive results and consequences in relation to human life. "The moral act is one which sustains a whole complex system of social values; one which keeps vital and progressive the industrial order, science, art, and the State." In order to demonstrate this concept well, Dewey takes the case of a "patriot who dies for his country" as a proof. Such a patriot

may find in that devotion his own supreme realization, but none the less the aim of his act is precisely that for which he performs it: the conservation of his nation. He dies *for* his country, not *for* himself. He is what he would be in dying for his

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 214-15.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁵⁹ Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934), p. 152; Roth, *Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 4, 9.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, pp. 3-12; Roth, *Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 17.

country, not in dying for himself. To say that his conscious aim is self-realization is to put the cart before the horse.¹⁶¹

Although self-realization is considered an aim of the moral act, it can be constituted and secured through the fulfillment of social values. To this extent, social values may take the first position as far as their relationship to self-realization is concerned. Pointing to the above-mentioned case, Dewey stated that the patriot's "willingness to die for his country proves that his country's good is taken by him to constitute himself and his own good is true; but his aim is his country's good as *constituting* his self-realization, not the self-realization."¹⁶²

`Allāma's Interpretation

What was viewed by Dewey as social or individual values advanced by and through a moral act was seen by `Allāma as an intermediate end. Moreover, the doctrine of the fixed ends is accepted and confirmed in `Allāma's words and notifications. Maintaining the prime importance of the individual, `Allāma indicates

[t]he first goal of creation is the happiness of the individual: the happiness of society follows upon this. In other words, the purpose of creation is the perfection of human nature, and this perfection is realized in the being of the individual, not in the shape and form of society. Thus man is directed towards the formation of social groupings to preserve the individual.¹⁶³

His interpretation of the ultimate end of education, as well as of the furthest aims of human life, is apparent from his extensive commentary on such Quranic verses as: "O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way; to Allah is your return, [the return] of all of you, so He will inform you of what you did."¹⁶⁴ "O you who believe! be careful of [your duty to] Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow"¹⁶⁵ In `Allāma's view, these indicate that the human soul is on an inevitable and everlasting journey from earthly to heavenly

¹⁶¹ Dewey, "The Place of Duty in the Moral Life: Subjection to Authority," in *The Middle Works 1899-1924*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, with an introduction by Charles L. Stevenson (London & Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), v. 5, p. 353.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Muḥammad in the Mirror of Islam*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ *The Qur'an*, 5: 105.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 59: 18.

life, as it returns to God. Human beings, as indeed their own wisdom will tell them, must strive only to attain what benefits them and leads to their happiness. They should realize that if they do good, it will be in their own favour, whereas if they do bad they do it against themselves. Such an inevitable journey, according to 'Allāma's Quranic world-view, is the position of every single human individual, whether s/he be believer or unbeliever, conscious or unconscious. "O human being! surely you must strive [to reach] your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him."¹⁶⁶ In this regard, the soul is considered the way to the Lord and God-realization regarded as the eternal and ultimate aim of the soul and its journey, in general, and of its morality, in particular.¹⁶⁷

According to 'Allāma's interpretation of another Quranic passage,¹⁶⁸ human beings in a period of time were nothing worth mentioning among creatures. In other words, as Shakir, one of the translators of the Qur'ān put it, "There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning."¹⁶⁹ God created them and made them able to hear and see in order for them to reach their aim. Some of the intermediate aims of human life are to hear the truth revealed by God to His prophets, to see the signs of God in nature, to think about them, then to follow the path of the truth, and finally, to journey towards the Eternal Truth (God) by means of faith and good deeds.¹⁷⁰ This is the path that the Creator has set for His servants in order to attain to Him. However, this does not necessarily mean that the path towards this same ultimate aim is already predetermined or that human beings must follow it until they reach that peak which is intended for them. Due to their wisdom and freedom of choice, human beings are in fact trusted to be selective and to strive for the sake of their own happiness. While some people find the Truth and follow the right path, others may be misled, because they are submerged in physical and material wants and desires, neglecting their spiritual health, their exalted aim and their happiness.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., : 84-6.

¹⁶⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, pp. 177-78 (Tehran).

¹⁶⁸ *The Qur'an*, 76: 1-3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 76: 31.

¹⁷⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 20, pp. 120-21 (Beirut).

¹⁷¹ Ibid., v. 8, p. 46 (Tehran).

Summary Comments

We have seen that both Dewey and `Allāma identified morality as an appropriate vehicle for the fulfillment and realization of one's self. I underlined that their different philosophical and epistemological principles led to the establishment of two different moral systems. Elaborating on their theories of morality, I presented the possible link between their respective notions of moral principles and conceptualizations of self-realization.

One of the major character components of their moral systems was their doctrine of the relationship between *theory* and *practice*. Accordingly, in the case of any moral act, theory and practice are considered as two intertwined, strongly interconnected parameters. The same doctrine is regarded as the cornerstone of both Dewey's and `Allāma's philosophies of ethics.

Dividing human knowledge into two sorts, namely science and belief or opinion, Dewey came to the conclusion that the former is *certain* and has a *necessary* and *unchanging* form. This indicates how Dewey's mind was influenced and shaped by the course of scientific evolution in his time. The certainty of many scientific conclusions has proved to be illusory. Therefore, the above evaluation may not be Dewey's final remark on science. Later on, we will see how Dewey himself recognized "the evils consequent upon technology"¹⁷² and placed the blame for devotion to money-making and the alienation of human beings on the shoulders of the new science and technology when "controlled by interest in private profit."¹⁷³

Both spiritual aspiration and arbitrary choice or volition, are of Dewey's focus in his interpretation of ethics and morality. This, as compared to `Allāma's thought, shows that for the latter, the divine elements of morals and morality in the human character have greater weight. Neither Dewey nor `Allāma were satisfied with the idea of the so-called sinful nature or spiritual death of the human image. They argued against this ideology but not in the same way or with the same approach. Dewey totally rejected the idea of any assumed divine inspiration intervening in human nature and influencing the construction of human morality. `Allāma on the contrary rejected the theology of "original sin" and

¹⁷² Roth, *Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 52.

¹⁷³ Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 31. See also p. 52.

suggested an Islamic understanding of the consequences of Adam's and Eve's actions against their own welfare.¹⁷⁴

The conception of good and evil, like most other moral themes and issues, was investigated by both Dewey and 'Allāma. They envisaged a division of good and evil into two sorts. This division in Dewey's mind and language was characterized as one between natural and moral good and evil. In 'Allāma's terminology, the above division was recognized as *takwīnī* and *tashrī'ī*. The former corresponds more or less to natural good and evil, i.e., to something good or bad by nature and in essence. The latter, on the other hand, accords with moral, ritual or religious good and evil.

In Dewey's mind, impulse is of great significance in the formulation of a moral action. It is an indication of the real or natural self. 'Allāma for his part placed more emphasis on the three faculties of the human soul upon which the basic elements of ethics are established: desire, anger, and reason. These faculties, leading the psyche towards acquiring practical knowledge, contribute to the emanation of all actions of the human species.

We have already seen that perfecting the intelligence, from Dewey's perspective, is an act of supreme value. In this regard, the individual's consciousness, as well as the expression and satisfaction of one's impulses, may be considered as the basic elements in creating one's moral values. These two phenomena are studied in their relation to the self. The impulse may be looked at from the standpoint of the inducing impulse or of the impulses and experiences induced. The expression and the results of the impulse function as determinants of moral value. Thus, human conduct is judged good or bad based upon the outcome it tends to produce. The consideration of the consequences of human voluntary behavior is the basic element by means of which moral good or bad may be identified.

In 'Allāma's definition of good and evil, the adjustment of personal or social events or deeds to the goals and desires of a human being, as well as their power to inspire happiness in both the individual and social aspects of one's life, are considered to

¹⁷⁴ Emile Dermenghem, a Christian orientalist, advocated that only Mary and Jesus Christ were free of original sin. Accordingly, Jesus was beyond the level of humanity, and he actually was a divine being in the shape of man who was never touched by Satan. See Emile Dermenghem, *The Life of Mahomet* (New York,

be of greater importance. Consequently, the real good is desired by nature in the same way that the real evil is rejected by it. In other words, human beings inherently like good and avoid evil. At any rate, human free-will and choice are involved in any particular moral act whether it be good or bad. Finally, according to 'Allāma's theology, God is not only the Absolute Good but also the source of all good.

Explaining the wisdom behind morality, Dewey looked at self-realization as an aim of the moral act. What is important here for Dewey is the fulfillment of social values, since the latter are seen as a major constituent and securing agent of moral acts. This is while according to 'Allāma, the fulfillment of personal or social values is an intermediary and instrumental end; it may, however, be employed for the fulfillment of an eternal and ultimate aim which is none other than God-realization.

The above to me is only a brief summary of what Dewey and 'Allāma advocated and recognized to be a vehicle for self-fulfillment and realization. For the sake of brevity, and in order for me to conduct further investigation in other areas, I must terminate my discussion of morality and embark on another field. This new area that constitutes the subject-matter of the next chapter of the thesis deals with Dewey's and 'Allāma's remarks on art, aesthetic feelings and science as regards their relation to the process of self-realization.

L. MacVeagh, 1930), p. 33 & Al-Sayyid Ja far Murtaḍā al- Āmili, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ min Sīrat al-Nabī al-A ḡam*, 2nd edition , (Qum: Intishārāt Jamā at al-Mudarrisin, 1983), v. 1, pp. 84 & 87-88.

PART III

Chapter 4

***The Arts and Sciences
Vehicles for
Self-Realization***

CHAPTER 4

The Arts and Science Vehicles for Self-Realization

Introduction

I believe that the arts, including architecture, sculpture, painting, design, poetry, music, singing, handicrafts of all kinds such as, hand calligraphy, miniature, decorative woodwork, metal and silver craftsmanship, embossed enamel work, pottery work, and so on project the beauty of the human inner self. They are the manifestations of one's inner devotion and love for beauty and beautiful objects. They are, if not the finest, among the finest experiences of the self. The human self is finely made and designed; therefore, its manifestations may be expected to be fine. One's aesthetic feelings and thought make a person an aesthete whose appreciation or enjoyment of the beautiful is rooted deeply in his or her innate self and identity. We may regard, for instance, an old fashioned and well-designed or nicely colored piece of pottery as if it speaks and narrates to us a cultural or traditional heritage behind it. This heritage contains within itself an exhibition of the self or selves of those who created it. A stanza from a poem would likewise convey to us the deep mentality of the poet who composed it. I would like to make the above clear through the following example. Remarking on the power of aesthetic feelings of music, Shajariyān, one of the great musicians and singers of the present time of Iran, believes that music separates him from the material world and connects him with the Eternal.¹ This is in fact an aspect of the hermeneutic of the arts and aesthetic feeling, and is in turn the art of the arts. I assume that not only the arts but also knowledge or sciences whether as a product of art or in its general concept, function as vehicles for self-realization. Science,

¹ Muḥammad Riḍā Shajariyān, "Guftugū bā Ustād M. R. Shajariyān," *Ettela'at: International Daily Persian Newspaper* 701(March 18, 1997): 9.

in both its reflective and technical senses, likewise can serve humanity and designate its realization and actualization in ordinary human life. This is while self-realization in turn can be viewed as a fine art of one's actualization of the self. In this regard, I will study Dewey and 'Allāma to see what they said about and how they reflected on the arts, beauty, knowledge and science in general and on the art of self-realization in particular.

I- The Manifestations of One's Self in One's Artistic Expression

The Nature of Arts and Aesthetic Feelings; General View

My study of the nature of arts and aesthetic feelings is restricted here to its connection to the concept of self-realization. Otherwise, it would be beyond the scope of my current research. What is intended is to examine to what extent Dewey and 'Allāma related their discussion of self-realization to their conceptualization of the arts and aesthetic feeling and sense. In order to gain a better understanding of Dewey's and 'Allāma's positions on the arts, let us consider briefly the terminological meaning of art, aesthete, aesthetic feelings and beauty. As stated in *Webster Dictionary*, the word "art" derives "from the same root as Greek arō," which means "to join, to fit." It is accordingly,

[t]he use or employment of things to answer some special purpose. the employment of means to accomplish some end: opposed to nature: a system of rules to facilitate the performance of certain actions: skill in applying such rules ... that is those that appeal to the taste or senses of beauty ²

From a different perspective, art is described as a synonym of skill, cunning, artifice and craft that "can mean the faculty of performing or executing expertly what is planned or devised."³

The term "aesthete" according to the same *Dictionary* is derived from the term "aesthetic." An aesthete is one who devotes himself or herself "to the principles or doctrines of aesthetic; a lover of the beautiful - aesthetic, ... pertaining to the science of taste or beauty." In this regard, aesthetics refers to "the theory of the fine arts; the science

² Webster, *Webster Dictionary*, p. 47, s.v. **art**.

³ Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, p. 61, s.v. **art**.

or that branch of philosophy which deals with the beautiful; the doctrine of taste.”⁴ In one sense, aesthete, dilettante and connoisseur as synonyms “all designate a person conspicuous for his enjoyment and appreciation of the beautiful, the exquisite, or the choice.”⁵ It is asserted that the term aesthete “implies highly developed sensibilities, with acute delight in beauty of color, line, sound, and texture, and violent distaste for the ugly, shapeless, and discordant”⁶

I will examine how and to what extent both Dewey and `Allāma elaborated on the concept of art and all its senses in connection with their conceptualizations of self-realization. Comparatively speaking, I will see that Dewey wrote a great deal in relation to the arts. “More than most people, he has a deep appreciation of art, literature, music, painting, sculpture, and he has no intention of doing away with these.”⁷ `Allāma on the other hand has only a little to say regarding the arts. This, however, should not pose any problem since the main concern behind my study of both Dewey and `Allāma is their views of art as a vehicle for self-realization.

Dewey’s Notion; Focus on Experience

In his both early and later works, Dewey discussed to a large extent art and its implications and manifestations in several aspects. At times, he critically challenged the Greek notion of art in order to discover the common and distinguishing points in the ancient and modern approaches to art. In his book entitled *Experience and Nature*, Dewey, elaborating on the Greek understanding of experience, concluded that experience and art accordingly are comparable to each other.

Experience, with the Greeks, signified a store of practical wisdom, a fund of insights useful in conducting the affairs of life. ... Thus understood, experience is exemplified in the discrimination and skill of the good carpenter, pilot, physician, captain-at-arms; experience is equivalent to art.⁸

⁴ Webster, *Webster Dictionary*, p. 16, s.v. **aesthete**.

⁵ Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster’s Dictionary of Synonyms*, p. 26, s.v. **aesthete**.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 52.

⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 354.

In his definition of aesthetic feelings, Dewey maintained that they “are such as accompany the apprehension of the ideal value of experience.”⁹ Dewey, as Robert Roth expressed it, accepted experience and art to be equivalent to one another.¹⁰ He nevertheless criticized the Greek disparagement of “experience in comparison with something called reason and science.” Such a depreciation of experience in Dewey’s eyes was due to the fact that experience “was taken to be a realization of inferior portion of nature, those infected with chance and change, the less *Being* part of the cosmos.”¹¹ Furthermore, in his theory of knowledge, Dewey indicated that the Greek ideology of knowledge “by nature” was transformed into that of the scientific revolution of knowledge “by art.” It was due to this revolution that the former ideology was substituted with the latter.¹²

According to the classic scheme, “the subject-matter of science, as the highest grade of knowledge, is what it is because of certain inherent forms, essences, or natures.” Science, from the perspective of the scientific revolution has been put “upon the road of steady advance and ever increasing fertility,” and “is connected with substitution of knowledge ‘by art’ for that it is said to be ‘by nature.’” Consequently, the subject-matter of the scientific kind is not eternal, immutable or necessary. It is instead “subject to improvement with further development of efficacy in inquiry-procedures.”¹³ In this regard, three concepts of nature and the natural may be identified in Dewey’s mind: nature when studied and intended as the subject-matter of scientific generalization; nature in its cosmological sense; and nature and natural as contrasted with art and artificial. In the latter sense, science is a matter of art and not nature.¹⁴

Several other terms are fundamental to Dewey’s theory and notion of art and science as vehicles for self-realization. Art and aesthetic feelings, as well as ideal and idealization in the nature of arts are among the most significant in this regard.¹⁵ The

⁹ Dewey, “Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling,” in *The Early Works 1882-1898; 2: 1887, Psychology*, ed. Bowers and Boydston (London & Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), v. 2, p. 267.

¹⁰ Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 40.

¹¹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 354-55.

¹² Dewey, *Problems of Men* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), p. 286.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-90.

¹⁵ For instance see Dewey, “Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling,” pp. 267-80; Dewey, “Knowledge - Processes of Knowledge,” in *The Early Works 1882-1898; 2: 1887, Psychology*, v. 2, pp. 75-136; Dewey, “A History of Aesthetic [a book review],” in *The Early Works 1893-1894, Early Essays and the Study of Ethics* (London

clarification of these terms in Dewey's thought will contribute to our better understanding of the connection existing between them and the process of self-realization. Furthermore, the definition of art can hardly be obtained without the disclosure of other terms involved in Dewey's notion. The following definition proposed by Dewey himself functions as a clue to this point.

Art from Dewey's point of view is "the attempt to satisfy the aesthetic side of our nature."¹⁶ When seen in this manner, art is expected to manifest the ideal which corresponds to the aesthetic side of human nature. First, we have the feeling of the ideal, then we strive to satisfy our aesthetic inclination. This can be accomplished through the manifestation of the ideal and by means of art.¹⁷ Looking forward, Dewey suggested the notion of "operative art" by which he meant the "intentional direction" of science, intelligence, and knowledge towards meanings and ideals.¹⁸

Speaking in a social philosophical sense, Dewey succeeded in establishing the point that human beings live in amity with art. In order to preserve such amity and friendship between human life and art, one must avoid thinking of art or making of art a luxury, which seems "stranger to the daily occupations of making a living."¹⁹ The consummation of art has something to do with liberating human capacity and proficiency. Therefore, art will be in harmony with human life, but also with the process of making a living as long as the "liberating of human capacity operates as a socially creative force," and as long as art is not distorted.²⁰ This represents Dewey's contribution to the foundation of the liberal arts, and to the liberating of those arts and education. The influence of Dewey and his approach to educational philosophy, as well as his methods and position on the development of experimental liberal arts, are subjects that have attracted much attention from Dewey's commentators.²¹

& Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), v. 4, pp. 196-97; Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 354-93; Dewey, *Problems of Men*, pp. 286-300.

¹⁶ Dewey, "Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling," p. 274.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 358.

¹⁹ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p. 211.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ For instance, see Philip Tate, "The Two Worlds of Teaching," *Journal of Education* 175 no. 3 (1993): 15-39; Wayne Willis, "Liberating the Liberal Arts: An Interpretation of Aristotle," *Journal of General Education* 39 no. 4 (1988): 193-207. These items were borrowed from McGill's Peruse Citation, Eric (1984 to 1997 database), with respective accession numbers EJ509417 & EJ4022813.

Moreover, Dewey from the same social philosophical standpoint as the above brought poetry, art and religion altogether and looked at them as precious things. These things “are an out-flowering of thought and desires that unconsciously converge into a disposition of imagination as a result of thousands and thousands of daily episodes and contacts.”²² In Dewey’s mind, “the development of the vital sources of a religion and art” can be expedited “by substituting faith in the active tendencies of the day for dread and dislike of them, and by the courage of intelligence to follow whither social and scientific changes direct us.”²³

Again, elaborating on habits as social functions, Dewey linked habits to the arts. Insisting on the need for a rational basis to moral discussion, he came to the conclusion “that habits are arts.”²⁴ This is due to the nature and functions of habits, which humanize them and consider them to be in fact human arts. Dewey explains that habits involving the skill of the sensory and motor organs, “assimilate objective energies, and eventuate in command of environment. They require order, discipline, and manifest technique. They have a beginning, middle and end.”²⁵ The artistic aspect of habits lies in the fact that each of their stages involves material and tools, that each converts “material to active use,” and that through such a process it marks progress and advances. To this extent, one’s art depends upon “support from objects and assistance from tools” and it is never “cooped up” within one’s self.²⁶

The terms ‘ideal’ and ‘idealization’ are of significance in Dewey’s interpretation of art and aesthetic feelings. They are among the key elements and components of Dewey’s understanding of art. One may find that Dewey’s notion of art and his remarks on the process of knowledge are interconnected in this regard. Explaining the processes of knowledge as idealization, Dewey stated that idealization is a meaning that “goes beyond the sensuous existence, which is actually present, and gives this present datum meaning by connecting it with the self, and thus putting into it significance, which as bare existence it does not have.”²⁷ Dewey placed more emphasis on the fact that an important

²² Ibid., p. 212.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 18.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Dewey, “Knowledge - Processes of Knowledge,” p. 122.

element like *meaning* is *ideal* since meaning is a relation or a connection which “must be supplied by the self or mind” This element goes “beyond the mere presentation to something beyond.”²⁸ What Dewey maintained in relation to the process of knowledge as idealization, as well as with respect to meaning as the relation of objects to each other or as “a thoroughly ideal factor,” can be, as Dewey himself explained, applied exactly to the notion of art and aesthetic feelings.²⁹ Our feelings are connected with the content of our consciousness, wherein “an element of beauty” may be found. This element is an ideal one.³⁰

Ideal, beauty and harmony are the key elements in virtually any discussion or interpretation of art to the extent that art, beauty and harmony are interconnected with one another. From Dewey’s point of view, the adjective “beautiful” is applied to the truth “because it thrills the soul with a peculiar feeling of an ideal indwelling in nature which finds an expression in this truth; the character is beautiful because of a like embodiment of an ideal. There is a sense of satisfaction felt in each”³¹ This approach suggests that the adjectives beautiful, harmonious and ideal are interconnected. Explaining the concept of harmony, Dewey pointed to “the feeling of the agreement of some experience with the ideal nature of the self” as constituting the essence of harmony.³² The fundamental element that in fact “constitutes aesthetic sentiment” is the same “feeling of satisfaction in the objective presentation of any harmonious ideal.”³³

Dewey, enlarging on the psychological feelings of the self, employed the same definition that he used when he was formulating his conception of “knowledge as idealization.”³⁴ He indicated that such aesthetic feelings as belong to the category of psychology “are the feelings of the meaning of experience, or of the relation of objects to each other; for meaning, or relation, as we saw when studying knowledge, is a thoroughly ideal factor.”³⁵

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Dewey, “Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling,” p. 267.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p. 273.

³³ Ibid., p. 268.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 267, 122.

Dewey did not take up the adjective “ideal” in terms of its classic conception. He instead conceived of the term “ideal” in its modern sense in contrast to the classic one. “In the classic philosophy,” Dewey indicated “the ideal world is essentially a haven in which man finds rest from the storms of life; it is asylum in which he takes refuge from the troubles of existence with the calm assurance that it alone is supremely real.”³⁶ In its modern perspective, “the ideal realm is no longer something aloof and separate; it is rather that collection of imagined possibilities that stimulates men to new efforts and realizations.”³⁷ Based on such terminology, Dewey maintained that the process of idealization is necessary in order to create “a wholly objective form” for aesthetic feelings. However, one should keep in mind that an aesthetic quality is never constituted by this process of idealization. “The ideal quality exists, but it is absorbed in the thing.”³⁸

Dewey’s conception of ideal and of the process of idealization proposes that aesthetic feelings are not something “ideal” as contrasted to “real.” In his review of Bernard Bosanquet’s work “A History of Aesthetic,” Dewey criticized the former’s insistence on “the fixed distinction between complete reality and distinct reality.” He argued that art when viewed “as expression of life leaves no room for any such division. Art becomes one with fullness of life.” And yet, what is more significant than art is the end of art itself.³⁹ The above-mentioned distinction, from Dewey’s point of view, refers “to just those historical periods when man has become aware of new principles of action just enough to condemn old action, but not sufficiently to secure expression for them.”⁴⁰

Harmony as a “*variety of unity*” is, indeed, the “most general property” that constitutes beauty.⁴¹ While beauty, from Dewey’s perspective, is meant to be “the fit and successful *embodiment of an idea in outward form*,” harmony represents “the *feeling of the agreement of some experience with the ideal nature of the self*.”⁴² Dewey, in his later discussion of “Art as Experience,” concluded that beauty is not just the result of fitness and adaptation found in the form of a well-constructed object. It is both this and

³⁶ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p. 118.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Dewey, “Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling,” p. 268.

³⁹ Dewey, “Reviews: A History of Aesthetic, by B. Bosanquet, 1982,” in *The Early Works 1893-94*, v. 4, p. 197.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-97.

⁴¹ Dewey, “Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling,” p. 272.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 268 & 273.

something more. The aesthetic aspect of a form depends upon an object "having this external form fit into a larger experience."⁴³ This larger experience in Dewey's mind is taken in a special aesthetic sense indicating that "adequate objective relationship of parts with respect to most efficient use at least brings about a condition that is favourable to esthetic enjoyment."⁴⁴ Dewey, quoting Plato's conception of the rhythmic and harmonious elements of art and paraphrasing his definition of the object of art, proposed the latter's hierarchical image of beauty "leading from sense upwards."

The lowest stage consists in the beauty of sensible objects, a stage that is morally dangerous because we are tempted to remain there. From thence we are invited to mount to the beauty of mind, thence to the beauty of laws and institutions, whence we should ascend to the beauty of the sciences and then we may move on to the one intuitive knowledge of beauty absolute.⁴⁵

Dewey, as may have been expected due to his empirical and naturalistic assumptions, was never satisfied with this Platonic ladder. His negative reaction is clear from his words on this subject: "Sense seems, as to Plato, to be a seduction that leads man away from the spiritual." Accordingly, sense is given the lowest position and is nothing but "a vehicle through which man may be brought to an intuition of immaterial and non-sensuous essence." Having it in mind to comment on Plato's image of beauty more effectively, Dewey drew our attention to his understanding of the function of art. He stated, "the work of art is the impregnation of sensuous material with imaginative values," so that he knew "of no way to criticize the theory save to say that it is ghostly metaphysics irrelevant to actual esthetic experience."⁴⁶ One can only imagine to what extent Dewey took up his own conceptualization of the harmonious and aesthetic elements of art and its idealization. This perspective, which borrows its authenticity from the Deweyan world-view, has no status beyond that of the material and sensuous world.

In his remarks on the moral emotions and interests, Dewey came to the conclusion that they are identical with artistic interests. In this realm, the emphasis is laid upon the

⁴³ Dewey, "Art as Experience," in *The Later Works, 1925-1953* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), v. 10: 1934, p. 344.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 295-96. See also Plato, "Republic," in *Philosophies of Beauty*, trans. E. F. Carrith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 17-28.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 297-98.

term “artistic” and not “aesthetic.” This is not simply a manipulation of the expressions. Rather, Dewey fully intends to distinguish between the two kinds of interests.

I say “artistic,” not “aesthetic.” Artistic interest is interest in the *execution* of an idea; in its assumption of that concrete fullness of detail which is realization. Aesthetic interest is interest rather in the contemplation of some idea *already* executed. It is the difference between art as a process to the *artist* and a *work* of art to the spectator. The latter *may* free activity in the beholder and so be artistic in turn; but it may stop in itself, in the mere self-absorbed feeling awakened.⁴⁷

The above passages, as well as what follows, should suffice to show us that the arts constituted a vehicle for self-realization from Dewey’s perspective. Elaborating on the fine arts and their ideal side, Dewey maintained “this ideal is the completely developed self,” so that

we may say that the end of art is to create that in which the human soul may find itself perfectly reflected. Or as the essential factor in beauty is harmony -harmony with self- we may say that the end of art is to produce a perfectly harmonized self. The various fine arts, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry, are the successive attempts of the mind adequately to express its own ideal nature, or, more correctly stated, adequately to produce that which will satisfy its own demands for and love of a perfectly harmonious nature, something in which admiration may rest.⁴⁸

This, I think is the clearest expression of Dewey’s position on the end of art as completely relative to his notion of self-realization. Nowhere else, as far as I can tell, did he write so precisely about the connection of art with the process of self-realization as he did here. These words of Dewey constitute the heart and cornerstone of the subject-matter of the present chapter. Human beings, in Dewey’s mind are distinguished by the existence of art. The existence of art in fact “is the proof that man uses the materials and energies of nature with intent to expand his own life, and that he does so in accord with the structure of his organism - brain, sense-organs, and muscular system.”⁴⁹

The major point in Dewey’s mind is that human beings, by using art, are distinguished “from the rest of nature” and at the same time are tied to nature since they are engaged in the process of interaction with nature. These are human beings, alone of all

⁴⁷ Dewey, “The Study of Ethics,” in *The Early Works 1893-1894*, v. 4, p. 301, footnote.

⁴⁸ Dewey, “Feeling - Aesthetic Feeling,” p. 274.

⁴⁹ Dewey, “Art as Experience,” in *The Later Works*, v. 10, p. 31.

creatures, who by the help of their intelligence are able to discover nature and reach their ultimate intellectual achievement. They can thus invent new arts “along with the use of old arts,” and this possibility is “the guiding ideal of mankind.”⁵⁰ In closing our discussion of art and self-realization in Dewey’s thought, it seems worthwhile to quote his final evaluation of art and civilization.

Art is a mode of prediction not found in charts and statistics, and it insinuates possibilities of human relations not to be found in rule and precept, admonition and administration.

But Art, wherein man speaks in no wise to man,

Only to mankind - Art may tell a truth

*Obliquely, do the deed shall breed the thought.*⁵¹

‘Allāma’s Notion: the Existence of *Fiṭrah*; the Divine Innate Nature of Human Soul

As we have seen, the subject-matter of any philosophical or theological field touched upon and investigated by ‘Allāma has been connected in one way or another with his epistemology and belief-system. Indeed, ‘Allāma’s belief in divine guidance and inspiration overshadowed his notions of any theme he studied or examined. His conception of art and aesthetic feelings is no exception. For the sake of better understanding, let us first look at ‘Allāma’s epistemology of the innate nature of human beings. As was mentioned earlier in the chapter on “Human Nature,” ‘Allāma spoke of the divine element implied in human nature, so that it is wholly linked to its Creator. ‘Allāma described the fact that the individual’s inclination towards beauty, embellishment and art is due to an internal drive rooted in human, divinely-bestowed, innate nature (*fiṭrah*).⁵²

Like other Muslim thinkers and theologians, ‘Allāma borrowed Quranic terminology and Islamic hermeneutics to explicate his notion of the basis of the human inclination towards art and beauty. The term *fiṭrah*, originally a Quranic term, occurs once therein where it implies the innate nature of human beings and its relation to the divine and revealed religion. A number of conjugations of the word *fiṭrah* are depicted in the

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 31-33; see also Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, pp. 31, 41.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 352.

⁵² Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 378 (Tehran).

Qur'ān, yet they were not first used in the Qur'ān.⁵³ Human *fiṭrah* as the source of all human characteristics can be applied to human traits.⁵⁴ There are in fact three different terms describing the inner features and traits of objects and creatures. *Nature* (*ṭabī'ah*), as contrasted with *fiṭrah* and *instinct*, has been used to stand for inanimate objects. *Instinct* (*gharizah*), in the same way has been employed to explain the character animal. *Fiṭrah*, in its turn, is devoted to human nature alone, for it is not shared with any other creature. For example, one speaks of the *nature* of water, the *nature* of air, etc., just as one does of the *instincts* of ants, horses, etc. But one can only say human *fiṭrah*. The former two can be used as alternatives to human *fiṭrah* to describe human nature and instincts. All these terms share in having been characterized as absolutely natural and not acquired. To this extent, *fiṭrah*, as “a fundamental dimension of our existence,”⁵⁵ is more consciousness in character than instinct.⁵⁶

In his explanation of the term “*fiṭrah*”, Ṭālibī indicated that God supplied human nature with an aptitude for knowing God and bestowed on it the capacity of faith in Him.⁵⁷ Generally speaking, human beings, through this same innate nature, are manifestations of God's existence and mirror Him as “the best of the Creators.”⁵⁸ This type of innate nature is like a current or spirit flowing through all parts and dimensions of human nature. This ideology, when seen to be applied to human nature in its entirety, is certainly applicable to it in its particularity. In other words, when a scholar such as Ṭālibī believes that human nature possesses a divine element or colour, he means that all features and manifestations of this same nature, including its inclination towards beauty and art, share in having the same element and colour within itself. This enables human beings to recognize what is beautiful or embellished and what is ugly or clumsy, and to “understand what is right and wrong for it.”⁵⁹

⁵³ Muṭahhari, *Fiṭrat* (Tehran: Ṣadrā Publications, 1996), pp. 14, 18-19.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁵ Sayyid Muṭṭabā Musavi Lari [S. M. Mūsawī Lārī], *God and His Attributes: Lessons on Islamic Doctrine*, trans. Hamid Algar (MD: Potomac, Islamic Education Center, 1989), p. 119.

⁵⁶ Muṭahhari, *Fiṭrat*, pp. 29-33.

⁵⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 15, pp. 19-20 (Tehran).

⁵⁸ *The Qur'an*, 23: 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 91: 8. For more on the interpretation of the verse, see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 20, pp. 297-98 (Beirut).

The above passages constitute the major presuppositions in 'Allāma's understanding of art. These are the assumptions upon which he established his theory of beauty and art. In 'Allāma's eyes, all aesthetic feelings and tendencies to beauty and art are deeply rooted in the above-mentioned *fiṭrah*. We will see how 'Allāma came to the realization that human beings, by their nature, love beauty and show their interest in and inclination towards every beautiful, artistic, elegant and creative object. Such love and inclination are never imposed upon the human individual by an agent beyond his or her innate nature.⁶⁰ Muṭahhari, a former student of 'Allāma worked it out that human inner tendency towards beauty is a foundation based upon which the human individual, as an aesthete, not only loves beauty but also has the potential to create beauty and art. And this is why the human individual, if sound and sane, always enjoys looking at beautiful and artistic works and crafts.⁶¹

Moreover, according to 'Allāma's interpretation of a particular Quranic verse, embellishment and beautification are constantly brought by God for the sake of human beings. "Say: Who has prohibited the embellishment and the good provisions of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants?"⁶² Explaining this verse, 'Allāma held that *zinah* [embellishment], as distinct from *shayn* [dismantling], is an element by means of which the human soul expresses no dislike or hatred towards any beautifully or artfully-made object. Through this divinely-bestowed property, God guides humankind to create many types of beautiful, eye-catching, and attractive things.⁶³

In 'Allāma's perspective, there is a link between the human tendency towards beautification and art or the human hatred of ugliness on the one hand and human social life on the other. Such inclinations and hatreds, to him, are among the most significant elements that enrich or distinguish human society. 'Allāma tended to establish his theory of art and beauty in relation to the social self of human nature. The existence of this same social self accordingly suggests that human beings show their interest in beautiful and artistic things in order to explore their social nature in a better way. Otherwise, there would be no active and useful interest and tendency as such, nor would there be any need

⁶⁰ For more on the issue see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 374 (Beirut).

⁶¹ Muṭahhari, *Fiṭrat*, pp. 80-82.

⁶² *The Qur'an*, 7: 32.

⁶³ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 8, pp. 78-79 (Tehran).

to create beauty if human beings were apart from human society or if they were not social by nature. When seen from another angle, there would be no applicability for human society if there were no interest in beauty or hatred of ugliness. This interest has shown itself as a living character within human societies since the dawn of human civilization. The most civilized societies have expressed a stronger tendency and interest in art and have produced more creative and skillful works by virtue of the above-said natural inclination.⁶⁴

`Allāma, however, when compared to Dewey, did not elaborate on art and aesthetic feelings in detail. Although he himself was well acquainted with the arts in their real sense, he did not leave behind any considerable writings on art. He possessed a delicate and fine poetic gift and recited many marvelous verses.⁶⁵ One of his poems begins with the following:

*"I always say and many times have said that my religion is to love the sweethearts."*⁶⁶

This verse manifests `Allāma's strong inclination and love towards those dear to him, who are in fact none other than God and His exalted friends. Most of his poems were recited by him in a spiritual atmosphere and contain mystical allusions. `Allāma at the same time was an accomplished calligrapher.⁶⁷ He was also an excellent swimmer, and a skilled horseman; when working on the farm, he usually went riding with his wife, who was herself a fine horsewoman.⁶⁸

My focus on this aesthetic aspect of `Allāma's intellectual background is to show that he was someone who was familiar with art and aesthetic feelings. But why he did not write something substantial about the arts is a mystery. I found only one passage in his exegesis of the Qur'ān where he deals very briefly with the nature and concept of beauty but not directly with the concept of art.⁶⁹ This, however, does not intimate that `Allāma had nothing significant to say about art and aesthetic feeling in an Islamic appraisal. To understand the position of Islam on beauty and art, one needs only read the ample work

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 78-80 (Tehran).

⁶⁵ Husaynī Ṭihirānī, *Mihr-i Tābān*, pp. 55-56; Guli Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 212-17.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 221-22; Guli Zavārah, *Jur'ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, p. 215-16.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 218, 370-71.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 383-84.

⁶⁹ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 374 (Beirut).

published on beauty and art from an Islamic point of view written by one of `Allāma's clerical colleagues, Muḥammad Taqī Ja'fari.⁷⁰

`Allāma speaks of beauty (*jamāl*)⁷¹ which is not synonymous with art, although it is the key element in the conceptualization of art. In another words art and beauty are intertwined and go side by side in any description of a work of art. Everything which is artful is beautiful, to be sure, but not vice versa, since there may be found many beautiful objects that are not considered art. For instance a very wonderful and amazing natural sight is eye-catching and attractive because of its beauty; however, it is not viewed as an art. One may perhaps find in this a clue to `Allāma's understanding of art. For him, a human being falls in love with beauty and his or her love of beauty is constantly increasing "from strength to strength, because man by nature loves beauty."<sup>72</sup> This same love, from `Allāma's perspective, finds its link to Divine Beauty and to God-realization which is again to him ultimately the product of self-realization.⁷³ The notion of Divine Beauty was originally depicted in the Islamic literature of prayer and invocation. The following sayings, which have of invocations spoken by the Imams of the Shi'a, demonstrate some reflections on Divine Beauty:

- "God is beautiful, loves beauty and He likes to see the manifestation of His grace in His servant."⁷⁴
- "Glorious is He Who holds cheerfulness and beauty."⁷⁵
- "You are bright in Your Beauty."⁷⁶
- "O You Who possesses glory and beauty."⁷⁷
- "Do not deprive those who are eager to see You from looking at Your beautiful image."⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Cf. Muḥammad Taqī Ja'fari, *Zibā'i va Hunar az Didgāh-i Islām* [Beauty and Art from Islamic Point of View] (Tehran: Nashr-i Karamat, 1996). For information on Islamic expressions of form and beauty in English see Richard C. Martin, *Islam* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1982), pp. 69-85.

⁷¹ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 374 (Beirut); see its English translation, v. 2, p. 232.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ja'fari, *Zibā'i va Hunar*, p. 276, cited from Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshāni, *Al-Waḥī*, part 11, p. 93. The saying is related to Imam `Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.

⁷⁵ `Abbās Qummi (Muḥaddith), ed., "Faṭimat al-Zahrā's Prayers," in *Mafāṭih al-Jinān* (Tehran: Farhang-i Islāmi, 1991), p. 72.

⁷⁶ Ibid., "Imam Mūsā Kāzīm's Prayers," p. 78.

⁷⁷ Ibid., "Du'a' Jawshan Kabir," verse 4, p. 161, from Imam Sajjād.

⁷⁸ Ibid., "Munājāt al-Khā'ifin," p. 221, from Imam Sajjād. All of the above sayings and some others are collected by M. Taqī Ja'fari in his volume on art and beauty in Islam. For more on this section see Ja'fari, *Zibā'i va Hunar*, pp. 276-77.

When seen in this manner, the one's love for God as the original source and wellspring of all beauty leads one to look "at a thing which has some beauty and attraction, he finds in it a sample – although imperfect – of the Divine Beauty."⁷⁹ In the eyes of the lovers of God, He

is the beauty, grace, perfection and magnificence; every beauty and perfection found in other things, in reality belongs to Him, because every thing is a sign of Allāh - it is its only reality, it is nothing more than that; it has no other disposition: it is but a reflection showing the image of the original.⁸⁰

In conclusion, it may be inferred from `Allāma's system of thought that art and beauty lead us to the Divine, thus God-realization and self-realization to him are the same path.

II- Sciences and Self-Realization

Instrumental Perspective; General Remark

As in the case of art and self-realization, I begin my study of knowledge, science and self-realization from the standpoints of both Dewey and `Allāma by taking a brief look at the terminological conception of knowledge and science. This is done in order to uncover some clues to a better understanding of Dewey and `Allāma and to lead us towards further investigation of the relation between science and self-actualization. The terms science and knowledge have been employed in several controversial senses.

A divergence in both the implications and applications of the words "art" and "science" manifests itself through the following statement. Bachelor and master degrees in the case of some branches of science have intensively borrowed the word *arts* as a suffix as in the "bachelor of *arts*, master of *arts*," designating "one of the fundamental branches of learning regarded as necessary to every educated person and serving as an instrument for his advancement in knowledge not only generally but specifically in his professional studies."⁸¹ A wider divergence has emerged since the nineteenth century. Art, for the most part, "is applied to those courses which have for their end teaching

⁷⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, English translation, v. 2, p. 232.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 233.

⁸¹ Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, p. 62, s.v. **art**: **3 Art, science**.

students to make or do something that requires skill and a knowledge of technique ... inventiveness, taste," etc.⁸² At the same time science is meant to refer to those "courses or studies as deal with the gathering and classification of facts, the drawing of correct inferences from them, and the establishment of verifiable general laws"⁸³

Moreover, there are a variety of terminologies such as knowledge, learning, erudition and scholarship that can be seen as comparable to the word science "when they mean what is known or can be known, usually by an individual but sometimes by human beings in general."⁸⁴ Science can be viewed as being distinct from knowledge. In such a sense, while knowledge may apply to both a body of facts and a body of ideas, science may ordinarily apply "only to a body of systematized knowledge dealing with facts gathered over a long period and by numerous persons as a result of observation and experiment and with the general truths or laws derived by inference from such facts."⁸⁵ I hold the above-quoted passages as a bridge to my study in the following pages of Dewey's and 'Allāma's attitudes towards the instrumentality of knowledge, science and technology for self-realization.

Dewey's Position: Instrumentality Leading to Consummatory Experiences

One may recognize different concepts of science in Dewey's technical language and explanations. The range of science extends from mere logic or reflective inquiries to the realm of the physical sciences, as well as to technology and industry. Thus, Dewey employed different terminologies in speaking of the different types of science, knowledge or technology, including logic, philosophy, physics, chemistry, industry and technology.⁸⁶ I have to recognize how Dewey's position on science became involved in his concept of self-realization. To understand Dewey in this regard, I think, I need not go into detail or elaborate on the numerous terminologies he employed or different notions he intended by the terms science, knowledge, technology, scientific technique and scientific temper.⁸⁷

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 481, s.v. **knowledge**.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 15, 17; Dewey, "Ethics and Physical Science," in *The Early Works*, v. 1, p. 223; "Message to Friends of the John Dewey Labor Research Fund," in *The Later Works*, v. 14, pp. 318-19. See also Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 71.

⁸⁷ For instance see Dewey, *Problems of Men*, pp. 172-73.

My major concern is to realize how Dewey connected his remarks on science and technology with self-realization, and there I must avoid a terminological discussion that would detract from the more important issue at hand.⁸⁸

Regardless of what conceptions of science may exist in accordance to Deweyan notion of science, one may think of science and art in parallel, regarding them as two vehicles for self-realization. The human individual's self-realization constitutes Dewey's major concern in his discussion of science and art.⁸⁹

I would say, in dealing with the parallels between art and science, that what I have noticed regarding Dewey's remarks on the arts can be applied to his remarks on science and technology. In fact, science and the arts seem correlative with respect to their objects. "The objects of science," Dewey maintained, "like the direct objects of the arts, are an order of relations which serve as tools to effect immediate havings and beings."⁹⁰

Explaining the various aspects of the nature of the object of knowledge,⁹¹ Dewey points out that one of these aspects is where science is identified as a body of laws and relations. Laws and relations exist among the elements of knowledge as an inevitable fundamental and constant character.⁹² Looking at an object as an instrumental phenomenon, Dewey believed that the character of object and tool are alike.⁹³ To this extent, there would be no status for knowledge, science and technology more important than to see them as instruments and tools to attain further objectives. In this way, science finds its link to art since, as Dewey mentioned, "[s]cience is an instrumentality of and for art because it is the intelligent factor *in* art."⁹⁴

Dewey, speaking of science as "a matter of art and not of nature" insisted that "nature" and "natural" in one sense are studied as elements that "contrast with 'art' and 'artificial'."⁹⁵ If it is affirmed that science and art go together and are interconnected in their nature, it will be clear that science functions, as art does, as a vehicle towards self-

⁸⁸ Ibid. For more information on terminological analysis see Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁹ Cf. Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 49.

⁹⁰ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 136, see also: p. 140.

⁹¹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 142-46.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 145-46.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 151.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 367.

⁹⁵ Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 290.

realization. To Dewey it is taken for granted that these two empirical phenomena are not separated from one another.

The separation of science from art, and the division of arts into those concerned with mere means and those concerned with ends in themselves, is a mask for lack of conjunction between power and the goods of life. It will lose plausibility in the degree in which foresight of good informs the display of power.⁹⁶

Pursued in this manner, science “is a product of art,” or is “the art of knowing,”⁹⁷ or perhaps going one step further, it is an art itself “with respect to both methods and conclusions.” Dewey argued that “all knowledge, even the most rudimentary, ... is an expression of skill in selection and arrangement of materials so as to contribute to maintenance of the progresses and operations constituting life.”⁹⁸ Again, my focus is on the juxtaposition of art and science and that they function in their instrumental sense as tools for self-realization. Elaborating on the notions of experience, nature, art and science, Dewey taught “that science is made by man for man.”⁹⁹

Moreover, one may find another sign or clue in Dewey’s words linking his notions of art, science and technology to that of self-realization. In one sense, all of these phenomena are products of experience, and are included in the Deweyan definition of experience, so that they are connected with the concept of self-realization as an interaction with nature.¹⁰⁰ Explaining the process of knowledge, Dewey maintained that

we cannot recognize anything unless we can connect it with our previous experience, and recognize it as like some of our past ideals, and unlike others. In short, it must be given a place in the connected series of ideas which make up our experience before it is known.¹⁰¹

Dewey’s definitions of experience and self-realization are interconnected, as are the definitions of art, science and technology as the products of artistic or scientific experiences. Experience for him “is a product, one might almost say a by-product, of continuous and cumulative interaction of an organic self with the world.”¹⁰² Dewey’s commentator, Roth, indicated that the former intended to identify the highest fulfillment

⁹⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 383-84.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁹⁸ Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 290.

⁹⁹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 382.

¹⁰⁰ Dewey’s definition of self-realization will be explored in the following chapter.

¹⁰¹ Dewey, “Psychology - Process of Knowledge,” in *The Early Works*, v. 2, p. 80.

¹⁰² Dewey, “Art as Experience,” p. 224.

which is expected of human beings. "And if it is made for man, instead of meaning all that is detrimental to man's development, it is rather that through which man must attain his self-realization."¹⁰³

Dewey, however, was aware of the limitation of the art of knowledge in classical culture where it was seen as belonging to a small number of people. "Like everything precious and scarce, it has been artificially protected; and through this very protection it has been dehumanized and appropriated by a class. As costly jewels of jade and pearl belong only to a few, so with the jewels of science." Dewey's major concern was to assert that science must have a lot to do with human life and has to be in favour of the mass of people; therefore, it must not "remain a special luxury for a few."¹⁰⁴ Dewey attempted to "broaden the notion of culture so that it may not be the prerogative of the few."¹⁰⁵ He was categorically against the classical notion of culture according to which gaining knowledge was the right and in the power of the upper class of society while the ordinary people and especially the workers were seen as spiritually impoverished.¹⁰⁶ From Dewey's perspective science and technology must help remove discrimination among people, as well as eliminate the separation between the human individual and nature. "Science and technology are transactions in which man and nature work together and in which the human factor is that directly open to modification and direction."¹⁰⁷

Science and technology have, in Dewey's eyes, another aspect that manifests itself in the alienation of human beings. The domination of interest in private and personal monetary gain is the major cause of the difficulties that people have with technology today. This has gradually resulted in the manifestation of a "lost individual." From Dewey's point of view this result was essentially due to the fact "that the loyalties which once held individuals, which gave them support, direction, and unity of outlook on life, have well-nigh disappeared. In consequence, individuals are confused and bewildered."¹⁰⁸

Such was Dewey's pessimism as to the potential of science and technology. However, the above problems never discouraged Dewey from finding hope in the

¹⁰³ Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁴ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 382.

¹⁰⁵ Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 52.

¹⁰⁶ Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 126; Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 52.

¹⁰⁷ Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁸ Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 52.

progressive science and technology of today. At first, he maximized the notion of culture to the extent that the latter does not restrict itself to artistic, aesthetic or cultural objects and activities. Accordingly it must include also the enrichment of human life at all levels and for the sake of all people, and must not be linked to the aristocrat or the elite.¹⁰⁹ Dewey then showed his contempt for “private pecuniary gain” and elaborated on “the attitude of ‘social awareness’ which on the broader plane includes a solidarity of all men based on a profound respect for the dignity of the human person.”¹¹⁰ In this way, the individual’s personal contribution to a shared culture is of great significance in Dewey’s mind.¹¹¹

Explaining the stages of knowledge and elaborating on perception as one of these stages, Dewey proposed the theory of “knowledge as self-development.” In this regard, it is ascertained that “perception is not a final stage of knowledge.” The objects of perception are connected with each other on the one hand and with the self on the other through the existing relations of identity.¹¹² Having explained that the “character of the object is like that of a tool,” Dewey held that “[t]he distinction between tools (or things in their objectivities) and fulfilled products of the use of tools accounts for the distinction between known objects on one side and objects of appreciation and affection on the other.”¹¹³ Going further, Dewey stated, “[o]bjects of natural science are not metaphysical rivals of historical events; they are means of directing the latter.”¹¹⁴ What Dewey “uniformly insisted upon is that knowledge when attained is the only medium to controlled enrichment,”¹¹⁵ which may “include all phases of liberation and enrichment of human experience.”¹¹⁶ For him, in cases where “things are defined as instruments, their value and validity reside in what proceeds from them; consequences not antecedents supply meaning and verity.”¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 122; Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 55.

¹¹⁰ Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 58, paraphrasing Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 95.

¹¹¹ Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 34.

¹¹² Dewey, “Psychology - Stages of Knowledge: Perception,” in *The Early Works*, v. 2, pp. 137, 152.

¹¹³ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 151.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

¹¹⁵ Dewey, “Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder,” in *The Later Works*, v. 14, p. 13.

¹¹⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 165.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 154.

Finally, the terms science and knowledge may be distinguished from one another in terms of their instrumentalities. In Dewey's eyes, "the end of science"¹¹⁸ in contrast with knowledge "is knowledge, implying that knowledge is more than science, being its fruit."¹¹⁹ In either case, either science or knowledge takes its position as an instrumental experience in order to achieve some higher objective in terms of consummatory experience. The purpose of this section is to identify Dewey's notion of self-realization as a consummatory experience when studied in relation to science and knowledge in terms of their instrumentalities.¹²⁰

'Allāma's Position: Instrumentality of "Knowledge by Presence"

Generally speaking, the problem of knowledge as a major issue has been touched upon by Muslim philosophers, as well as by Muslim theologians and logicians. As seen in the history of Islamic thought, Muslim thinkers have approached the problem of knowledge and presented a variety of definitions and doctrines. Various aspects of knowledge, as well as the interrelation between knowledge on the one hand and some other aspects of human life, including those of an intellectual or philosophical, social or individual nature on the other have been discussed by them.¹²¹

Although there are a number of places where 'Allāma discussed the theory of knowledge in detail, his discourse on the subject is most often presented in a philosophical psychological sense. In such instances he looks at the problem of knowledge through its connection with the faculty of "mental existence" (*al-wujūd al-dhīnī*),¹²² or as an implication and attribute of human soul in terms of its being either a perceiver or an intelligible, as well as in terms of its being equipped with "the knowledge by presence" (*al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*).¹²³

¹¹⁸ Dewey holds this position for science in terms of both its applied and pure divisions. Engineering, medicine, and social arts are among "applied science"; while mathematics, and physics are in the list of so-called "pure science." Ibid., p. 161.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

¹²⁰ For more on the issue see Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization*, pp. 98-99 and pp. 42-43.

¹²¹ Cf. Muṭahhari, *Sharḥ-i Mabsūṭ-i Manzūmah* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Hikmat, 1084), v. 1, pp. 255-56; S. M. R. Hejazi [Hijazi], *Knowledge by Presence (al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī): A Comparative Study Based on the Epistemology of Suhrawardī (d. 587 / 1191) and Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1050 / 1640)* (McGill University: Institute of Islamic Studies, M. A. Thesis, 1994), p. 1.

¹²² Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, pp. 25-36; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 1, pp. 83-94.

¹²³ Cf. Ibid., pp. 135-53; Cf. Ibid., v. 2, pp. 193-266.

In both his philosophy and Quranic commentary, `Allāma presented his thesis of knowledge, but nowhere did he specifically elaborate or put his finger on its relation to the doctrine of self-realization. Nevertheless, when I study `Allāma's philosophical and psychological discourse and assumptions in more depth, I may extract his perception of knowledge or science with regard to its instrumentality for self-realization from the latter's explanation and conceptualization of knowledge. In order to explore the above-mentioned instrumentality from `Allāma's point of view, I intend first to follow `Allāma's approach to the conception of both "mental existence" and "knowledge by presence." As a further investigation, I prefer to rely on his Quranic commentary, where the theory of knowledge or its implications are concerned, to discover `Allāma's notion of the instrumentality of knowledge and science for a higher aim, i.e., self-realization. My intention is to study how I might find an existing relationship between one's self "as knowing subjects" and "an external object as the thing known."¹²⁴ The following passage may give us some sense of clarification of the above relationship.

If I truly say "I know something", does this assertion presuppose that I as the knowing subject am already acquainted with myself which is, in this case, the knowing "I"? If it does, what can the meaning of this acquaintance be except the *very being* of my self? In the light of this fundamental introvertive question, and by means of laws and principles of logic, we feel quite justified to arrive at the very foundation of human intellect where *the word knowing does not mean any thing other than being*. In this ontological state of human consciousness the constitutive dualism of the subject-object relationship is overcome and converged into a unitary simplex of the reality of the self.¹²⁵

This is because of the knowledge by presence that the consciousness of *I* manifests itself through the existence of the self and does not leave one's awareness.¹²⁶ `Allāma maintained that "the reality of 'I' remains fixed."<sup>127</sup> We will see how `Allāma's words lead us to the same position when we examine his notions of the mental existence and knowledge by presence. This will help us understand the existing link between the process of knowledge as was mentioned above and the reality of self-realization. For the

¹²⁴ Mehdi Ha'iri Yazdi [Mahdi Ha'iri Yazdi], *Knowledge by Presence* (Tehran: Cultural Studies and Research Institute: 1982), p. I.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. I, II.

¹²⁶ Ṭabāṭaba'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, p. 163.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

same reason, I approach 'Allāma's philosophical discourses on knowledge, the knowing subject and external or internal object as thing known. When this part becomes clear, the bridge to the process of self-realization will be apparent.

Mental Existence and Immateriality of Perception

In Islamic philosophy the problem of "mental existence" is studied in contrast to the problem of "external existence." As Miṣbāḥ, a former student of 'Allāma and his commentator explains, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1147-1209)¹²⁸ and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (1198-1273)¹²⁹ were among the first Muslim philosophers who addressed the problem of mental existence. Before these two thinkers, Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) referred to a type of existence in the soul (*al-wujūd fī al-naḥs*) as opposed to external existence. The latter does not use the term "*al-wujūd al-dhiḥnī* (mental existence)."¹³⁰

At any rate, it is ascertained and taken for granted that all external beings and quiddities have a special form of existence other than their existence in the external, physical and outer universe. This is their existence in mind, or as it might be put, their "mental existence." In short, the "mental existence" constitutes the groundwork of our knowledge of observable and external quiddities and realities.¹³¹

'Allāma argued that we may perceive existent beings and realities in their generality and totality. For instance, we see a real horse in the external world, and at the same time we think of the species of horse and judge that this same perceived general form of being exists for certain. There is no doubt that it exists, yet it does not exist in the external world since what exists there is the horse in its individuality. Thus, it should exist in another realm of existence, which is our mind. Again, we may imagine non-existent things or absolute non-being, whereas there is no place for them in reality in the external world. On the one hand, we know that our judgment about these non-beings depends upon their existence. But on the other hand, we find in the external world no space given over to non-being. Based on these premises, we conclude that these non-beings do not exist

¹²⁸ See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 1990), v. 1, pp. 114-115.

¹²⁹ See Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, *Tajrid al-I'tiqād* (Tehran: Markaz al-Nashr, Maktab al-A'lam al-Islāmi, 1986-87), pp. 106-107.

¹³⁰ Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā', Ilāhiyāt* (Qum: Maktabat al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi, 1983), v. 4, pp. 33-34; Ṭabāṭaba'i, *Nihāyat al-Hikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 1, p. 83.

¹³¹ Ibid.

except in our mind or soul and that they do not possess any portion of existence except for mental existence. The nature of the mental existence is nothing but the nature of mere conception and knowledge which has no length or width or depth, nor does it have any attribute of matter and material or physical beings.¹³²

ʿAllāma established his theory of the immateriality of knowledge and perception.¹³³ When seen in this manner, the mental existence of every thing has been taken in its abstract and general form free of any materiality and particularity since the latter are attributed to the world of matter. When we think of a quiddity, that quiddity is present for our soul in its essence but not in its material or physical existence.¹³⁴ Before ʿAllāma it was Mullā Ṣadrā, the great master of transcendental philosophy and theosophy, who insisted on the doctrine of the immaterial existence of the object known. It was to him the status of any perceived object whether it be “a sensitive entity or an intellectual one.”¹³⁵ It is the capability of the soul that it can contain the forms of physical and material things without taking their material substance. In fact, mental existence is one of the existential aspects of the self that mirrors the external realm of existence. This is whether there exists something in a real sense to parallel this mental form as in the case of existent beings, or whether there may be found nothing but a mere supposition and imagination as in the case of non-beings.¹³⁶

The above explanations encompass the status of the self as being present for the mind. When it is said that one’s self is present for one’s mind it means that one has knowledge of one’s self. Self-knowledge in turn constitutes my point of departure in the discussion of self-realization. The main concern in this regard is to find the bridge between the mental existence of the self on the one hand and self-realization on the other. What is obvious is that the self can never be a distinct being in an observable material sense or in its essence and totality since it is to ʿAllāma an abstract (*mujarrad*) reality. The perceivable particularities of the self in a physical sense are in fact the manifestations

¹³² Ibid., pp. 85-87.

¹³³ Ṭabāṭabaʿī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 2, pp. 196-99; *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 135, 152; *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 51; *Al-Mizān*, v. 17, p. 382.

¹³⁴ Ṭabāṭabaʿī, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 34-35.

¹³⁵ Mullā Ṣadrā *Asfār*, v. 1, pp. 282-296, 308-309. See also Hejazi [Ḥijāzī], *Knowledge by Presence*, pp. 41-42.

¹³⁶ Ṭabāṭabaʿī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 1, pp. 90-91.

of the self and not the self as it is perceived in its mental and abstract form of existence. As was mentioned earlier, the latter is but the self-knowledge that functions as an element in the process of self-realization. Although this part is not explored by 'Allāma when he is elaborating on the notion of mental existence, it is compensated when he comes to his position on the doctrine of knowledge by presence.¹³⁷

Knowledge by Presence: A Foundation for Self-Realization

The concept of “knowledge by presence or intuitive knowledge” (*al-ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*)¹³⁸ contrasts with that of “conceptual (empirical) knowledge”¹³⁹ (*al-ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*). Historically it finds its origin in Plato’s theory of knowledge, yet the latter did not clearly mention this so-called concept of knowledge by presence. In Greek scholarship, the distinct concepts of two different phenomena, “namely intuitive and discursive” were stated evidently for the first time by Plotinus.¹⁴⁰ Since the time of the earlier Muslim philosophers such as Fārābī (d. 950), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and Suhrawardī (d. 1191) to the present there have been many who have touched upon the issue of the knowledge by presence in one way or another. In the later period the influential thinker and philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā explained “knowledge by presence” as the unity of the existence of the object known with the existence of the knowing subject. This is what the latter ultimately referred to by the definition *ittiḥād al-‘āqil wa al-ma‘qūl* or *ittiḥād al-‘ālim wal-ma‘lūm*

¹³⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 194-96.

¹³⁸ It is called “knowledge by presence” because this type of knowledge, as will be clarified, is always present to the self in whatever state or condition it is and without any particular sensory means.

¹³⁹ It is called “conceptual or empirical knowledge” since it is obtainable through the conception which is acquired by means of sensation or observation or practical experience. For more information see: Hejazi, [Hijazi] *Knowledge by Presence*, pp. 32-33. Hejazi, presenting a relative comprehensive definition of this kind of knowledge, maintained that it “has been defined as ‘the knowledge which comes through the form of an object about the very essence of that object in the mind of the subject or the knower.’” *Ibid.* From ‘Allāma’s perspective, it is identified as the knowledge of an object known which is present to the self by its essence and form and not by external existence. Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 2, pp. 196-99. Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 135-36.

¹⁴⁰ “Middle Platonism concentrated its attention on the cosmic aspects of *nous* [soul; self]... and it is not until Plotinus that we have any significant contribution to the working of the Immanent *nous*. As did Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus distinguishes two types of intellectual activity, one intuitive and one discursive.” For more on the subject see F. E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), p. 127, s.v. *nósis*, p. 121.

See also Hejazi [Hijazi], *Knowledge by Presence*, pp. 37-38.

(the unification of the intelligent subject with the intelligible object or the unification of the knowing subject with the object known).¹⁴¹

Such was the position of Mullā Ṣadrā on the concept of “knowledge by presence.” When it came to his turn, ṬAllāma followed the same approach and used the same language. Accordingly, knowledge has been taken in one sense as “the presence of an abstract [*mujarrad*] being, [the object known] for another abstract [*mujarrad*] being, [the knowing subject].”¹⁴² Seeing it in this manner, ṬAllāma took up all three components involved in the process of both knowledge by presence and conceptual or empirical knowledge, namely, knowledge [*al-ʿilm*], the object known [*al-maʿlūm*], and the knowing subject, the self [*al-ʿalim*]. All these phenomena are unified and looked at by ṬAllāma in an actual and not potential sense as they were taken in an abstract and not material existence. Actuality and abstract go together just as potentiality and matter do.¹⁴³ When we know something, this known thing is attained for our self by its existence and not by its corporeal being. The existence of something is the attainment of that something itself. Thus, our knowledge becomes the same as the known object by essence. Moreover, the acquisition and the presence of the latter imply the unification of it with the knowing self.¹⁴⁴

It is generally assumed that there is no single person who is in doubt of his or her self. Even if someone denies his or her existence s/he acknowledges that it is s/he who denies her/his existence. In early Muslim philosophical literature, one finds this idea expressed by Ibn Sīnā in his famous doctrine of *the suspended soul* or *the flying human being* by which he explains the private state of awareness possessed by the soul, or knowledge by presence. Imagine a human individual who has just come into existence and has no reminiscence of his or her own self, nor does he have any contact with his or her body or other materials. This individual, though negligent of the body and its organs and unaware of his surroundings, is never unaware of his/herself. This self-knowledge to Ibn Sīnā is the first and the most obvious perception one apprehends without the help of

¹⁴¹ For more on the history of knowledge by presence among Muslim thinkers see Haʿirī [Ḥaʿirī], *Knowledge by Presence*, pp. 1-36 and Hejazi, *Knowledge by Presence*, pp. 38-41.

¹⁴² Ṭabāṭabaʿī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, pp. 135.

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 136-37.

¹⁴⁴ Ṭabāṭabaʿī, *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 2, pp. 205-207.

any sensory organ or a *priori* or a *posteriori* reasoning.¹⁴⁵ This type of knowledge “has all relations within the framework of itself, so that the whole anatomy of the notion can hold true without any implication of an external objective reference calling for an exterior relation.”¹⁴⁶ This suggests that “the relation of knowing is ... a self-object relation without the intrusion of a connection with an external object.”¹⁴⁷ This is a kind of “knowledge by presence” that indicates that the existence of the self and its knowledge of itself are exactly the same and identical. “In other words, in the case of knowledge by presence the objective object and the subjective object are one and the same.”¹⁴⁸ To this extent, no one is absent from himself or herself even if we assume that he or she is negligent of his or her body, organs, senses, faculties and powers. What is perceived in this specific state is the essence of the self without the interference of anything other than the self qua self.¹⁴⁹

‘Allāma was not only influenced by Mullā Ṣadrā in his interpretation and division of knowledge but he also accepted and confirmed, as the latter did, that “all kinds of knowledge (or perception) refer to knowledge by presence.”¹⁵⁰ Mullā Ṣadrā indicated that our perceptions or conceptions that we have obtained both through intellection and sensation are never separated from one’s essence, nor are they different from one’s individual being and substance. “That which he *essentially* perceives is only existing in his essence, not in something else.”¹⁵¹ ‘Allāma in turn took up the same position stating that the conceptual or empirical knowledge, when studied in depth, refers to “knowledge by presence.” ‘Allāma’s argument for this doctrine finds its basis in the claim that knowledge and object known, even in their conceptual or empirical form, are both actual, immaterial and abstract. Thus, they are not subject to change or alternation nor do they

¹⁴⁵ For more details see Ibn Sinā, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt* with the commentary and gloss by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī & Qutb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rāzi (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥaydarī, 1959), v. 2, pp. 292-295; Muḥammad Fanā’i, *‘Ilm-i Ḥudūrī*, [Knowledge by Presence: A Groundwork for Epistemology and Metaphysics] (Qum: The Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, 1996), pp. 31-32; Ha’iri [Hā’iri], *Knowledge by Presence*, p. 181, note 1 & A. Naṣrī Nādir, *Ibn Sīnā wa al-Nafs al-Bashariyah* (Beirut: ‘Awidāt, 1960), p. 18.

¹⁴⁶ Ha’iri [Hā’iri], *Knowledge by Presence*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ For more on the subject see Fanā’i, *‘Ilm-i Ḥudūrī*, pp. 31-44; Ha’iri [Hā’iri], *Knowledge by Presence*, pp. 73-80. Cf. Ibn Sinā, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, v. 2, p. 292.

¹⁵⁰ Hejazi [Hijāzi], *Knowledge by Presence*, p. 42; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, v. 1, pp. 282-296, 308-309.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb al-‘Arshīyah*, ed. and trans. into Persian Q. Ahani (Isfahan: Isfahan University, 1984), p. 32. See also its English translation by J. W. Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne* (N. J.: Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 159.

possess the attributes of matter such as its division in terms of time and place or its partition to smaller parts and portions.¹⁵² Again, to obtain knowledge is to find it and its abstract and actual existence at the present of the self. And this is what that is meant by 'Allāma while describing knowledge as the known object being at the present of the knowing subject.¹⁵³ This thesis was clarified by 'Allāma's disciple and commentator, in his *Gloss* on his master's textbook of philosophy. He stated in one of his interpretations that "conceptual (empirical) knowledge" reveals at first glance the object known by accident. But this is, when seen exactly and in depth, the same as knowledge by presence which reveals the object known by essence. What has been revealed to us is in fact the presence and existence of the object known. However, since we are dealing with external quiddities and material objects, our intellect has to have recourse to a consideration of the external objects.¹⁵⁴

"Self-knowledge" or "self-conscience" is the point of departure by which 'Allāma, like Mullā Ṣadrā, began his argumentation on the knowledge by presence. He remarked that the self as an abstract and actual substance by essence knows itself in the manner of "knowledge by presence." This kind of knowledge is in existence nothing but the very being and essence of the self itself.¹⁵⁵ "Knowledge by presence" does not limit itself to the knowledge of an abstract being like human self of its own self. It includes indeed the knowledge of the self of its effects and its cause.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, when it is said that the self is knowing itself it means that all existential aspects of the self in its wholeness including all its positions, characteristics, affections, powers and faculties are present to the self.¹⁵⁷ Such was 'Allāma's understanding of "self-knowledge" which is considered the cornerstone of self-realization since it should be taken for granted that the self in its way to actualization and realization is known in its wholeness for itself. When the self knows something, it implies that it is conscious of its own existence and reality as the

¹⁵² Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbah, v. 2, pp.196-99. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 137, 152-53.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 204-205.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196, footnote 352. See also: Hejazi [Ḥijāzī], *Knowledge by Presence*, p. 42 and Fanā'ī, *Ilm-i Ḥuḍūrī*, pp. 151-52.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 256; *Ibid.*, p. 41. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 137, 152-53.

¹⁵⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, p. 153. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbah, v. 2, pp. 256-57.

¹⁵⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, v. 2, pp. 33-40. M. Fanā'ī, *Ilm-i Ḥuḍūrī*, pp. 71-81.

knowing subject (*`ālim* or *`āqil*) before it is conscious of the object known. This same *self-self consciousness* or “*self-object consciousness*” is known as “knowledge by presence.”¹⁵⁸ What follows exemplifies the notion of “knowledge by presence”:

The prime example of this knowledge is what shows itself to us performatively and directly without mediation of any linguistic symbolism. It shows itself to us through all our self-judgment, e.g., I think, I speak, etc. The acting subject of these judgments is the *performative* “I” as distinct from the metaphysical I or the self which is problematic in philosophy.¹⁵⁹

This was the focus in `Allāma’s thought. The most distinguished and obvious example of “knowledge by presence” to him was one’s knowledge of him or her self which is referred to by “*I*” (*ana*). One is never negligent of his or her own self and its states and positions in any situation whether one be in a private or a public situation and whether asleep or awake, etc. The “*I*” which one refers to is a very distinct and personal “*I*” in essence which is shared by no other person or object. This same “*I*” is present to the self by both its existence and conception, and not just by its conception. In other words one’s knowledge of one’s self is nothing but one’s being and existence, by means of which all the states, functions and activities of the self are recognized or performed.¹⁶⁰

Later on we will see how `Allāma, relying on Quranic verses and Islamic traditions from the Prophet Muḥammad or his Household, distinguished between the two kinds of knowledge that one may have of his or her self or of other objects in nature.¹⁶¹ To terminate the present discussion it suffices to hint at the following point elaborated on by `Allāma in his interpretation of one of the verses of the Qur’ān. Accordingly, “the conceptual (empirical) knowledge” is missing at the birth of a human infant, whereas the knowledge by presence is part of the presence of the infant’s self even at the very moment of its birth. The verse indicates, “Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts that you may give thanks (to Him).”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Ḥa’iri [Ḥa’rī], *Knowledge by Presence*, p. II.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 135-36. Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbah, v. 2, p. 195.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, pp. 174-190. This part of `Allāma’s discourse will be explored in the next chapter.

¹⁶² *The Qur’ān*, 16: 78.

ʿAllāma stated that the verse confirms what has long been stated by psychologists, i.e., that the human psyche learns little by little and step by step what it did not know before. The sensory or thinking organs mentioned in the verse are used as vehicles for conceptual and empirical knowledge and not for knowledge by presence. Our conception of things depends upon our sensation of them, and the basic senses are hearing and seeing. First we hear or see something, and then we receive a concept or obtain a knowledge of it. Meanwhile, our mind or intellect is the wellspring of thinking.¹⁶³ These are the fundamental elements that constitute the structure of “conceptual (empirical) knowledge.” The reason for this construction is that in the case of “knowledge by presence” one needs no specific sensory or thinking organ. Indeed, as was mentioned above, the being of the self and its knowledge of itself are identical. As early as it exists, it is known for itself and it is aware of itself. It is on the condition that the self, as ʿAllāma accepted, is considered an abstract being and that it possesses a reality other than mind and intellect or other physical and psychological organs. On the basis of this premise, the self is beyond organic or even psychological existence, for these are but the manifestations of the self and not the self itself. Moreover, while human soul is abstract in essence and its essence is known for it without any intermediary, it is not abstract in knowing objects other than itself. This suggests that the self is corporeal and material in terms of the process of knowing other objects. It knows any thing other than itself through and by means of sensation or thinking and reasoning. The latter corresponds to “conceptual (empirical) knowledge”¹⁶⁴

As we have seen, the role of “knowledge by presence” is of great importance in the process of self-knowledge, and the latter in turn constitutes a foundation of self-realization. Furthermore, ʿAllāma’s conception of knowledge as regards its instrumentality for self-realization, does not restrict itself to only “knowledge by presence.” It rather encompasses all empirical and experimental sciences. In ʿAllāma’s mind, knowledge of any kind reveals the reality to the knower depending on the

¹⁶³ Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Al-Mʿān*, v. 12 (Tehran), pp. 333-34.

¹⁶⁴ For more on the self as an abstract being in essence but material in function see Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah*, pp. 152-53. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbāḥ, v. 2, pp. 256-259.

magnitude that corresponds to its causes and applications.¹⁶⁵ As much as empirical and experimental knowledge concerns, human knowledge according to 'Allāma's thinking has its own limitation. He, relying on some verses from the Qur'ān¹⁶⁶ stated that human beings in their mundane life do not possess but a little amount of knowledge, and only as much as may be the extent of their needs.¹⁶⁷ 'Allāma maintained that there is no scientific situation or any empirical and practical reality unless we find that knowledge or science is involved in the discovery of that situation or reality.¹⁶⁸ Yet, the more essential fact, which still has to be discovered is the human self. Self-knowledge as a step leading to self-realization is to 'Allāma the most precious and invaluable knowledge among all sorts of knowledge, as well as the ultimate aim of all knowledge, science and cognition. Again, the greatest victory and the highest success for an individual are to come over and obtain self-knowledge and realization. This is for the most part because when the individual engages with an insightful and deep study of the book of the self, s/he will reach the point where s/he finds the Lord, God the Almighty. S/he then will discover her or his position before Him and recognize that s/he is poor before Him, and nothing but a being dependent upon the existence of God.¹⁶⁹ This is why 'Allāma in his Quranic studies came to the conclusion that there is nothing in existence except that it is God's favour bestowed upon human beings and that all favours of God including science and knowledge¹⁷⁰ are to be employed in the way of and for His worship.¹⁷¹ At times the human individual is distracted from his or her deep attention and knowledge of his or her self. This is due to the intensive attention that the human individual pays to physical, bodily, material and corporeal needs and demands to the extent that s/he thinks that s/he is nothing but a physical and bodily existence.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6 (Tehran), p. 215.

¹⁶⁶ For instance see *The Qur'ān*, 2: 216; 15: 2; 17: 85.

¹⁶⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6 (Tehran), p. 215.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 1 (Beirut), p. 49.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, v.6 (Tehran), pp. 182-90.

¹⁷⁰ In his exegesis of the Qur'ān, 'Allāma explains that God is the wellspring of all kinds of knowledge. See *Al-Mizān*, v. 6 (Tehran), pp. 214-15 and v. 2 (Beirut), p. 151.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, v. 4 (Beirut), p. 38.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.191.

Summary Comments

The arts and science are not only viewed as a product of, but also as food, for the self. In order to clarify this notion, let me take the example of the honey-bee. This little flying insect, based on its instinctive power, goes from flower to flower and drinks from their nectar, then produces honey. This process corresponds to the case of the self in the sense that the latter has the potential of both consuming fine thoughts and creating fine arts and science. At any rate, the inclination towards arts and beautification is deeply seated in the human psyche. Moreover, no phenomenon has the same sharp influence on the human self as arts have.

My comparison of Dewey and `Allāma in their respective conceptualizations of art and its idealization, as well as in their distinct remarks on science and technology, is in essence a comparison of their dissimilar ontological and epistemological perspectives. Their attitudes and doctrines, in fact, are the fruits or products of their respective ideologies or world-views. The latter, in their turn, function as roots and wellsprings of the former. Both Dewey and `Allāma taught that the arts, science and technology are made or created for the sake of human beings and as instruments to serve humanity and improve quality of human life. These phenomena, as instrumental ends involved in the process of self-realization must not be produced or learned simply for personal monetary gain. Otherwise, they will alienate human beings and lead to the loss of a sense of individuality. They belong to all races and classes and must help remove discrimination among people. To this extent, one can see that the above views are shared by both Dewey and `Allāma. The result would be a shared idea of the instrumentality of the arts and knowledge for self-realization. They part company when it comes to determining the extent and aptitude of their notions of the arts, knowledge and self-realization.

Generally speaking, Dewey in comparison to `Allāma drew more attention to the definitions of the varieties and themes of art, beauty, science, knowledge and technology. He also presented a more extended investigation and analysis of the arts and knowledge. `Allāma instead placed more emphasis on the divine origin, content, and orientation of the art and science. We have seen that from Dewey's perspective, self-realization occurs in learning how to deal with nature in a sound and positive interaction. Therefore, in searching for an instrument to accomplish this purpose, he placed emphasis on the

elimination of any separation between the human individual and nature. In a practical sense, Dewey gave preference to experience over philosophical argumentation and syllogism. His knowledge of the naturalistic process of self-realization is authenticated by a naturalistic, materialistic and sensuous world-view and epistemology. This approach does not, however, lead a human being in his or her journey to self-realization to a position beyond the natural and mundane domain. Accordingly, in journeying towards its actualization and perfection the self is limited since it is bounded to its nature and the natural environment.

By contrast, 'Allāma, focused on the realm of the extra-mundane life and spoke of the divine element of the innate nature of human beings and its relation to the Divine. The process of self-realization as one of the finest ends of the arts and science has been viewed in its connection to the Divine from two directions. The self, on the one hand, as God's creature, has an inclination towards its perfection, which it seeks through efforts that are fine and good. When seen in this way, the essential tendencies towards loving beauty and creating art or developing science have in turn a divine orientation and colour. For 'Allāma it is God Who created the human self with all these inclinations and wants. The human self, on the other hand, should employ all the tools at its disposal, including the arts, science and knowledge, to serve it on its journey towards its ultimate perfection. The latter, from 'Allāma's point of view, is achievable only through God-realization. In this way, the human self is never separated from nature; to the contrary, it communicates with nature and uses nature, as well as its own divinely-given nature as vehicles towards realizing God Who created it. Moreover, one's expression or demonstration of the arts and beauty is a manifestation of one's social self. Human beings are social by nature; the sociability of the human self encourages the individual to express or exhibit his or her artful talent and artistic productions. Those who are isolated from social life therefore have no strong motivation to pursue their inclinations toward art and beautification.

The arts and science have their own indisputable places in the process of self-realization. They are never disconnected from the basic elements of self-realization. The following section as the closing chapter of the thesis is to elaborate on the basic elements and manifestations of self-realization.

PART III

Chapter 5

Basic Elements and Manifestations of Self-Realization

Chapter 5

Basic Elements and Manifestations of Self-Realization

Introduction

From a purely naive standpoint, one might think that a concept such as self-realization can deal only with mystical experience, and that it is entirely empty of realistic content. It might also be alleged that self-realization has everything to do with the internal aspects of human life and nothing to do with its external manifestation. To avoid such misconceptions or misunderstandings, it is intended to take a closer look in this chapter at the problem under investigation. I will come to the conclusion that the doctrine of self-realization can be seen from either a naturalistic or religious standpoint yet without disconnecting from real life and practical sense. We will see how a single theme may be viewed in different ways, from different or perhaps even opposite standpoints, without ignoring its connection with ordinary and routine life. It is particularly intended in the present chapter to deepen our knowledge of Dewey's and Allāma's concepts of self-realization, although not by simply repeating what I touched upon in the previous chapters. What is needed here is a deeper and more insightful study from within the context of their remarks on self-realization. What seems to be of significance from both thinkers' points of view is that human beings are able to achieve the richest and fullest experiences possible for them, a fact that differentiates human life from that of the beast and elevates the human individual "into the so-called ideal and spiritual realm."¹

The development of the human personality can take place in accordance with its capacities and energies and with respect to the fulfillment of certain ideals. The question

¹ For more on Dewey's position see: Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 412 and Roth, *Self-Realization* p. 6. For more on 'Allāma's position see: Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 111-13; v. 20, p. 242 (Beirut).

is what these ideals are and how they can be fulfilled. Speaking on an epistemological level, one's position depends basically on one's understanding of the whole cosmos, of which humankind forms an integral part. This is to suggest that belief in either naturalism or divine transcendentalism is belief in the governing of either of the two over nature and the human species. When seen in this way, even one's discussion of the knowledge of God finds a link to one's conceptions of self-realization. Whether God may be considered as equivalent to "the ideal ends," as in the case of Dewey, or Divine Being, as 'Allāma put it, the process of self-realization is automatically linked to understanding God in one way or another.²

Dewey's Naturalistic Realism

Dewey's pragmatism is generally considered to be an explicit version of realism. For a certain period during his academic development at least, Dewey was "in direct contact with the Aristotelian realism of Woodbridge and the monistic realism of Montague." This was during the time when he moved from Chicago to New York in 1905. Later on, Dewey indicated that his "philosophic view did not develop in a vacuum." He emphasized that he "took seriously philosophic doctrines that were current."³ Dewey's realistic pragmatism comes out strongly in his notion of philosophy. To him, it is larger and deeper cultural achievements, social needs in general, and current conflicts and problems that give birth to the philosophy of any period.⁴

We will see that Dewey's naturalism was never an obstacle to his realistic conceptualization of self-realization. However, his final remarks on realism show a particular emphasis placed on the natural universe and the material cosmos. Indeed, Dewey's naturalism and realism are intertwined and together have an impact upon all features of human life including human self-realization. As was mentioned earlier, on the basis of Deweyan naturalism, "there is no absolute, no supernatural transcendent being, no extra-mundane reality." Similarly, there is no room for a supernatural religion.⁵

² The question of God will be explored later when I deal with Dewey's and 'Allāma's respective conceptualization of God.

³ Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder," in *The Later Works*, v. 14, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵ Roth, *Self-Realization*, p. 101.

Regardless of what is meant by the terms “naturalism” and “naturalistic,” it is important in Dewey’s mind that human nature and self-realization be studied in connection with nature. Human life in its entirety is an integral communication with nature and it is in fact “bound up in the processes of nature.”⁶ In other words, it must never be seen as separate phenomenon from nature. How a person acts and strives for his or her success, just as how his or her career leads to success or defeat, etc., depends for the most part upon the way of intercommunication with nature.⁷ In Dewey’s naturalism, one studies human nature as an “intra-mundane” reality which has no “extra-mundane” features or orientation. All features, orientations and manifestations of human life, including habits, inclinations, thoughts, desires, ideals, aspirations, conflicts, ambitions, efforts, etc., are collectively considered “an integral part of nature.” There one finds no correlation between these human themes and the realm beyond.⁸

To understand Dewey’s naturalism properly, one must see it from within the context of a Deweyan interpretation. Naturalism, like many other words that carry the suffix *ism*, implies a concept of a school of thought and not a mere approach or a simple methodology of research. When seen in this manner, Dewey’s naturalism can be considered the philosophical, ontological and epistemological component of his thought that colours whatever position has been taken by him in any area of discussion. We can even see in his theory of art and aesthetic feeling how Dewey develops his notion of natural arts. “Naturalism” to him “is a word of many meanings in philosophy as well as in art.”⁹ In my chapter on art and self-realization, I came to the conclusion that both art and self-realization have the same boundaries and points of contact whose heart is nothing but a sound interaction between the individual and his or her environment.¹⁰ Furthermore, one may look upon the process of self-realization as the art of moral life. To his definition, “naturalism in the broadest and deepest sense of nature is a necessity of all great art”¹¹—I would add—the art of self-realization itself. It is a genuine naturalism that receives no voice from beyond the natural environment and has no connection with some

⁶ Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 267.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dewey, *Individualism: Old and New*, p. 153; Roth, *Dewey and Self-realization*, p. 100.

⁹ Dewey, “Art as Experience,” in *The Later Works*, v. 10, p. 155.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 156.

¹¹ Ibid.

agent as Supreme Being. In Dewey's view, both natural and objective conditions are the groundwork for any experience from which self-realization must not be excluded. These two presupposed elements of Dewey's realism must be used in any case to develop a perfect "expression of the values that belong to an integrated experience in immediate quality."¹²

Dewey himself, being aware of the ambiguity of the words "nature" and "natural," qualified them by means of adjectives like "native," "original" or "innate." To Dewey, "nature" and "natural" are applicable to "what exists at birth in distinction from what is acquired by cultivation and as a consequence of experience."¹³ In order for us to avoid any confusion as to whether the concept or process of self-realization may be considered an experience, I would explain that nature in the sense advanced by Dewey is an element that comes not from outside, but is something that has lifelong residence within us. It is something in which and of which we are. In this sense, human beings with all their properties, such as relations, institutions and traditions, should be regarded as a part of the nature in which and through which they live.¹⁴

Finally, the unity of the human being may be considered as one of the crucial premises upon which Dewey's conception of the self is based. Indeed, according to his theory of "the wholeness of the self," human mind, soul and body and all features of these two or three parts of human nature are identified as one.¹⁵ Taken all together they identify a particular type of being as a human being. "We can recognize and identify a man as a single object, a numerical unit, by observation which marks out boundaries, as we note that the bounded object moves as a whole."¹⁶

Dewey's major concern was to link this same unified being to nature and environment. It should not be disconnected from the outside world. Dewey gives as an example the case of a physician who proceeds "to regulate the diet, sleep and exercise of patients." The physician deals in fact with the active functional connection of the self with the outside world.¹⁷ The same situation applies when a psychologist or an educator tries to

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Dewey, "Freedom and Culture," in *The Later Works*, v. 13, p. 108.

¹⁴ Dewey, "Art as experience," p. 336.

¹⁵ Dewey, "The Unity of the Human Being," in *The Later Works*, v. 13, p. 323.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 325.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 328.

regulate one's psychological or educational needs. In this regard, Dewey replaced the old saying "A sound mind in a sound body" with "A sound human being in a sound human environment."¹⁸

Naturalism, Transcendentalism and Spirituality

In my study of Dewey's naturalism, I am interested in examining whether or not naturalism leaves any room for transcendence and spirituality. One could hardly say that Dewey's remarks bar the road to spirituality. In his "Introduction to Philosophy," Dewey stated that the word "unnatural" means "metaphysical" or "transcendental."¹⁹ This, however, does not mean that spirituality, in Dewey's view, might not be something natural. To the contrary, one finds no hostility between spirituality and naturalism in Dewey's terminology. Dewey's attitude in this regard is shown in the following sentence: "As the spiritual kept realizing itself more and more *in* the natural ... the latter got additional meaning until each of the two sides come to have *equal* value."²⁰

This passage, as well as the words leading up to it, injects naturalism into spiritualism and transcendentalism according to which a person may practice his or her own self-journey without depending for it upon a divine element, agent or object. Accordingly, self-journey is not simply a way of letting the self find itself. Rather, it is the success of the self "in subjugating nature and transforming institutions."²¹ We will see how spiritualism was colored and shaded by natural notions in Dewey's thought.

Even Dewey's notion of "eternal truth" is a manifestation of his pragmatist thought. There one finds not even the slightest credit given to divine eternal truth, which is for 'Allama nothing other than the Necessary Being (*Wājib al-Wujud*),²² "God." The eternal truth for Dewey consists rather in "certain tested ideas in performing a constant or recurrent function" that "secure a certain permanent status."²³

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 336.

¹⁹ Dewey, "Introduction to Philosophy," in *The Early Works*, v. 3, p. 211.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 227.

²¹ Dewey, "Introduction to Philosophy," in *The Early Works*, v. 3, p. 227.

²² See Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd - Risālat al-Tawḥīd," *Rasā'il al-Tawḥīdiyyah*, pp. 6-7.

²³ Dewey, *Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy and Other Essays*, pp. 150-53. Ratner, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 240.

All these Deweyan conceptualizations find their basis in Dewey's metaphysics. His work *Experience and Nature* expresses his metaphysical manifesto. The latter in its turn was colored by his naturalism to the extent that it was transformed into a sort of naturalistic metaphysics, which is a dilemma in Dewey's thought.²⁴ He proposed that metaphysics must not necessarily be studied from a supernatural perspective, but from a naturalistic point of view, as Dewey himself put it. For him the term metaphysics does not carry with it the idea of supernaturalism. Thus seen, the term does not necessarily convey any concept beyond its natural atmosphere and domain. Thus, in Dewey's system of thought both naturalism and metaphysics are bound tightly together so as to constitute the fundamental elements of Dewey's epistemology.²⁵

The expression "naturalistic metaphysics" suggests that Dewey's metaphysics is derived from his naturalism and not vice versa. His major concern is of course naturalism, upon which all aspects of his thought system, including metaphysical notions, are founded. As far as Dewey's understanding is concerned, there one finds no contradiction or dilemma between the terms. His metaphysics, as he himself put it, is in and of the common people yet explained by philosophical language. The extent and method of this metaphysics are, accordingly,

the large and constant features of human sufferings, enjoyments, trials, failures and successes together with the institutions of art, science, technology, politics, and religion which mark them, communicate genuine features of the world within which man lives.²⁶

Moreover, a naturalistic metaphysics from Dewey's point of view "is bound to inference from the empirical traits of thinking"²⁷ A comparison of natural sciences and naturalistic metaphysics shows to which extent Dewey took up his position on the latter. He maintains that a naturalistic metaphysics makes inferences from the empirical

²⁴ George Santayana, a critic of Dewey, remarked that "naturalistic" and "metaphysics" as two characters of Dewey's system of thought seem contradictory. See George Santayana, "Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics," in *Dewey and His Critics: Essays from The Journal of Philosophy*, selected, with an introduction by Sidney Morgenbesser [from *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. XXII, no. 25, December 3, 1925] (New York: The Journal of Philosophy, 1977), pp. 343-358.

Richard Rorty, "Dewey's Metaphysics," in *New Studies in the Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Steven M. Chan (Hanover, New Hampshire: The University Press of New England, 1977), pp. 46-47.

²⁵ Rorty, "Dewey's Metaphysics," pp. 45-47.

²⁶ Dewey, "Half-Hearted Naturalism," in *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, v. 3 1927-28; *Journal of Philosophy* 24 (1927): 59; Rorty, "Dewey's Metaphysics," p. 47.

²⁷ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 68; Ratner, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 19.

traits of thinking exactly as the empirical sciences “make inferences from the happening of suns, radio-activity, thunder-storms or any other natural event.”²⁸

In his *Experience and Nature*, Dewey gave all credit to natural phenomena and naturalistic conceptualization. The terms naturalistic metaphysics, the temporal quality of existence,²⁹ natural theology and natural ends suggest that the dominant feature in Dewey’s thought is his empirical naturalism.³⁰ Moreover, in his naturalistic philosophy and theology, Dewey used the terms “natural theology” or “natural ends” and even their presumably highest form—metaphysics, as instruments of not only personal but also social changes.³¹ This kind of approach to existence influenced Dewey’s notions of religion, religious themes and moral ideals and led him to accept the doctrine of self-realization as a way towards a good and sound relationship between the individual and nature in its general sense.³²

Dewey on Religion: Religious versus Religion

When it comes to Dewey’s understanding of and his position on religion and religious sanctions, it is difficult to detect a consistent position. As regards religion, Dewey as a boy of ten and eleven was not the same as he was as an adolescent, nor did the teenager think the same as the university student or adult. Both Dewey’s parents, and particularly his mother, had a strong affiliation to Christian Protestantism and “were interested in the moral and religious upbringing of their sons” His father was more tolerant and easy-going than his mother. We read in Dewey’s biography that his mother’s “concern did not weigh too heavily on John in his early years, but as he grew into adolescence, he began to rebel against the limitations she imposed on him.”³³ Under the direction of his parents, Dewey at the age of eleven was encouraged to seek membership of the First Congregational Church in Burlington. Supervised by his mother, Dewey was prohibited from dancing, card-playing, billiards, drinking and gambling. He was even

²⁸ Ibid. Ibid.

²⁹ The world of existence in Dewey’s mind contains two fundamental characteristics namely, experience and nature. It is in fact an experienced and natural reality which “is found to have temporal quality and reference” For more on this issue see: Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 70-71.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 68-71, 94-98; Ratner, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 19-45.

³¹ Rorty, “Dewey’s Metaphysics,” pp., 48-49.

³² Ibid.

³³ Dykhuzien, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 7.

forbidden to visit the places where these were allowed. Lucina constantly reminded her son of his moral and religious obligations and questioned him whether he was “right with Jesus.”³⁴ This constant reminding and questioning was distasteful to Dewey and consequently led him to write later on in one of his earliest articles: “Religious feeling is unhealthy when it is watched and analyzed to see if it exists, if it is right, if it is growing. It is fatal to be forever observing our own religious moods and experiences, as it is to pull up a seed from the ground to see if it is growing.”³⁵

In his religious conceptualization, Dewey found liberal evangelicalism more suited to his developing intellect and saner than that of his mother and her “narrow pietism and excessive religious emotionalism.”³⁶ This is why he did not abandon religion altogether at that time. Moreover he had assimilated evangelical teachings “during the most impressionable years of his life,” and these remained in his mind and conscience for a long time.³⁷ A few years later, he came to recognize evangelical dualism (as being located “between ‘the lower life of the flesh’ and ‘the higher life of the spirit,’” or “between the person one is and the perfect man in Christ one ought to be,”) as “a source of considerable mental and emotional disturbance, ...”³⁸ Influenced by Neo-Hegelianism during his years of graduate study, Dewey softened these dualisms and tempered his evangelical thought without diminishing his liberal evangelical Christian faith.³⁹ His biographer expresses

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., citing Dewey, “The Place of Religious Emotion,” *Monthly Bulletin*, Students’ Christian Association, University of Michigan (November 1886): 24; Dewey, *The Early Works*, v. 1, p. 91.

³⁶ Liberal evangelicalism as a form of Protestantism advocating the Bible as the final scripture of Christianity, rejects “the notion that it must be read and interpreted literally or in terms of some historic denominational creed. Accordingly, “Scripture must be read in the light of experience and intelligence.” As R. Lewis O. Brastow one of the exponents of liberal evangelicalism indicates, it “assumes that human intelligence may venture to deal with the facts of revelation and of religious experience and bring back valid results.” Ibid., p. 7; Lewis O. Brastow, *The Work of the Preacher: A study of Homiletic Principles and Methods* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1914), p. 188.

³⁷ Dykhuzien, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 8.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 8. As a Neo-Hegelian, Dewey was more likely influenced by the German idealist philosopher Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) through the latter’s work *The Phenomenology of Mind*, published in 1807, “describing how the human mind has progressed from mere consciousness through self-consciousness, reason, spirit and religion to absolute knowledge.” The greater Hegelian impact on Dewey was due to Hegel’s second work *Science of Logic* in 2 volumes published 1812 and 1816,

in which he set out his famous dialectic, a triadic process whereby thesis generates antithesis and both are superseded by a higher synthesis which incorporates what is rational in them and rejects the irrational. This dialectical progression is not applied narrowly just to logical argument but to the evolution of ideas and to historical movements on the largest possible scale.

well how Dewey came to reconcile his evangelical and neo-Hegelian beliefs. As a neo-Hegelian he did not disregard his evangelism, yet he looked at evangelical faith from the former perspective. In doing so Dewey

took a renewed hold on his evangelical faith; ... He spoke of 'that perfect and living will of God as made known to us in Christ'; he referred to Jesus as 'the teacher of all who know'; and he reaffirmed as man's moral ideal 'the perfect and matchless character of Christ.'⁴⁰

His idea of the perfect human individual "reappeared in his mature philosophy as the concept of ... the 'religion of shared experience'." It was in accordance with the evangelicalism he had learned in his youth that he wrote: "we come to the perfect man, to the perfect stature in Christ, only in our associate life."⁴¹ To me, Dewey's notion of so-called "associate life" suggests the significance of living and enduring intercommunication with the environment or, as he put it, with nature. It seems that Dewey at the time did not deny the role of the church and Christian faith in actualization of human perfection.

The publication of *A Common Faith* introduced Dewey's new approach to the concept of religion and religious terminology into his metaphysics in general and his naturalist position on self-realization in particular. The book enriches "the reader's understanding of Dewey's religious humanism."⁴² As Dykhuizen remarks, "Dewey's aim was to restore religion to its proper place in human experience by putting it in its naturalistic and humanistic setting."⁴³ Generally speaking, Dewey's intention was "to show that there is no necessary connection between religion and the supernatural and to clear the ground for a humanistic and naturalistic religion."⁴⁴

Advocating a special form of human-made and natural religion, Dewey preferred to choose the term *religious* instead of *religion*. "To be somewhat more explicit," Dewey

Magnusson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 687, s.v. **Hegel**. In this way Dewey was able to treat the oppositions found in liberal evangelical teachings.

⁴⁰ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 8; Dewey, "The Place of Religious Emotion," p. 25; Dewey, *The Early works*, v. 1, p. 92; Dewey, "Soul and Body," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 43 (1886): 262; Dewey, *The Early Works*, v. 1, p. 114.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; John H. Randall, "The Religion of Shared Experience," in *The Philosopher of the Common Man: Essays in Honor of John Dewey to Celebrate His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Sidney Rantar (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), pp. 106-45.

⁴² Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 263.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁴⁴ Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, p. 214. See Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 1-2.

explains, "a religion (and as I have just said, there is no such thing as religion in general) always signifies a special body of beliefs and practices having some kind of institutional organization, loose or tight."⁴⁵ In other words, the term religion corresponds to the body of a belief system, or as Dykhuizen put it, "to the sum total of religions, each with its own particular set of beliefs and observances, and unique institutional organization."⁴⁶ It denotes an institution or a set of beliefs that generally summons one to the recognition "of some unseen higher power," that has control over human beings and their destiny.⁴⁷ This is while the "adjective 'religious' denotes nothing in the way of a specifiable entity, either institutional or as a system of beliefs. It does not denote anything to which one can specifically point as one can point to this and that historic religion or existing church."⁴⁸

The term religious for Dewey, implying a consummatory human experience, did not necessarily deal with any divine agent. For him it qualified as being analogous to any esthetic experience. Dewey argued "that 'religious experience' is no more a special kind of experience than is esthetic or moral experience." He used the term "quality" to describe religious experience as "the effect produced, not the manner and cause of its production." Such qualities should be, in Dewey's thought, free of any special content like gods. Basically, a religious experience as a consummatory quality may infer from many objects other than supernatural.⁴⁹ This is an approach to the concept of religion or religious feelings which is justifiable on the basis of Deweyan standards of thinking.

Dewey put the blame for the inhumanity or human moral defeatism of the modern world on the shoulders of supernaturalism just as much as he laid it on those of the new sciences and militant atheism. He intended to "develop another conception of the nature of the religious phase of experience, one that separates it from the supernatural and the things that have grown up about it."⁵⁰ Supernaturalism was declared incapable of demonstrating its supposed competence and of practicing what it preached, in spite of the

⁴⁵ "For we are forced to acknowledge that concretely there is no such thing as religion in the singular. There is only a multitude of religions." Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 7 and p. 9.

⁴⁶ Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 261, from Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 9. (1934).

⁴⁷ Cf. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27; Geiger, *Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 38-39, 214; Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 261.

⁵⁰ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 2.

fact that it has been around for a longer period.⁵¹ The new sciences were failure due to their inability to save human beings from alienation, misery and moral defeatism, in spite of the fact that they have been able to conquer physical nature.⁵² Dewey charged militant atheism with a "lack of natural piety."⁵³

Dewey's attitude showed preference for a humanistic religion or a religious humanism. Modern American humanism in this regard owes a debt to the Deweyan notion of religion, which is a secular religion. Seen in this way, faith and its electricity "will illuminate a secular religion, which is not an overbearing religion." It will place emphasis upon human intelligence and resources. Human beings can accomplish more if they do not surrender, "turning to wishful rationalizations about a supernatural world and a superhuman instrument."⁵⁴

In keeping with the modern scientific view of nature, the religion of humanism in one sense attempts to bring human beings and nature nearer to one another, a goal that is a Deweyan translation of self-realization.⁵⁵ When seen in this manner, religion, for a "learned and self-conscious generation," is "a universal tendency of human nature." It is important from Dewey's point of view to safeguard religion as such. He maintained that since a religion of this kind "is the consciousness of the spiritual import of experience, we must find mechanical appliances for developing it."⁵⁶ The denial of supernaturalism accordingly led to the adoption of an intellectual attitude towards the concept of religion. In accordance with this view, supernaturalism was substituted with science in that the latter was seen to have the same spiritual import as the former.⁵⁷

To Dewey, however, the negative impact of both mechanical models and supernatural beliefs was taken for granted. He indicated that he never intended to reduce human beings "to another form of a mechanical model" or to appeal to "the doctrine that something literally supernatural marks" human beings "off from nature."⁵⁸ We see how

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 53; Geiger, *Dewey in Perspective*, p. 226.

⁵² Cf. Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 52.

⁵³ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 53.

⁵⁴ Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 226-27.

⁵⁵ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 55; Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 221-22.

⁵⁶ Dewey, "Religion and Our Schools" *The Hibbert Journal* VI (1908): 796-809; Ratner, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 504.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 55; Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 221-22.

important is the adoption of a closer relationship between human beings and nature, which lies at the heart of self-realization. "The less mechanical—in its older sense—physical nature is found to be, the closer is man to nature."⁵⁹

Dewey on the Concept of God

An early short essay by Dewey that touches on his belief regarding the Christian concept of God is entitled "The Obligation to Knowledge of God."⁶⁰ This introduces us to the original theology of Dewey; however, it cannot be relied upon for information concerning his later views on this subject. Dewey, in this essay, shows a strong sympathy towards an evangelical belief in God as the Creator and as the Divine or Heavenly Being. Dewey at the time accepted the Christian teaching on scripture that "the statements of Christ and his immediate followers are explicit. To fail to get knowledge in these matters is not an intellectual, but a moral defect."⁶¹ Dewey, still inspired by his belief in evangelicalism, believed in a Heavenly God towards Whom the interests, desires, and wills of human beings should be directed. He went even further, saying:

[t]he evangelist, ignorant though he be, ... is a better judge of religious truth, than the man of science. All knowledge is one. It is all of God, the universe, say rather, of God; and if any set of facts are regarded as something in themselves, out of all relation to God and God's creatures, it is no knowledge.⁶²

The earlier Dewey saw the need for attaining knowledge of God and for seeking Him. He stated: "The man whose interest in the things of God is not great enough to lead him to direct his eyes to the things of God, will never see the light of the world God is everlastingly about us, and to fail to know Him is to show that we do not wish to know Him."⁶³

One, however, cannot rely on those early statements for an overall understanding of Dewey's notion of God. The problem with Dewey's thought on God is its inconsistency. One's assessment of Dewey must ultimately depend on his conceptualization of the issue in later years. Indeed, Dewey's final remarks assign no

⁵⁹ Ibid. Ibid.

⁶⁰ The chapter is chronologically the sixth essay among the very earlier essays of Dewey during 1882-88. See: Dewey, "The Obligation to Knowledge of God," in *The Early Works*, v. 1, pp. 61-63.

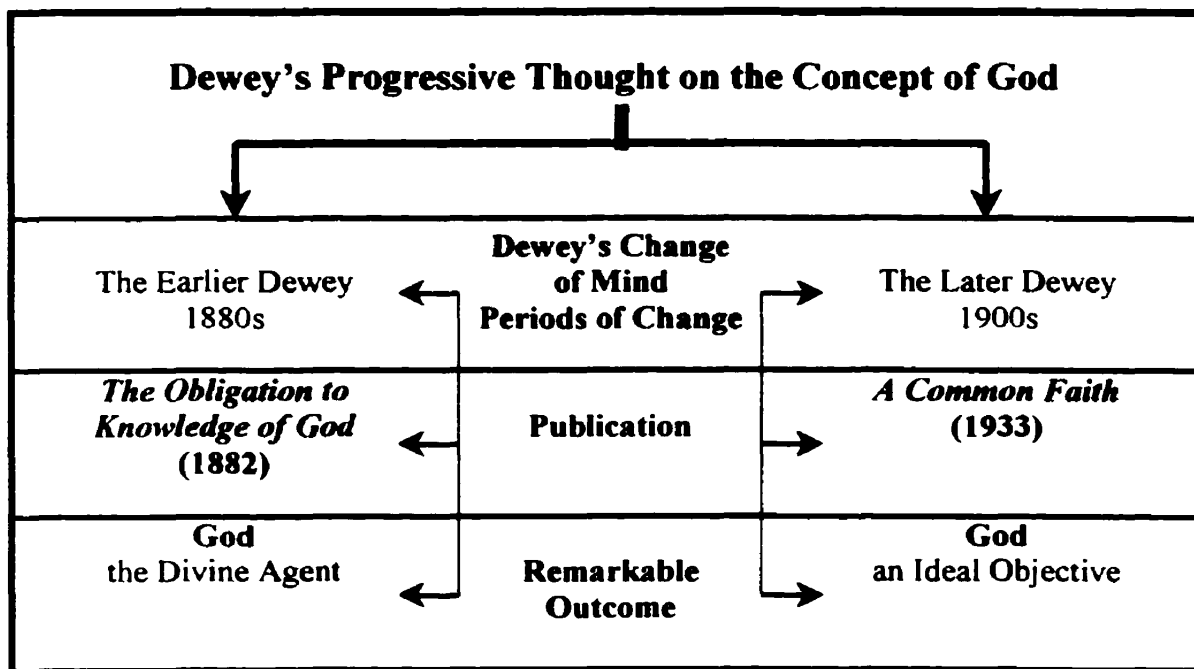
⁶¹ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶² Ibid., p. 62.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 63.

validity or authenticity to his earlier ones, and supersede completely the former belief-system.

Dewey in his later works transformed the God as Divine Being into God as “ideal ends.”⁶⁴ This inconsistency and paradox in Dewey’s mind makes his concept of God a confusing one. The confusion is rendered even more strongly by his insistence in using a capital ‘G’ for God even when he modifies the concept. One might have expected that he would use the term ‘gods’ due to the plurality of the ideal ends themselves. Dewey himself was aware “that using the word ‘God’ laid his doctrine open to misinterpretation because of the term’s long association with the supernatural.” He nevertheless attempted to hold up a naturalistic and pragmatist conception of God. This was because, to him, “the term had no unequivocal meaning in the history of thought.” Moreover, he argued “that there was no danger of its being misunderstood ... and that there was no reason why its emotive associations of the sacred, profound, and ultimate should be surrendered to the supernaturalist”⁶⁵



The Early and Later Deweyan Conceptions of God

⁶⁴ Cf. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 42, 50 & 53.

⁶⁵ Sidney Hook, “Some Memories of John Dewey,” *Commentary* 14 (1952): 253; Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, pp. 388-389, footnote 56.

Dewey's God then is not the same as the Heavenly God. His God is essentially a fabricated concept. As Geiger explains: "In any case, use of 'God' furnishes no beginning compromise with supernaturalism."⁶⁶ For Dewey, God may be "a unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and action." He states:

Suppose for the moment that the word 'God' means the ideal ends that at a given time and place one acknowledges as having authority over his volition and emotion, the values to which one is supremely devoted, as far as these ends, through imagination, take on unity. This idea of God, or of the divine, is also connected with all the natural forces and conditions—including man and human association—that promote the growth of the ideal and that further its realization

....⁶⁷

The accessibility of the ideal aims for human beings is the major concern of Dewey. This perhaps constitutes Dewey's chief argument throughout for the acceptance of 'God' as "a unity of all ideal ends."⁶⁸ To him ideal aims and values "are not located in the clouds but are backed by something deep and indestructible in the needs and demands of humankind."⁶⁹ It is faith in these ideal aims and values that may inspire human welfare and happiness.⁷⁰ Looking at it in this way, I suggest, according to Dewey's understanding, self-realization may in fact constitute "the moral ideal"⁷¹ that might serve as a vehicle for god-realization, albeit god in its Deweyan sense. Later on, in the conclusion, I will compare these two ideas in order to show if they are closely connected with one another.

`Allāma's Transcendental Realism

I already promised to explore my understanding of `Allāma's belief-system as transcendental realism. `Allāma certainly was not a naturalist thinker. Whether or not he is considered a supernaturalist theologian or philosopher is a matter of question. It was asserted that supernatural, when conceptualized as irrational or illogical, was foreign to `Allāma's realism. Thus considered, one has to be careful to describe `Allāma as a supernaturalist theorist; otherwise, one would miss the point from where one has started.

⁶⁶ Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, pp. 219-20.

⁶⁷ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 42, 50, 53; Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, p. 219.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Dewey, "Freedom and Culture," in *The Later Works*, v. 13, p. 174.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 179.

⁷¹ Dewey, "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideals," in *The Early Works*, v. 4, p. 42.

Studying `Allāma, it is necessary to reflect on the concept by which one can allude to the divine and celestial domain, to God as the Creator of nature and as the Necessary Being. God in this sense is the Originator of the natural world and not part of it. He is above the natural realm yet supervises the whole macrocosm. Looking at it in this way, both natural and divine realms are integrated to each other. One is the Creator with His "attributes of Beauty and Perfection (*al-jamāl wa al-kamāl*) such as Omniscience (*ilm*), Omnipotence (*qudrah*), Self-Sufficiency (*ghana*), Divine Will (*iradah*), Everlasting Life (*ḥayāt*)," ⁷² and the other is the natural abode of His creatures. There is in fact a causal relationship between the Creator and His creatures, between the Invisible One and visible beings. ⁷³ God created the world of existence, yet He has never left it to go by itself since He has not created it in vain. The Qur'ān says: "What! Do you think that We have created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?" ⁷⁴ `Allāma explains that human beings have not been created or do not die without any reasonable objective. Allah is the ultimate Truth; therefore, He does not create in vain. ⁷⁵

`Allāma himself never uses any word of equal value of the term supernatural or supernaturalism. His terminologies to describe the realm of the Divine differ from place to place; however, they all convey the same reality and maintain the same notion and idea. For example, as a realist philosopher, `Allāma refers to the transcendental realm of the Divine by the title "Beyond Sense and Experience" [*Māvarāy-i Ḥiss va Tajribah*]. ⁷⁶ In this regard, he pertains a dialogue between materialism or experimentalism on the one hand and Islamic realism on the other. Thinking and writing as an exegete and commentator of the Qur'ān, he makes use of the Quranic terminology "*al-ghayb*" meaning the unseen or unobservable universe(s). By the term *al-ghayb* the Qur'ān describes the existence of God and all those realities and facts which are beyond the access of ordinary means and human experience. In one sense the belief in *al-ghayb* implies the belief in God and in the heavenly angels, in the divine revelation, and in the

⁷² Muzaffar, *The Faith of Shi'a Islam*, P. 7. For details see Ṭabāṭabā'i, "Risālat al-Asmā'," pp. 21-53.

⁷³ Cf. Musavi Lari, *God and His Attributes*, pp. 72-80.

⁷⁴ *The Qur'ān*, 23: 115.

⁷⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 15, p. 73 (Beirut).

⁷⁶ See Ṭabāṭabā'i, "Mawara-yi Ḥiss va Tajribah," p. 104.

world coming after.⁷⁷ 'Allāma maintains that *al-ghayb* (unseen) as opposed to *al-shahādah* (observed) is relevant to what which is above our physical and visual senses. This in particular includes Allah and His great invisible signs.⁷⁸ Accordingly, the Qur'ān puts emphasis on the significant role of wisdom and rational common senses in discovering the real world beyond the natural domain. It insists that one's knowledge of reality must not restrict itself to sensation and experimental sciences.⁷⁹

'Allāma's faith never motivated him to deny or ignore the external and practical feature of self-realization. From his transcendental point of view, however, self-realization is a step towards obtaining ultimate success both in the mundane and extra-mundane worlds. Accordingly, one must think not only of providing for one's material needs. For a Muslim thinker like 'Allāma, the first real truth is the Transcendental Divine God, the Necessary Being. He is the ultimate and ideal end of human life, towards Whom human nature has a basic inclination.⁸⁰

'Allāma's thought on the above transcendentalism is more easily recognized and is more consistent than in the case of many other Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037) or Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-98) or even the master of transcendental philosophy, Mullā Ṣadrā (1571-1640). 'Allāma's faith is apparent in all his writings and discourses: where he discusses the creation of human beings,⁸¹ where he writes on the development of the self,⁸² where he elaborates on knowledge, art and beautification; where he explains the Quranic verses on self-realization⁸³ and even where

⁷⁷ See *The Qur'ān*, 2: 2-4, where the Qur'ān says:

This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil). Those who believe in the unseen [*al-ghayb*] and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to you [the Prophet] and that which was revealed before you and they are sure of the Hereafter.

For information on 'Allāma's commentary see: Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 45-46 (Beirut).

⁷⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 45-46 (Beirut).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ For more on 'Allāma's account on the communication with God see Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Walāyah," pp. 265-71. For further information on God's existence, His Names and Attributes see Ṭabāṭabā'i, "Kitāb al-Tawhīd" (including three treatises: "Risālat al-Tawhīd," "Risālat al-Asma'," and "Risālat al-Af'al.") in *Rasā'il al-Tawhīdiyyah*, pp. 5-99. In these treatises, Allāma describes God as the Necessary Being, paraphrases the doctrine of the Oneness of God and explains His Names, and His Attributes of Essence and Acts. For more on God and His attributes in English see Musavi Lari, *God and His Attributes*.

⁸¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 269 (Tehran); v. 8, p. 95; v. 18, p. 386-87 (Beirut).

⁸² Ibid., v. 1, p. 112.

⁸³ Ibid., v. 6, pp. 206-208 (Tehran).

he speaks of human communication with nature and consumption of natural resources.⁸⁴ Human beings are in direct contact and have a close relationship with nature and the environment, which means that they must rely on their divinely-given mental and physical abilities. At the same time, this potential has been bestowed on them by God's will and favor. This point, as 'Allāma mentions, is shown clearly in the following verses of the Qur'an where it is stated, "And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."⁸⁵ Or "He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens and He knows all things."⁸⁶

At any rate, God's servants are asked to think and reflect upon nature and natural phenomena, as a result of which they shall come to understand that all nature, as well as they themselves, exist by virtue of God's command and will. In this way, 'Allāma concludes that all the blessings of God were created by Him for the sake of human beings. This for 'Allāma illustrates the path people are supposed to follow and indicates whence they started out, and whither they are bound.⁸⁷

The course of our journey begins with God and departs towards God. However, there are those who follow the right path and meet their Lord and return to Him, well-pleased with Him and well-pleasing Him,⁸⁸ as there are those who meet their Lord and return to Him, deeply-misled and lost due to their own evil acts. Therefore, there exist two paths for this same journey and departure; both are optional and left to the responsibility of the individuals themselves.⁸⁹ Human beings are responsible for what they earn and they will be asked how they lived and how they treated their souls.⁹⁰ In short, in 'Allāma's mind, while the significance of nature and natural phenomena is not lost or ignored, the individual's effort at attaining the area beyond nature, that of the Necessary Being, is the major purpose of human life.

⁸⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 112 (Beirut).

⁸⁵ *The Qur'an*, 45: 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 29. See: Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, pp. 112-13 (Beirut).

⁸⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 113 (Beirut).

⁸⁸ *The Qur'an*, 89: 28.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 6-7; Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 1, p. 113 (Beirut). See also pp. 28-29.

⁹⁰ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 20, pp. 95-94 (Beirut). *The Qur'an*, 74: 38; 52: 21.

To Ḥallāma, belief in the world beyond never strays into idealism, nor does it disconnect humans from the real sense of their natural life. Ḥallāma's terminology though carries with itself something beyond nature and natural universe, it is not meant to be a mere ideal separated from the world of reality and existence. Realism in fact never limits itself to the material, the empirical or the visible or sensible worlds. Every material or visible thing is a real instance of existence. However, this does not imply that every real fact has to be observable and material or achievable by human natural experience. Ḥallāma, going even further, asserts when commenting on Platonic philosophy that one could hardly accuse Pythagoras, Plato or, Plotinus of being the fathers of idealism. He maintained that these Greek philosophers and thinkers indeed were seeking the truth and had no other goal in mind but to develop knowledge and to serve humanity through their thought and in a very real sense. The development of philosophy and science owes a serious debt to these great thinkers since they founded the pillars and fundamentals of the philosophical or physical sciences.⁹¹

Ḥallāma in fact organized a discussion group out of which emerged a series of publications on the principles of philosophy wherein he explained the methodology of realism and elaborated on the realistic approach to the understanding of the human mind, perception and the world of existence. The volumes in turn constitute the author's definitive ontological and epistemological points of view. There, he argues that our real world never restricts itself to the world of matter and sensation. Our knowledge of reality is not, as materialist thinkers put it, a product of just material and sensory activities.⁹² Much of human perception is abstract and nonmaterial. These kinds of perceptions do not originate in the sensory organs nor are they affected by matter or material qualities. For instance, they do not take into consideration physical size, space, motion, division, shape or other qualifications of material objects. One's "knowledge by presence" of one's self, as well as the faculties of thinking and imagination, for example, are abstracted from matter due to the absence of such qualities.⁹³

⁹¹ Ṭabāṭaba'ī, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, v. 1, pp. 72-73.

⁹² See *ibid.*, pp. 88-127.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90, 94-95, 118-119 with Muṭahhari's explanations.

One result of the above argument would be the acceptance of the fact that the means and instruments of the discovery and disclosure of something must be applicable and adaptable to the nature of that thing. To discover a fact that is abstract and nonmaterial, one should not turn to a research laboratory. It should never therefore be suggested that all that we perceive as real must be in touch with our sensory organs or subject to the laws of experimental science. Reality, accordingly, surpasses the material world and the realm of sensation and extends to the realm beyond this one.⁹⁴

Moreover, we have seen in `Allāma's remarks on human nature that the human soul is not a one-sided reality; it has rather within its nature both material and non-material dimensions of reality. It is not necessarily equivalent to physical mind. What we have examined already shows that, for a Muslim thinker, belief in a divine agency intervenes in the course of nature and natural laws. This notion all in all constitutes `Allāma's realism, since for the latter the world of existence, thoroughly and without exception, acquires its actuality from this same agency. Therefore, God is not only the Absolute Truth, the Self-Existence or Necessary Being but also the origin and originator of being.⁹⁵ And this is the reality behind all realities towards Whom all creatures are directed and guided.⁹⁶

Another place where `Allāma develops this image of reality and the real world is in his conception of the truth and his argument for the absolutism of truth. He asserts that external visible reality in a certain sense is a matter of change and evolution by essence. However, one should not mix reality as such with those thoughts and facts that are not subject to change and alteration. According to `Allāma's realism, there are, in a real sense, those facts that are considered absolutely unchangeable truths.<sup>97</sup> The following statements may give us a better sense and understanding of `Allāma's thought of truth and realistic eternal facts. For example, when it is said that "Aristotle was Plato's pupil in the 4th century BC," there is no doubt that if this predicate is true in reality, it is a historical truth forever. Moreover, when it is said: "Metals expand due to the effect of heat," one can observe that this judgment is applicable. When it comes to mathematical facts such as

⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹⁵ See Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 16, pp. 235-36 (Beirut).

⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁷ For more on the issue see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, v. 1, pp. 172-204.

“The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles,” again one sees nothing to argue with in terms of this fact. Furthermore, the proposition that “The successive circle and infinite series are null,” is another example of a predicate that states an eternal truth in its real sense. All these facts endure in reality free of any kind of change and alteration. They are axiom.⁹⁸

As we saw in the former chapter, “knowledge by presence” was one of the significant elements and characteristics of ‘Allāma’s thought on the conception of knowledge as a vehicle for self-realization. One of the places where the importance of knowledge by presence seems evident is one’s knowledge of one’s self, personality and identity. This knowledge again is never subjected to any change, error or falsehood.⁹⁹ This is most often because neither the self nor one’s knowledge by presence of the self is material.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, in accordance with the metaphysical principle of ‘concordance with reality,’ ‘Allāma took as his examples of the statements “four is bigger than three” and “three is bigger than four.” The former accords with reality, whereas the latter does not. In neither case can one find any change or alteration whatsoever.¹⁰¹ This suggests the existence of absolute truths in real life as opposed to those in a relativistic perspective. Any fact, if it is true and concords with the real world, remains the same in any condition, but if it is untrue and does not concord with the real world, it will be so in any condition.¹⁰² Thus philosophical and mathematical principles are certain and unchangeable, whereas experimental sciences are a matter of change and evolution. The reason is that the former category of knowledge borrows its validity and authenticity from fixed and irrevocable facts and principles, while the latter category of human knowledge is established upon experiences and senses which can be subject to falsehood or change.¹⁰³ This explanation suffices, I think, to demonstrate ‘Allāma’s realism, and to show that the real world according to him is not necessarily a matter of changeable and evolutionary episodes and phenomena.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

⁹⁹ Tabātabā’i, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, v. 1, p. 204.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 118, 124.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 140, 193-203.

¹⁰² For more on the issue *ibid.* pp. 140-149.

¹⁰³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 143-46.

Spirituality: Connection with the Divine

The Quranic terminology *al-ghayb* (the unseen world) stands for the divine transcendental elements and agents. According to `Allāma's thought and belief-system, it would make no sense to disconnect spirituality from the divine realm. However, this does not mean that he wishes to encourage any type of isolationism whatsoever. There are many traditions narrated from the Prophet of Islam and his Household indicating that God has never prescribed the monastic life or the practice of isolationism.¹⁰⁴ This is probably why, according to the Qur'ān, Christian monasticism is referred to as an innovation and not a divinely-prescribed system of life.¹⁰⁵ Living among people, dealing with nature in its general sense and, at the same time striving for purification of the self and realization of it through an appropriate way, as well as humbly remembering God and seeking His pleasure, all have within themselves the value of a true monastic life.¹⁰⁶

According to `Allāma, spirituality, mysticism and self-realization are intertwined. He maintains that spirituality or mysticism in general and self-realization as a type of mysticism, in particular, are derived from religion. However, this does not suggest that religion and mysticism are the same; religion, as we shall see below, is one thing and mysticism something else.¹⁰⁷

`Allāma's notion of spirituality and mysticism is depicted to a large extent in his "Risalat al-Walāyah," where he asserts that the journey towards the divine domain and the observation of the mystical realm are not explicitly restricted to God's prophets. Indeed, those who follow the prophets, too, are able to perceive such positions through their own

¹⁰⁴ According to some of these traditions, monkery and monastic life have no value per se and are not prescribed by Islam. Another category of traditions maintain that monkery used to be practiced by Christian monks and pastors, those who innovated such a practice hoping to gain God's pleasure. In a third category of traditions, there finds an explanation of the term "monkery" stating that it was sometimes in the form of separating from women, and sometimes in the form of wearing casual clothes or in the form of isolation from human society and leaving the social life for a life in the desert, mountains or uninhabited regions. None of the above forms of monkery is recommended by Islam.

For more on the first type see Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 14, p. 272; v. 68, p. 319; v. 70, p. 115; v. 83, p. 380 and v. 82, p. 114. For more on the second category: Ibid., v. 68, p. 319 and v. 94, p. 127. And for more on the third one ibid., v. 14, p. 277.

¹⁰⁵ See *The Qur'ān*, 27: 57; `Allāma's commentary on the verse, *Al-Mizān*, v. 19, pp. 173, 175 (Beirut).

¹⁰⁶ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 14, p. 272; v. 16, p. 330; v. 70, p. 115; v. 83, p. 380 and v. 87, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Ṭabaṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 202 (Tehran).

self-journey. The difference between them is that the prophets are stronger than their followers in this regard.¹⁰⁸

In his “al-Walāyah,” ‘Allāma presents a systematic evaluation on the subject. ‘Allāma himself was a mystic whose academic and routine life in its practical sense was marked by devotional exercises, contemplation and spirituality. Most often one must rely on ‘Allāma’s companions, pupils and colleagues for evidence of this sense of spirituality in his life. Muṭahhari, who attended ‘Allāma’s courses on philosophy, mysticism and Quranic studies for about thirty years, stated that ‘Allāma reached in his spiritual perfection the point where he could spiritually see what ordinary people could not see or understand.¹⁰⁹ Jawādī Āmulī is another important figure who had a very close relationship with his master ‘Allāma for more than thirty years. Āmulī’s appreciation of ‘Allāma is then an authentic one. He states that ‘Allāma, like some of his own masters and teachers, was in turn a practicing follower of the Prophetic path. This is why he could write of his experiences on spirituality as shown in his “al-Walāyah”. As Āmulī mentions, ‘Allāma was one of the few wayfarer mystics who could accurately explain the process of the self-journey to others in terms of how he himself perceived it through his own spiritual and mystical experience. He was able to verbalize what he perceived by spirit and could conceptualize and express in words and conception what he had seen by means of the eye of his heart. As a Muslim Shī‘ī believer, ‘Allāma in his self-journey attempted to connect himself with the Qur’ān on the one hand and the Prophet and His Household on the other since they were to him the wellsprings of a successful spirituality.¹¹⁰ This approach suggests the importance of religion and religious implications and practices into the process of self-journey.¹¹¹ At the same time, this is why he maintained that mysticism and spiritual practice and experience should find their link to religion and religious practices.¹¹²

God-worship and pantheism are other concepts that manifest the necessity of the role of religion in a spiritual journey. God-worship is to be a faithful servant of Him and

¹⁰⁸ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, “al-Walāyah,” p. 265; Guli Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, pp. 271-72.

¹⁰⁹ Guli Zavārah, *Jur’ahā-yi Jānbakhsh*, p. 134.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 272-73, quoting Jawādī Āmulī, “Shartī bar Risālat al-Walāyah ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā‘ī,” *Mirāth-i Javidān* 2nd year, 2 (summer 1994).

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 352.

¹¹² Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 202 (Tehran).

to surrender to Him under all conditions.¹¹³ God's prophets prescribed worship and religious beliefs and instructions revealed to them from God in order for them as well as for God's servants to make their departure towards God.¹¹⁴ By means of worship, the individual journeys to God and humbles himself or herself before Him.¹¹⁵

`Allāma on Religion: Divinely-Revealed Religion

`Allāma studied religion in terms of its origin, its content, and its role in human individual and social life, as he reflected on religion in terms of philosophy and history of religion."<sup>116</sup> The concept of religion finds its specific framework and content in `Allāma's mind as a believer in divinity and the divine aspect of religion. Therefore, to him, religion must come from God and must be revealed from the Divine to God's prophets. Sometimes, in order to separate divinely-revealed religion from that of man-made religion, `Allāma uses the adjective "true religion" in contrast to "false religions." Of the former it may be said that it "consists in a set of practical and ethical instructions that the Prophets have brought from God for the guidance of mankind."<sup>117</sup> `Allāma looked at religion in its instrumentality for the happiness of human beings. "To accept these beliefs and to carry out these instructions lead human beings to happiness in this world and the next."¹¹⁸ Religion to this extent is responsible for the accomplishment of human happiness in both the mundane and extra-mundane worlds.¹¹⁹ This is on the condition that the human person should himself or herself be bound to religion and religious instructions.¹²⁰

What seems of significance here is that the wellspring of God's religion, i.e., the reason that God revealed His religion is, from `Allāma's perspective, the demands of innate human nature itself. Such was the status of religion, in the eyes of `Allāma, whether as natural innate religion or as monotheistic religion; both expressions identify

¹¹³ Ibid., v. 14, p. 123 (Beirut).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., v. 1, p. 299 (Beirut).

¹¹⁵ Ibid., v. 10, p. 274 (Beirut).

¹¹⁶ Ibid., v. 14, p. 361; v. 4, p. 369 (Beirut).

¹¹⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 19.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mẓān*, v. 2, p. 130; v. 16, p. 178 (Beirut).

¹²⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 19, 22-25. Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mẓān*, v. 4, p. 369 (Beirut).

one single fact.¹²¹ “The divine religion is based on nature and normally people cannot go astray in a natural thing. Nor can they demand of nature change.”¹²² The general principles and rules of divine religion consist of faith in God, as well as in what He revealed to His prophets. These principles and instructions accord with the innate nature of human beings and meet its needs, thus providing for perfection and happiness.¹²³

This, however, does not imply that the social aspect of religion escaped ‘Allāma’s affection. Drawing attention in his discussion of religion to both individual and social appearances of religion, ‘Allāma said that religion is a social order decreed for human beings. Since human beings are social by nature, they are in vital need of social order and discipline.¹²⁴ They need civil rules through which they can settle their disputes and differences. “It goes without saying that material interests normally give rise to various forms of discord, rancour, and loss of amity. In order to preserve individuals’ amity, society must have a set of rules which can avert chaos if observed.”¹²⁵ These rules to ‘Allāma find their roots in divine religion.

Criticizing secular rules and laws, ‘Allāma points out that rules over society must be derived from the Divine since the latter seems more comprehensive and embodies both the external and interior nature of human beings. Its focus is not just “on the material side of individuals,” nor is it only on harmony and preservation of the system. Divine laws take more account of spiritual values. Moreover, the rules authorized by divine religion impart “a sense of responsibility for every individual and social act, such that man feels responsible to God Most High for his every action and inaction.”¹²⁶

‘Allāma on the Concept of God

In discussing God from a variety of angles and in terms of many related yet subordinate subjects, ‘Allāma took a consistent position in his understanding of God. The term “Allah” in Quranic theology comprises all beauty, glory, and might. It identifies God

¹²¹ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Al-Ma‘ānī*, v. 6, p. 202 (Tehran).

¹²² *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 122 (Beirut); English translation, v. 3, p. 180.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 311; v. 14, p. 119 (Beirut).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 337; v. 4, p. 122 (Beirut).

¹²⁵ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 28.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31. For further remarks and a comparison made by ‘Allāma on and between secular and religious rules see pp. 28-36.

as the Transcendental Being with all of His Attributes. `Allāma speaks of God to a great extent in terms of His existence, His Names and His Attributes.¹²⁷

There are many other themes that correspond to one's relationship with God, such as one's knowledge of God, one's love of God, one's meeting with God, one's remembrance of God, one's obliviousness of God, and so on.¹²⁸

In short, God created human beings in order for them to worship Him, yet real worship does not take place except when God's servants truly recognize Him. Therefore, human beings are expected to know God insofar as their knowledge of God may help them understand the ultimate goal of their lives and achieve their appointed perfection.¹²⁹ Again, `Allāma, basing himself on Prophetic tradition, insisted that self-realization through the above-mentioned journey of the soul is the major requirement and vehicle for God-recognition.¹³⁰

Remarks on Self-Realization

Having addressed the philosophical or theological positions adopted by both Dewey and `Allāma, it is perhaps time to make some preliminary remarks as to their immediate notions of self-realization. Some aspects of this issue have already come to the fore in the previous discussion. In this section, however, I will begin to look into the question in a more direct way. In Dewey's case, I have consulted his essays "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal"¹³¹ and "The Place of Self in the Moral Life"¹³² When it comes to `Allāma, my understanding of his conception has been extracted from his "al-Walāyah" and his commentary on a particular Quranic verse.¹³³

¹²⁷ For more on the contents see Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 175; v. 7, p. 29; v. 12, p. 279; v. 13, pp. 223-224, 227, 270; v. 14, p. 273; v. 15, p. 324; v. 17, pp. 222, 232, 288; v. 18, pp. 25, 155, 169; v. 19, pp. 47, 86, 87, 106, 145. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 44-57.

¹²⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 5, p. 383 (Beirut); v. 6, pp. 177, 187, 259 (Tehran); v. 10, p. 15; v. 16, p. 102 (Beirut).

¹²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, v. 18, pp. 386-88 and v. 20, pp. 352-53. *The Qur'ān*, 51: 56.

¹³⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 20, p. 177 (Tehran).

¹³¹ Dewey, *The Early Works*, v. 4, pp. 42-53.

¹³² Dewey, *The Middle Works*, v. 5, pp. 351-58.

¹³³ *The Qur'ān*, 5: 105. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, pp. 162-68.

Dewey's Remark

In his early approach to the concept of self-realization, and indeed in his early remarks on the nature of self-realization, Dewey declared the question of moral ends as being nothing other than self-realization. In proclaiming the division of ethical theory into empirical and intuitionist perspectives, he maintained that this division "is a cross-division, one relating to the ethical criterion, the other to the method of arriving at knowledge of it."¹³⁴

Ethical ideals, from Dewey's point of view, are characterized by two crucial phases. Firstly, he denies any sort of "subordination of self to any law outside itself," and, secondly, he indicates that the moral end should be "sought in the active, or volitional, side rather than in the passive, or feeling, side."¹³⁵ Dewey attempts first to work out the ideas of self and of realization. Appreciating this will help us to understand Dewey's views somewhat more precisely.

As regards the concept of self, Dewey criticizes the notion of the self according to which the latter is viewed "as a presupposed fixed *schema* or outline."¹³⁶ As regards the notion of realization, Dewey criticizes any notion that "consists in the filling up of this *schema*." He then substitutes these notions with his own, explaining that the self must be looked at "as always a concrete *specific* activity." It is through this kind of activity that one may anticipate how to identify and realize the self.¹³⁷

Dewey took it for granted that the idea of realization by itself suggests the existence of "a presupposed complete self" with its all capacities or possibilities. As a practical fact, the moral goal, from Dewey's perspective, was to realize the powers and possibilities of the self. The interpretation of such a fact is a major matter of question. The nature of the capabilities of the self must be seen in their specific and individualized forms existing at an exact moment and space in a definite person. Dewey, illustrated that the capacity of one's self is itself definite activity and not simply possibility of activity.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Dewey, *The Early Works*, v. 4, p. 42.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

The dilemma of capability and actuality thus occupied Dewey's mind. In answer to such a paradox, Dewey noted, "our first conception of our activity is highly vague and indeterminate. We are conscious of the activity of our eye and ear in general, but not of just the way in which they work." Moreover, the more interested we are in a phase of our activity the more conscious and recognizant we are of that phase of our activity. In making this point, Dewey proclaimed the important principle of James's psychology, according to which "the essence is that *which is so important for my interests* that, comparatively, other properties may be omitted."¹³⁹

Dewey went on to divide human activity into two parts as shown in the following table.¹⁴⁰ Dewey's intention in proposing such a division was to specify the fixed permanent core in one's activity which is to be realized through the process of one's self-realization.¹⁴¹

Human Activities in Terms of Their Realization



Sort of Act	Permanent Interested Action	Time to Time Interested Action
Description	"comes to be thought of as a sort of fixed permanent core"	"may, from time to time, go through more or less transitory operations"

A Deweyan Division of Human Activities

So far, we have seen that, for Dewey the process of self-realization consists in the individual's capacity being realized. In terms of realization there must exist something as self in its real and not ideal sense that needs to be realized. Dewey indicates that realization of "capacity does not mean, therefore, to act so as to fill up some presupposed ideal self. It means to act at the height of action, to realize its full meaning."¹⁴² To this extent, the core element and aspect of self-realization for Dewey is to figure out how to realize in a practical sense the capacity of the self. In such an atmosphere, in order for us to understand Dewey's notion of realization, I feel it to be necessary to arrange those

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 46-47, citing James, *Psychology*, II, 335.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. For more on the content of the table see p. 47.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 47.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 49.

characteristics that identify Dewey's understanding of realization. In the following lines, the major components of Dewey's interpretation of the infinitive "to realize" are listed. As is shown below, realization is not just a matter of theoretical knowledge. It indeed implies a more practical sense and proposes guidelines on how to act properly.

To realize one's full capacity:

- a) "to act concretely, not abstractly;"
- b) to find out "a direction to us with reference to knowledge, not with reference to performance;"
- c) to act in accordance with the relations and content of action;
- d) "to take deeper account of the present activity;"
- e) "to get beyond the mere superficialities of the act" in order "to see it in its totality;"
- f) "to make the special act which has to be performed an activity of the entire *present* self – so far is it from being one step towards the attainment of a remote ideal self."¹⁴³

One of the significant components of Dewey's notion of self-realization is found in his focus on the practical aspects of education as the foundation for self-realization. In order to comprehend this point practically as well as theoretically, one must avoid "thinking of this life as merely a preparation for another life." At the same time, Dewey advocated that parts of the present life can be "as merely preparatory to other later stages of it" and not to the life after. This is one of the areas where Dewey calls for a needed reformation in the spirit of education. He writes: "Cease conceiving of education as mere preparation for later life, and make of it the full meaning of the present life."¹⁴⁴ In short, Dewey placed an emphasis on the possible capacity and activity of the present time and situation rather than on the life hereafter. If there is any consideration of preparation, it is viewed as preparatory activity for further stages in the present life. Accordingly, genuine education is not the one that which leads on to the extra-mundane life. It is rather the one that which leads on to further steps or later stage in the present worldly life.

Moreover, this emphasis, according to Dewey's interpretation of moral life and self-realization, was to be placed on the necessary consciousness of and attention to the

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

present life and its fulfillment. To this extent, the goal behind morality and moral life in one sense is to realize “the self in the highest and fullest activity possible at the time, and to perform the act in the consciousness of its complete identification with self.” In other words, it is to act in the cognizance of complete identification of action with complete interest. This is in fact the major component of morality and the true nature of realization.¹⁴⁵

Dewey disagreed with Green, whose division of the presupposed self into two separate selves led to splitting the self into realized and ideal selves. According to such a division, while the realized self is considered the agent of action, the ideal self is considered the goal of action. Again, the self acts to attain to the ideal self.¹⁴⁶ The problem with Green’s division, Dewey indicates, is how the ideal self is supposed to become an end at all when a break is expected “between the already realized self and the ideal self.” This division from Dewey’s perspective is “the fallacy of hypostatizing into separate entities what in reality are simply two stages of insight upon our own part.”¹⁴⁷

Dewey’s criticism was directed at the splitting the self into two separate entities. As we shall see later, Dewey’s emphasis on the unity and unification of the self as one entity and one reality may be seen as one of the major commonalties found between him and `Allāma. Dewey goes on to say:

This “realized self” is no reality by itself: it is simply our partial conception of the self erected into an entity. Recognizing its incomplete character, we bring in what we have left out and call it the “ideal self.” Then by way of dealing with the fact that we have not two selves here at all, but simply a less and a more adequate insight into the same self, we insert the idea of one of these selves realizing the other.¹⁴⁸

As we have seen in the above passages, Dewey dealt for the most part with the definition of realization, as well as with the identity and nature of self as the realized and as the ideal self. The latter two, as shown above, were but two features of one self. This is while in his further investigation into self-realization, Dewey looked at the conceptualization of self-realization in relation to moral ends. Elaborating on “Good as

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Green, *Prolegomena*, pp. 202-5; Dewey, “Self-Realization,” pp. 51-52.

¹⁴⁷ Dewey, “Self-Realization,” pp. 52-53.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

Self-Realization,” Dewey debates whether self-realization can be the end at all. “End” in Dewey’s mind has two distinct meanings. It “means either the consequences actually effected, the closing and completing phase of an act, or the aim held deliberately in view.”¹⁴⁹ From Dewey’s standpoint, realization of the self is not an end in view; it is rather an end in act though it is not the only end of a moral act. Moreover, realization of self is not only an aim of moral action but also a consequence of it. Any action, whether it be good or bad, moral or immoral, leaves its own effect and mark on the development and fulfillment or lowering and destruction of selfhood. At any rate, self-realization is not considered the only and final end of morality.¹⁵⁰ As was mentioned earlier, the example of “[t]he patriot who dies for his country”¹⁵¹ illustrates the core element of Dewey’s argument explaining why self-realization should not be considered the only end of moral action.

In the above example, the aim behind the patriot’s willingness to die for his country’s sake constitutes his self-realization. Although self-consciousness is an important element that coexists with the process of self-realization, it happens, as in the above case, that the losing of the self in the endeavor to realize a higher objective may be justified. When seen in this way, a sense of self-abnegation, or self-forgetfulness and disinterested interest might be likely and conceivable.¹⁵² This is, however, one specific feature of the problem. Generally speaking, in the process of self-realization, at times, the realization of selfhood, as well as the strengthening of its capacity, is the major phase of a moral objective end.¹⁵³

What is of greater importance in Dewey’s mind is to understand how to touch upon the problem of equating personal and public or general ends. As a universal order, it is assumed that those who seek the happiness of others should also themselves be happy. Dewey’s proposal concentrates on a two-sided action that leads on to a path that lies between one’s own personal objectives and those of others. Accordingly,

The most comfortable course of life is one in which ... the individual shuns those excesses of vice which injure health, wealth, and lessen the decent esteem of

¹⁴⁹ Dewey, “The Self in the Moral Life,” in *The Middle Works*, v. 5, p. 352.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 352-53.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 353-54.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 354.

others, but also shuns enterprises of precarious virtue and devotion to high and difficult ends.¹⁵⁴

Finally, Dewey takes further steps towards making a distinction between the real and artificial aspects of the above-mentioned problem. He maintains that the problem is insoluble so long as it remains artificial. He concludes that it is the business of human beings themselves and not that of moral theory to encourage and develop the capacity and desire for this equation.¹⁵⁵

`Allāma's Remark

In his "al-Walāyah," `Allāma, describing his conception of the nature of *walāyah*, indicates that "it is the true ultimate perfection of human beings and it is the furthest aim behind the legislation of the true divine religion."¹⁵⁶ He devoted five chapters to developing his argument regarding the fulfillment of this so-called priceless ultimate aim of human life. These chapters, one after another, form the essential characteristics of one ideology and theology. They constitute an Islamic interpretation of the spiritual aspect of human life. In this regard, let us consider `Allāma's words to see how he begins and how he terminates his notion of self-realization. Let me summarize the latter's remarks in the following manner.

1. Divinely-revealed religion, as well as all its teachings, has an internal face as well as an external form. Religious teachings convey and manifest other truths behind their ritual and solemn creeds. The formal restrictions of the religion correspond to human mundane life just as the interior body and spirit of the religion corresponds to the extra-mundane life. The second period of human life is the true life in its Quranic conception. "This mundane earthly life is nothing but an entertainment and a play; the next abode is surely the life"¹⁵⁷ In another verse the same division of human life is illustrated more precisely indicating that this mundane life has another abode other than its

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 355.

¹⁵⁵ For further remarks on the status of self-realization in the moral life see *ibid.* "The Good as Self-Realization," pp. 351-57.

¹⁵⁶ Ṭabaṭabā'i, "al-Walāyah," p. 251.

¹⁵⁷ *The Qur'an*, 29: 64.

explicit and external aspect.¹⁵⁸ “Most people know the outward aspect of this world’s life, but of the hereafter they are absolutely heedless.”¹⁵⁹

2. It is taken for granted that neither the system nor the interior aspect of the world life is a made-up conception conveying no reality or fact beyond the mind. The mutual process of *being* and *becoming* within this system functions in terms of the process of cause and effect. It is in the sense that every single effect in this framework seeks its fulfillment of perfection through its attachment to its own cause. One sees that the relationship between cause and effect is the relationship between light and its shadow¹⁶⁰ in the sense that the latter is nothing other than a manifestation of the former and has no reality parallel to the reality of its cause. It also means that the latter borrows its existence from the former and that the former is the wellspring of the existence of the latter.¹⁶¹ Every level of life is preceded by an upper level as its cause until the cycle ends with the existence of the Eternal Truth of God. Any sort of perfection found in this mundane life exists in its higher and more complete position in the upper world.¹⁶² For instance, here one finds life; there, there exists the source of life.
3. Those who believe in divinely-revealed religions have no doubt that the prophets were in communication with the world beyond this earthly material life. They, to the extent of their different gradations and positions before God, knew many intrinsic issues. The question which may be raised here is to realize whether or not this communication and knowledge is bestowed only upon the prophets. In fact, the door is still open to ordinary people. They like the prophets, yet to the measure of their spiritual capability, may acquire this position. One must not think that s/he is but a body with only its physical or psychological functions. One’s having an insight into one’s innate nature may let one realize and witness the mysterious aspects of human life. They could

¹⁵⁸ Ṭabaṭabā’ī, “al-Walāyah,” pp. 251-54.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 253. *The Qur’ān*, 30: 7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 257.

¹⁶¹ My own explanation.

¹⁶² Ibid., pp. 257-58.

see what they will see after death and in the hereafter.¹⁶³ There are two types of signs for understanding the truth; one external and the other internal. Allah states, "We will soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth."¹⁶⁴ These signs direct the individual towards the Lord God. The Qur'ān says: "And that to your Lord is the goal."¹⁶⁵ "And surely to our Lord we must return."¹⁶⁶ "... whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join any one in the service of his Lord."¹⁶⁷ And finally it is narrated that Imam 'Ali said: "I see nothing but I see Allah before that thing."¹⁶⁸

4. It is time to see what the path to the above-mentioned Truth really consists of. There is nothing more obvious for the self other than its own innate nature and interior abode. This interior abode in turn is connected with its internal truth. The chain of causality continues until it reaches the Ultimate Truth towards Which every truth tends. The true perfection of a human being then is to reach, by essence, substances, actions and by all existing aspects of his or her life, that Ultimate Truth. Thus, s/he realizes no one other than God and communicates with Him in a subtler way of communication. This same fact and the way to realize it is wrapped up in the realization of the self itself. When seen in this manner, the closest and the most immediate way leading towards the Ultimate Truth is that of self-realization.¹⁶⁹
5. It is needless to emphasize that in one's self-journey to the Ultimate Truth one must pass all levels of monotheistic thought in order to be a true believer in monotheism and in the Oneness of God in all senses of the Oneness. This is to acknowledge that God is One in essence, in acts and in attributes. All these elements altogether are the manifestations of One Absolute Being.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, in one's journey towards God one visits one Creator and

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁶⁴ *The Qur'ān*, 41: 53.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 53: 42.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 43: 14.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 18: 110.

¹⁶⁸ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Walāyah," p. 270.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 271-73.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 294. See also p., 273.

communicates with one Lord and surrenders to one Worship-object and express her or his servitude to one Master.¹⁷¹

The above principles shed light on `Allāma's approach to the conceptualization of self-realization. The latter went into more details describing the different rates and gradations of the individual's self-journey, as well as touching upon the states of mystics before God.

Another place where `Allāma elaborates extensively on the doctrine of self-realization is in his commentary on the Quranic verse "O you who believe! Take care of yourselves; one who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way; to Allah is your return ...."<sup>172</sup> In his later writings, `Allāma explained how one's departure towards God would be. Generally speaking, all human beings journey towards Him inevitably. Their ways to Him differ from one another in terms of different attitudes, the beliefs they adhere to or the different actions they perform. This inevitable journey is understandable from the following verse in the Qur'ān where God says: "O human beings! Surely you are striving towards your Lord a hard striving until you meet Him."¹⁷³ Accordingly, every single human being follows his or her way towards God whether s/he is believer or not, a good-doer or an evil-doer, consciously or unconsciously. One who follows a path will certainly reach the point where that path ends. The self then has a now and a tomorrow, a point of departure and a terminus, and it is in motion and journey from now to tomorrow and from the starting point to the point of destination, and in one word from the self to God.¹⁷⁴ `Allāma maintains that God is the ultimate aim of life the oblivion of which cause the oblivion of the path itself. Moreover, one who forgets the Lord, s/he indeed forgets her/his self. According to a Prophetic tradition, one's full realization of one's self leads in fact to one's realization of the Lord.¹⁷⁵ The Qur'ān says: "Surely I rely on Allah, my Lord and your Lord; there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the right path."¹⁷⁶ This is exactly the divine teaching on creation based upon which God's creatures in general and human beings in particular are led towards Him. The

¹⁷¹ My notes.

¹⁷² *The Qur'ān*, 5: 105.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 84: 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Al-Mīzān*, v. 6, pp. 162, 165-166.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁷⁶ *The Qur'ān*, 11: 56.

Qur'ān says: "The path of Allah, Whose is whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually come."¹⁷⁷

One's actions are considered from 'Allāma's perspective as one of the major means and vehicles to attain the above ultimate goal. 'Allāma's divisions of these actions include both mental and organic actions of the individual. While the first type of actions correspond to one's belief-system, the other type corresponds to one's explicit organic actions performed in order to worship God or to perform for the sake of God. Whenever one or both of these two types are not appropriate, they do not help the individual actualize and fulfill the above-mentioned final goal of human life.¹⁷⁸ Whether or not one can achieve happiness depends upon one's acts and beliefs. Theory and practice go side by side with one another to help one be successful in both one's mundane and extra-mundane periods of life. The following short verses of the Qur'ān somewhat shed light on the divine inspiration, as well as on the role of the human individual in purification or corruption of the soul through both faith and acts. "And (I [God] swear by) the soul and Him Who made it perfect. Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it. S/he will indeed be successful who purifies it. And s/he will indeed fail who corrupts it."¹⁷⁹

The major effort according to 'Allāma should be pursued to activate and motivate one's consciousness in order for one to realize his or her position before the Lord God. This was because the one who is aware of one's position before God and realizes one's relationship to other parts of the world while in his or her solitude, will find that there is no real master and friend other than God. Then s/he will understand God's words, "... To Allah is your return"¹⁸⁰ 'Allāma maintained,

Now, the self while conscious immigrates from the abode of polytheism to that of monotheism and God worship; continuously changes any type of polytheism to monotheism, fallacy to truth actualization, remoteness to closeness, satanic haughtiness to divine humbleness and illusive independence to servitude poverty; all occur if divine favour aids the self and if divine success drives it.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 166. *The Qur'ān*, 53: 53.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 165-66.

¹⁷⁹ *The Qur'ān*, 91: 7-10. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 167.

¹⁸⁰ *The Qur'ān*, 5: 105.

¹⁸¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 168.

The aforementioned verse from `Allāma's point of view may convey a social message to the Muslim community. Looking at it in this way, he proclaimed that the addressee of "O you who believe! Take care of yourselves;"¹⁸² is Muslim society in general. To this extent, Muslims are asked to purify their Islamic society by the means of divine guidance and grace through safeguarding religious teachings and preserving their good actions. This is as God says: "And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited, ..."¹⁸³ This same social holding fast is meant to stick to the Muslim Holy Book and Islamic tradition and culture.¹⁸⁴

Summary Comments

Disregarding divergences found between Dewey and `Allāma, one can extract a logical parallelism from among their attitudes and approaches. Both thinkers, we have seen, emphasizing the momentousness of self-realization, believed in the journey of the self towards something transcendental. While this transcendental agent for Dewey does not depart beyond the natural life of human beings, for `Allāma it surpasses the natural domain and finds its way towards the Divine. In this realm, the different interpretations of God, for instance, may function as distinct signs of parallelism between the two ideologies.

The Deweyan God is a human-made god created by the human mind and chosen as an ideal objective. The number of this god may increase by the expansion of the number of human persons themselves. To this extent every single human being may have his or her own god, that is his or her ideal objective end. The life and power of such a god, as well as its light and manifestations depend upon the amplitude of life, power, light and manifestations that the individual has devoted to his or her ideal objective. In short, it is an individual god and not a universal one. This is an individualistic approach to the notion of God that suggests the injection of relativism into the conceptualization of God. God according to this notion can never take a role in the unification of human society. The element of unification should be looked for somewhere else. It is in fact the business

¹⁸² *The Qur'ān*, 5: 105.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3: 102. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 168.

¹⁸⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Al-Mizān*, v. 6, p. 168.

of social norms and standards to suggest general rules and criteria to be practiced in human life as a unifying agent of the human society.

`Allāma's God, on the other hand, is the Creator One Whose light, power, life, and manifestations are everywhere explicitly clear. Nowhere can one find where the same God is not present with all His essence and attributes. In fact, all parts of the universe including the universe of human beings are signs of His existence. This is God the One and the only Creator of the universe. Not only all human beings, but also all creatures are continuously inclining and departing towards Him since they are unexceptionally His creatures and He is undoubtedly their first cause of existence. He is the Lord to Whom the origination of all beings refers. All life, power, light, love, etc., are continuously bestowed from His Splendor upon the world of existence. The `Allāma God has both individual and universal conceptions upon Whom the reality of all realities have been depended. Looking at it in this way, God is the Absolute Real Being. Islamic teachings in both their contents and forms summon one thoroughly to the belief in and submission to this Everlasting Truth. The following maxim gives us a sense of what constitutes and colors the elements and pillars of an Islamic world-view. "The heart is the sanctuary of Allah, therefore, do not settle therein anything but Allah."¹⁸⁵ In this specific Islamic framework, one's love of anything else or of any one other than God must not oppose the love of God. One may love others not in parallel to the love of God but for the sake of God's pleasure. For instance, s/he may love her or his fellow human beings because God wants His servants to love one another, and because in this God's pleasure is secured.

Moreover, despite the fact that self-realization from the different standpoints of Dewey and `Allāma has two different originations and orientations, it is considered the product of human morality from both perspectives. In Dewey's case, the process of self-realization, both when discussed in terms of its entity or its definition and when discussed in terms of an objective end for moral act, has definitely all things to do with human morality. One must not forget that morality in Dewey's mind "is one which sustains a whole complex system of social values; one which keeps vital and progressive the

¹⁸⁵ K. Faqih Imani, [Faqih Imāni] *A Bundle of Flowers*, trans. Sadr al-'Ameli [Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Āmilī] (Iran: Isfahan: The Scientific and Religious Research Center, 1998), citing Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 70, p. 25.

industrial order, science, art, and the State.”¹⁸⁶ ‘Allāma’s point of departure to the concept of self-realization on the other hand, is human morality which in its complete sense leads to transcendental mysticism. Accordingly, it is through this mystical journey that the realized self connects itself with natural, private and social life. Again, morals for ‘Allāma embrace all aspects of human life including one’s duties towards one’s self, as well as towards nature, others, human society and God. This in turn formulates ‘Allāma’s image of the human value-system.¹⁸⁷

With the above passages, I come to end the investigative chapters of the thesis, now to embark upon the concluding part which will be the closing part of the present research. I have tried to make clear the themes inherent in the thesis so as to contribute to our understanding Dewey’s and ‘Allāma’s positions on the concept of self-realization. I do not claim that the subject has been exhaustively investigated from all dimensions and with all its features and implications. There may be in fact many other significant varieties that are missing from my study of self-realization. Nevertheless, it is beyond the scope of any research study, mine not excluded, to touch upon all aspects of its subject-matter. But I have delimited the study to include what I have claimed are the principle topics that help to elucidate the conceptions of self-realization as a significant aim of education as anticipated from the writings of Dewey and ‘Allāma. I will now consider the conclusions that can be drawn from the study as a whole. Finally, I would draw my reader’s attention to the fact that the present study may at least function as a clue, smoothing the way towards further investigations in the field of self-realization.

¹⁸⁶ Dewey, “The Self in the Moral Life,” in *The Middle Works*, v. 5, p. 353.

¹⁸⁷ For further study see Ṭabāṭabā’i, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 149, 174

PART III

Conclusion

Conclusion

Initial Remarks

Those who might expect this thesis to conclude with some all-embracing summation of the concept of self-realization will unfortunately be disappointed. I have treated the two doctrines of Dewey and `Allāma in terms of the variety of themes, orientations, conceptualizations and implications they touched upon, and from different perspectives. Studied in terms of their respective philosophical roots and positions, their two schools of thought could certainly be compared as if they were absolute rivals to one another. At first glance one might be unable to recognize any common line between the two systems of educational philosophies. This is mainly because, as we have seen, one of the doctrines has its foundation in a naturalistic world-view and epistemology, while the other finds its basis in some where beyond the corporeal world. We have seen that Dewey was a naturalist thinker in terms of both theological and philosophical concepts of the term naturalism. As a naturalist theologian, Dewey takes no account of divine revelation. His thought suggests that all religious truths are from natural causes and not from revelation. As a naturalist philosopher, Dewey gives all credits to natural causes. Accordingly, all events have to be explained in terms of natural laws without attributing divine weight to them. `Allāma, unlike Dewey, was recognized neither as a naturalist theologian nor as a naturalist philosopher. Iranian philosophy in general and `Allāma's in particular connects the individual with divine transcendentalism and spirituality on the one hand and with human life after earthly death on the other.¹ Looked at in this way,

¹ For more on the characteristics of Iranian philosophy see Henry Corbin, *Philosophie Iranienne et Philosophie Comparée* (Paris: Buchet / Chastel, 1985), trans. (into Persian) Seyyed Javad Tabataba'i-Nejad. [S. Javad Ṭabāṭaba'ī] *Falsafah-i Irānī va Falsafah-i Taṭbiqī*, pp. 131-138.

Dewey's and 'Allāma's doctrines may hardly be seen as compatible with each other on any point. However, as will become clear, this is not the whole story in this regard.

To me, an ideological perception or insight is derived from a major world-view or from a generalized precept and philosophy. The cases of Dewey and 'Allāma are no exception. At times, a particular idea is predictable if the general standards to which a thinker is bound are known and evident. Moreover, the stability or instability of the belief-system to which the thinker adheres leaves its impact upon its ideological products and makes them stable or unstable. In our case, we have seen that Dewey, in terms of consistency, may be seen as *earlier* Dewey and *later* Dewey, in that he switched from one position to another through his scholarly career. 'Allāma on the other hand stayed the same and was identified as a consistent thinker. This is not to suggest whether the quality of consistency or inconsistency should be either positively or negatively regarded. What I am saying is that the inconsistency which is seen in both the principles and implications of Dewey's thought suggests that the latter found alternatives to the belief-system to which he adhered before his academic career flourished. No such phenomenon can be detected in 'Allāma's case. In his belief-system, 'Allāma thought the same way both before and after his scholarly activities began.

Studying their dissimilar philosophies, I contend that it is probably credible to acknowledge that both Dewey's and 'Allāma's philosophies of education in general resulted from their basic philosophical methods and approaches. The following examples found in their writings seem to point to this fact. In short, the secularism, which is apparent in Dewey's philosophy, clearly was maintained in his philosophy of education.² Similarly, the same reconciliation of reason and divine revelation which is seen in 'Allāma's philosophy³ is perceptible in his philosophy of education.⁴ Therefore, the basic elements and implications of their respective philosophies are more or less conveyed in

² Cf. Jasper Jr. Hunt, "Dewey's Philosophical Method and Its Influence on His Philosophy of Education," *Journal of Experiential Education* 4, no. 1 (spring 1981): 29-34.

³ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*, with commentary and gloss by Miṣbah, p. 11, foot. 4, commentator's note.

⁴ 'Allāma's educational remarks are depicted in his volumes on *Islamic Teachings and Human Beings*. For further research see: Ṭabāṭabā'i's chapters on "Morals", "Duties toward Others" and "Justice" in *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 149-174, and his chapter on "al-Insān fī al-Dunyā," pp. 189-202.

their positions on education and educational themes. In other words, their philosophies mirror their educational approaches, disciplines, theories and doctrines.

To this extent, one would like to discover if there was any sort of commonality between the two in one way or another. The divergence between their two ways of thinking is of the same nature as that between naturalist and divine metaphysics or epistemologies. In short, there seems no point in attempting to seek for similarities between Dewey and 'Allāma in order to reconcile their different ways of thinking. In most respects, the scholars under study expressed a very exclusive kind of commitment to a specific framework of thought. Thus considered, it is not within the scope and responsibility of the present study to explain whether and how the two systems of thought can be reconciled. Instead the important differences between them must be recognized as a first step. The range of these differences varies—from their respective backgrounds of metaphysical and methodological assumptions to their specific understandings and interpretations of human nature, morals and values, arts and sciences, etc. This must be examined insofar as they correspond to their conceptualization of self-realization.

One might imagine that a comparative study such as the one that I have undertaken would lead to the formulation of two distinct conceptualizations of self-realization. Yet, while there are differences, there are also commonalities, which I discovered in the process of comparing the two. In particular, I elaborated on the parallelism found in the case of philosophical, psychological, educational and even metaphysical themes, which were employed and discussed by the two eminent philosophers. Here, I do not intend to repeat what I stated in the preceding chapters. What is intended instead is to remind my readers that the rationality and logic behind the current comparison has already been examined.

The Subject-Matter of Philosophy

One of the major disputes between Dewey and 'Allāma is to be found in their respective notions of philosophy. The difference between their definitions of philosophy in terms of its subject-matter is the difference between *becoming* and *being*. Dewey insisted on the doctrine of *becoming* and 'Allāma on that of *being* as the subject-matter of

philosophy. In Dewey's mind, reality is not to be found in *being*, but in *becoming*. In its practical sense, *becoming* lies at the heart of Dewey's pragmatism.

Becoming, as I understand, primarily belongs to morals and morality or to philosophy of ethics or education and not to philosophy in its general formulation. Philosophy must deal with more generalized and fixed standards and principles. I think there finds no subject more general and fixed than the issue of *being*. Philosophical standards are of a mathematical nature and identity. They are not subject to change and alteration. To argue in this regard, I maintain that there are philosophical principles as general standards whose truth and existence must be approved first in and by philosophy. First, it should be established in and through philosophy that for instance 'the presence of two precisely contradictory objects in the same place and at the same time is impossible.' One realizes that this same enduring philosophical standard is guaranteed in advance and it is true in every situation at all times.

The question in philosophy is always of *is* or *is not* or *can* or *cannot* and not of *how to become*. For instance, 'Is there or is there not a first mover or any creator for the universe? If there is one, is it material or immaterial? Is there or is there not a relationship between cause and its effect? Can or cannot two definitely antithetical objects or phenomena be united?' Such questions and the standards which result from them, are not subject to scientific experimentation. Also their *isness* or *impossibility* cannot be established through experimental discovery. It is therefore philosophy with its rational argumentation, induction and syllogism that for the most part takes the responsibility for certifying the *isness* or *impossibility* of the above standards. Otherwise, no other branch of knowledge is an appropriate place for this task. With this methodology and approach in mind, the line between the subject-matters of philosophy and ethics on the one hand and between philosophy and experimental and natural sciences on the other seems to be more distinct and evident. Looking at it in this way, although philosophy is not necessarily the forum for a discussion of *becoming*, it may promote it. Nor is philosophy an appropriate basis for scientific experiments, though it may contribute to their development just as the latter may contribute to the development of philosophy. I would never claim that Dewey was ignorant of such a logical distinction. What I am saying is that Dewey's definition of

philosophy does not lead to the above differentiation between different branches of knowledge.

Due to his profound emphasis on the role of experience and experimental naturalism, Dewey advocated the idea of *becoming* to be the central subject of philosophy. Therefore, Dewey's trend of thought is more an experimental rather than a philosophical pragmatism. 'Allāma, on the other hand, due to his focus on philosophical rationalism, determines *being* to be the central subject of philosophy. 'Allāma's trend of thought is more a philosophical theosophy that places more emphasis on the philosophical principles of argumentation.

A question which may be raised here pertains to their relatively unbalanced and profound focus on one element rather than another. This is indeed true of both parties, although not in the same way or on the same level. For instance, experience and experimental analysis receive more attention in Dewey's treatment. For him, experience and science are certain, whereas philosophical opinion and theory are not. To this extent, philosophical rationalism seems not to be of much importance as compared to experimentalism. Experience for Dewey is the key to many locked doors. It always speaks the first word and takes the first role in discovering any trend of thought. In his concepts of self-realization, morals, arts, etc., Dewey's definitions are interconnected with his conception of experience. Therefore, Dewey's thought is more experimental-oriented, whereas 'Allāma's thought is more philosophical-oriented. Dewey did not consider any philosophical opinion reliable which is not subject to experiment. Accordingly, certainty lies behind experience and with experimental sciences. Dewey's attempt was made to reconstruct philosophy and free it of its general abstractness. His conception of experimental certainty, however, contradicts his notion of relativism. Certainty and fixed principles are interdependent. This is while Dewey objected to any sort of absolute ideology and fixed formula.

'Allāma, on the contrary, gives preference to philosophical rationalism as compared to experience. Certainty lies behind philosophy and not with experience and science. According to him, philosophical standards like mathematical principles are certain; the certainty of experience and experimental sciences is not always guaranteed.⁵

⁵ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-i Falsafah*, v. 1, pp. 143-46.

While philosophical principles are certain and remain unchanged, experience is ever-changing and usually uncertain. `Allāma's account of the relationship between the philosophical and experimental sciences is not so clear. He emphasized two points: one is the matter of certainty and the other the matter of existence. As regards the first point, `Allāma indicated that philosophy is certain, while experience is not. Concerning the issue of existence, he insisted that the existence of science should be based upon the acceptance of fixed philosophical standards. Experience is of importance in contributing to the development of certainty, though by itself it does not definitely end in certainty.

One would probably think of reconciling both experience and philosophy in one way or another. Yet, the first question that comes into mind is: How could the two be reconciled when each one, having its own origin, resource and methodology, is a specific means to a specific outcome. For the sake of a better understanding of the philosophy-science relationship, one may think that although the existence and certainty of science are independent of philosophy, science in turn contributes to a clearer approach to the rediscovery and reexamination of philosophical principles and standards. In one sense, philosophical standards may be applicable to the cases which are produced by science. For instance, in accordance with the philosophical principle of cause and effect, nothing can come into existence except through and by means of its own appropriate cause. Philosophy does not determine what cause in particular produces what effect. Philosophy, nevertheless, gives us a sense of the general rules that govern, for example, the principle of cause and effect. In fact, it is the task of science to discover what individual and experimental cause results in what effect of the same kind.

In fact, there is experienced wisdom or knowledge and natural wisdom or knowledge; each complements the other in establishing certainty. It is narrated from Imam `Ali that he said: "Knowledge is of two kinds—that which is absorbed and that which is just heard [experienced]. The one that is heard does not give benefit unless it is absorbed."⁶ In its dictionary definition, "absorb" is a synonym for imbibe or assimilate. They "can all mean to take (something) in so as to become imbued with it or to make it a

⁶ See Imam `Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (601-661), *Nahjul Balaaghah* [*Nahj al-Balāghah*], [collected and compiled by Sayyid Raḍi (d. 1029)], trans. Sayed Ali Reza (Washington DC. Maryland: Ahlul-Bayt Assembly of America, 1996), selections from the Imam's short sayings, no. 348, pp. 308-309.

part of one's being."⁷ The absorbed knowledge consists in those rational principles that are self-evident truths. We live with these elementary and fixed formulas and act in accordance with them as philosophical standards of conduct; even though we usually do not pronounce them in our routine conversations and acts. At any rate, experienced knowledge, in order for it to benefit and to become certain, must rely in a real sense on the first category of knowledge.

Study of Human Nature and Self-Realization

The development of human personality, its perfection and its actualization is the cornerstone and chief substance of self-realization. As a fundamental notion in self-realization, it is taken for granted that human beings are properly equipped with the means and capacity to journey onwards to the world of the self, and to actualize the ultimate end of their lives. Otherwise, the discussion of self-realization would be useless and inappropriate. When seen in this manner, the magnitude of our knowledge of human nature would be of great importance in shaping our understanding and conceptualization of self-realization. The more knowledge we obtain, the more accurate the perception that we gain and develop. In this regard, every ramification of thought might affect our conception. Therefore, no evaluation of either Dewey's or Allāma's doctrines of self-realization can be attempted unless one reads carefully the assumptions or presuppositions they raised, the premises they established and the principles or disciplines they created or advocated through their remarks on human nature. And this is what is intended by the present investigation. In so doing, we must first comprehend how our scholars approached the study of human nature and how they authenticated a human being's rank in their cosmological perspectives.

Both Dewey and Allāma devoted considerable attention to the notion of human nature. Dewey studied human nature to a great extent as the groundwork of social psychology or, as he himself put it, as an introduction to the latter. This does not imply that Dewey neglected the individual aspect of human nature. His concentration on social psychology in fact mirrors the significant role of the individual self in the formulation and actualization of the social self. This aspect of human life is of more importance in

⁷ Gove (ed.), *Merriam Webster's Dictionary Synonyms*, p. 8, s.v. **absorb**.

Dewey's mind because all that he intended to do was to help us realize how to communicate with nature, with the real world around us. This reality, in one of its aspects, includes human social life. At any rate, human nature is studied within the framework of its natural life and is untouched by any presupposed agent beyond the natural scene. This approach may be a manifestation of the Darwinism and neo-Hegelianism towards which Dewey's mind inclined. During his high-school studies, Dewey was interested in all the fresh controversies on evolution that were current in the academic and religious circles of his age. His sympathy for the theory of evolution led to the acceptance of human nature as being of mundane and earthly origin. It will ultimately return, as Dewey's interpretation suggests, to the world, since everything goes back, willingly or unwillingly, to its point of origin.

`Allāma, on the other hand, studied human nature in a three-dimensional approach. He discussed human nature in terms of its origin and creation, its mundane life span, and its extra-mundane departure. `Allāma's writings on human nature thus conceive of three stages of human life. We have seen how `Allāma studies human nature in terms of its situation before its coming to the natural world, when it lives in the natural world and after its departure from the natural world. With this in mind, he intended to identify two distinct realms of life, as well as to define the origin and the destination of human life.

The corporeal world [*Al-dunyā*] is one of these three stages. The term *al-dunyā* as contrasted with *al-ākhirah* is meant to refer in general to nature, to the natural or material and mundane world, just as the latter is meant to refer to the world after. *Al-dunyā* is originally from *dunww*, meaning what is nearer, or from *dani'*, meaning what is lower and lesser in terms of its worth as compared to the worth of the coming world.⁸ At any rate, it is called *al-dunyā* in an effort to describe either the nearer and visible or the lesser and lower world, which is the world of matter and corporeality, just as the hereafter is called *al-ākhirah* to indicate that it is either the further or the greater world that comes after, where human beings will reap the consequences of what they did in the material

⁸ S. `Alī Akbar Qurashī, *Qāmus-i Qur'ān* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyah, 1982), vs. 1-2, p. 362, s.v. *Dunyā*.

world.⁹ The latter universe is the world above nature and natural domain. In one of his interpretations of a Quranic verse,¹⁰ 'Allāma maintains that the lowest of the low is nowhere other than *al-dunyā* where all human beings enter whether they be believers or unbelievers. God then will raise the believers up to a better world, to a greater life because of their faith and good deeds.¹¹

In Islamic literature, there may be found a great number of sayings qualifying both *al-dunyā* and *al-ākhirah* and describing their interrelationship. Accordingly, *al-dunyā* has two different faces; one manifesting the ugliness and the other the beauty of the worldly life; one leading to the worse and the other to the better stage of human existence. One can be deeply engaged in the world of matter to the extent that one thinks of nothing but material gain for one's own sake. This for the most part leads people to seek their own personal profit and become, in the process, lost, to the extent that they ignore their fellow human beings. This finally creates corruption, vandalism and destruction in human society and increases poverty, injustice and oppression among people. Due to this aspect of the worldly life, it is said that *al-dunyā* is considered the origin and the fount of all sorts of corruption and immorality.¹² *Al-dunyā* is also called a "*la'ib*" and a "*lahw*."¹³ As may be understood from 'Allāma's definition, a *la'ib* is an idle game or an action that has no true end. *Lahw*, on the other hand, is an amusement in which the individual engages for his or her own sake, forgetting all others.¹⁴ Seen from this specific angle, *al-dunyā* can draw people into the pursuit of material gain and pleasure and divert them from transcendental pleasure, from attaining to eternal profit and happiness.¹⁵ This, however, is not the complete image of worldly life. It can also help one achieve happiness in both the present and the coming stages of life and attain the pleasure of God. In this sense, *al-dunyā* is viewed as a bridge to the life in the hereafter, to *al-ākhirah*. Moreover, it is in this world where God, as shown in the Qur'an, provides faithful believers with a goodly

⁹ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 57, p. 355, no. 1.

¹⁰ *The Qur'an*, 95: 4-6. "Certainly We created human beings in the best make. Then We render them the lowest of the low. Except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward never to be cut off."

¹¹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān fī al-Dunyā," pp. 198-99.

¹² Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 73, p. 59, no. 29.

¹³ *The Qur'an*, 47: 36.

¹⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'i, "al-Insān fī al-Dunyā," p. 198.

¹⁵ Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 1, p. 134, no. 30.

provision by means of which they may seek their happiness in both this world and the world after.¹⁶

In one tradition narrated from Imam `Ali, religion and worldly life (*dīn* and *dunyā*) are tied together in having common elements for their mainstay. The Imam says:

... the mainstay of religion and the world is four persons: The scholar who acts on his knowledge; the ignorant one who does not feel ashamed of learning; the generous one who is not niggardly in his favours; and the destitute one who does not sell his next life for worldly benefit. Consequently, when the scholar wastes his knowledge, the ignorant feels shame in learning; and when the generous is niggardly with his favours, the destitute sells his next life for worldly benefits.¹⁷

Generally speaking, the above passage suggests the importance of knowing how and for which purpose and in which sense one may take benefit from the worldly life.

The first momentous step for `Allāma was to identify and introduce the existing connection with the celestial universe into his discussion of human nature. This element thoroughly overshadows `Allāma's approach. We have seen that through the entire process of its life, from the starting point of its existence to the time of its departure, human nature keeps in touch with the divine agent, with God the Creator. Again, human nature must inevitably depart towards the source of its own origin. This same origin, according to `Allāma's interpretation must be no one other than Allah.

Dewey's and `Allāma's doctrines of self-realization and human nature neither propose nor encourage human individuals to descend into the depths of their own selves, all the while relying on their own inner peace, disregarding the facts that exist or happen around them or isolating and disconnecting themselves from the real world. According to the thesis advanced by the present comparative dissertation, in order to realize the self, one must study the self in all its orientations and dimensions. When studied in this way, the process of self-realization as a relational and mediatory factor connects the individual to his or her internal world on the one hand and to the external universe on the other. It is both *introversion* and *extroversion*, traveling to one from another, from internal to external, and vice versa.

¹⁶ *The Qur'ān*, 11: 3. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, v. 10, p. 142 (Beirut).

¹⁷ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 313, selections from the Imam's short sayings, no. 382, with some changes and edition.

The figures under the study are not one single-minded advocates of a merely personal and individualistic aspect of spirituality. What they prescribe is a relatively comprehensive discovery of the self and human nature, including both social and individual, internal and external aspects of the self. Their concepts of self-realization never recommend *isolationism*; rather they call for a kind of *isotropy* of all dimensions of human life. This issue has been agreed upon by both thinkers, who are realist and yet come from both naturalist and transcendentalist standpoints. The most important difference between the two appears when they discuss the real world beyond the self and human nature. For the former, there is no reality beyond that of nature and the natural cosmos, while for the latter the real world is extended to the celestial world.

At any rate, each of the two has assuredly made a positive contribution to our understanding of the concept of self-realization, as well as of our existence, orientation, and status in the universe. These are the considerable aspects found and responded to in virtually any process of self-realization. How one reflects on the following elementary questions constructs one's notion of self-realization. In fact, self-realization to a large extent is one's reflection on the following questions: "*Where did I come from? – Where am I at the moment? – Where will be my return?*"

All schools of thought that partake in the study of human nature, whether they be labeled as retaining a naturalist or a religious groundwork, intend in one way or another to reflect on the above questions. Here is the central meeting place of the challenge between various schools of thought.

Spiritual Element in Human Nature

One can easily find two distinct doctrines of spirituality when comparing the two thinkers. Accordingly, the theory of *spirituality without leaning on the divine agent* was advanced by Dewey, whereas the theory of *spirituality in unavoidable connection with the divine agent* was advocated by 'Allāma. This distinction can be rooted in their distinct theories of the spirit and its existence in human beings. While the ideology of so-called Omnipotent Being was totally rejected by Dewey, it was certainly adopted by 'Allāma. The human spirit or soul to the latter is from God, created by Him and bestowed upon

human beings. This in turn for 'Allāma indicates the inevitable connection of human spirituality with God as the origin of human nature.

Let us put both doctrines aside for a moment and examine whether or not spirituality can be seen by nature without having to link it to the divine transcendentalism. "The use of the word spirituality" John M. Hull mentions "reveals not only vagueness but contrast and conflict."¹⁸ Spirituality, briefly considered, is the state or manner of being spiritual. Speaking on the level of dictionary definition, "spiritual" derives from the term "spirit." To have a better understanding of the concept of spirituality, it seems necessary to discover the notion of spirit. Spirit as the vital animating principle in living beings, is the incorporeal part of their existence. This is because there one finds none of the qualities and specifications of corporeal and material objects that debase the spirit. Seen in this way, it is in fact a synonym to the incorporeal part of a human being, to the soul.¹⁹ The soul or spirit is credited with the faculties of thought, emotions, action and so on, and is viewed as the immaterial part of human beings. The soul and body are intertwined to the extent that the dualism of body and soul is not seen in its real sense. Nevertheless, these two component elements are of two origins and different essences. The body is without a doubt material and forms the corporeal aspect of human existence. We have to admit one of the two other alternatives. Either to believe that the soul evolves out of nothingness and belongs nowhere, which is essentially a false idea, or to advocate that it originates in or comes from the divine realm. Looked at in this way, spirituality, which has its origin in the spirit, and divine transcendentalism are interdependent and correlative. In its dictionary definition, spirituality is synonymous with "immaterial" and "incorporeal" and an antonym to physical. It may be contrasted with words such as "material, corporeal, phenomenal, sensible, objective: bodily, corporal, somatic." In another sense, spiritual is defined by the terms "holy, sacred, divine, religious, blessed" whose analogous words are "supernatural, supranatural: celestial, heavenly" and whose antonyms are "physical, carnal, material, temporal."²⁰ Therefore, to establish the theory of spirituality without linking it to the divine means that it must be seen as of a naturalist background and must

¹⁸ J. Mark Halstead and Monica J. Taylor, ed., *Values in Education and Education in Values* (London, Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1996), p. 33.

¹⁹ See Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, p. 764, s.v. **spirit**.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 765, s.v. **spiritual**.

have everything to do with naturalism. In this way, to maintain the idea of naturalist spirituality seems equivalent to sustaining a paradox like naturalistic divine!

What naturalism proposes is in fact a naturalistic image of the act and process of meditating. Meditation is a devotional exercise that leads to a relatively pronounced transcendental contemplation which is involved in the process of self-journey and consequently to self-realization or, as Maslow put it, to self-actualization. Spirituality, according to a Deweyan framework of thought, seems not to be an experience beyond its transcendental meditation. It is a humanist adherence that overshadows Dewey's thesis of self-realization. Dewey's humanism shows itself in all starting points, directions, orientations, consummatory experiences, as well as in the ultimate aims of self-realization. This is why I have come to believe that Dewey's approach conveyed the importance of humanist religion or religious humanism to the theory of spiritual phantasm. Humanist religion is considered by its adherents to be the best alternative to divine religion.²¹ The doctrine of meditation or of self-journey does not have necessarily all the specifications of the doctrine of spirituality. The former can be conducted and supervised both with and without the interference of the divine transcendentalism. In other words, meditation may have both a naturalist or transcendental form and orientation. The former type of meditation is seen in the teachings and practice of non-divine religions and creeds. What an atheist, for instance, practices as self-journey is of this kind and nature. In short, I propose the term meditation rather than spirituality to be used in the case of the above form of the self-journey and the peak experiences of the psyche.

Allāma's understanding of spirituality suggests that it is not mere meditation. It is rather this in addition to the individual's connection with the Divine. According to the Islamic creeds, any single ritual practice like praying, fasting, alms giving, pilgrimage must be performed and accomplished for the sake of the servant's nearness to and liking for God (*qurbatan ilallāh*). In other words, they should be performed in order to win God's favour and to please God. For those believers who practice in this way and with such an intention, pleasing God in its turn leads to pleasing the self. This is mostly because God's pleasure itself is seen as the ultimate aim of the self-journey and one's inclination towards the aim is in fact the inclination towards one's satisfaction, pleasure

²¹ See the present thesis, Appendix I.

and felicity. God's pleasure, accordingly, is at the heart of the doctrine of God worship and phantasm.²² As depicted in the Qur'an, the best favour among God's blessings is His "goodly pleasure, that is the grand achievement."²³

Moreover, there is a deeper point to be found in the heart of spirituality. Sacredness, divinity and divine aspiration are the constituent elements of the heart of spirituality. The question is whether or not these elements should be originally attributed to a divine agent; whether or not their wellspring is the Divine God. We see, for example, how fire for fire-worshippers, sun for sun-worshippers, idol for idol-worshippers and science for, let us say, science-worshippers are sacred. That is the reality of human life that has manifested itself through the life span and history of humankind. Nevertheless it is not the ultimate reality and true story of human life. People most often acknowledge something as an object of worship because they think that the same object must have a great role and effectiveness in the world. Even people may believe in a Divine God, yet they worship idols thinking that the latter make them nearer to God. The Qur'an has revealed this fact where it says: "Now, surely, sincere obedience is due to Allah (alone) and (as for) those who take guardians besides Him, (saying), We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to Allah"²⁴ The Qur'an uncovers what was in the minds of idol-worshippers in relation to God as the Creator. Accordingly, they used to serve idols, while at the same time believing that God was the only One Who created the heavens and the earth.²⁵

Thus considered, the true sacredness must be sought elsewhere beyond nature and above the corporeal world. Sometimes people misunderstand or misinterpret which holy being truly deserves to be the object of worship. Their heart's inclination is towards loving the sacred being; however, they may be misled and replace that which is true with that which is untrue. Seen in this way, spirituality in its real sense must be defined in relation to the wellspring of divinity and sacredness, i.e., God.

²² See the present thesis. Appendix II.

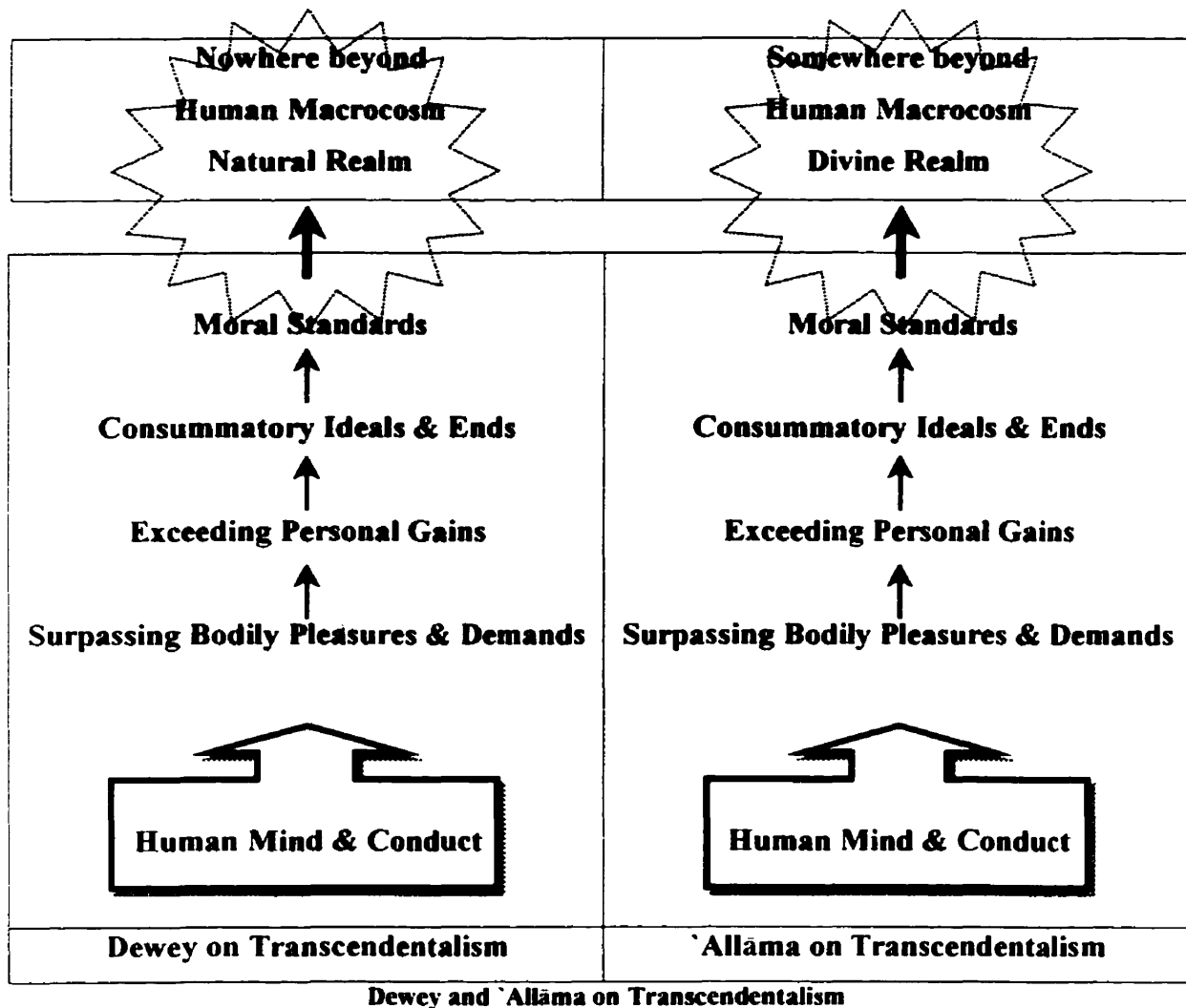
²³ *The Qur'an*, 9: 72.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 39: 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 39: 38 and 29: 61, 63.

Transcendental Element in Human Nature

Another point of contact for Dewey's and 'Allāma's doctrines is that of so-called transcendentalism. *To transcend*, meaning to surpass or exceed, is analogous to the verbs surmount and overcome. Its adjective *transcendent* can be compared to such terms as consummate, finished, accomplished and perfect. In one sense, the analogous words to transcendental are supernatural, supranatural, categorical and ultimate.²⁶



The above diagram indicates that both Dewey's and 'Allāma's theories have transcendental qualities, although with different contexts, levels, measures and spans. As a naturalist thinker, Dewey needs not to exceed the level of moral, ethical and social

²⁶ Gove, ed., *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, p. 829, s.v. **transcend**, **transcendent** & **transcendental**.

sphere, whereas Allāma usually surpasses this in a divine spiritual and mystical domain. Dewey's transcendentalism has no province further than natural and worldly life and existence. It exceeds bodily pleasures, needs, demands, desires and inclinations yet discontinues the self-journey before reaching a plane beyond the limitations of this world. He shows no interest in any other conceivable step beyond the natural space of the human mind. The ultimate ceiling of his transcendentalism is the restrictions of the human mind. Allāma's transcendentalism, on the other hand, moves onwards to the celestial realm and existence while connecting the self with its earthly and physical span of life. The earthly and natural life is a bridge or pathway to the spiritual life.

Transcendental yet Not Supernatural

For Dewey, to go further and posit a so-called supernatural agent is unnecessary even superstitious. He rejects the supernatural in both its encyclopedic meanings, as something unseen, above nature and beyond the natural span and as something irrational and superstitious. This ideology forms the cornerstone of Dewey's philosophy and metaphysics. In fact, all implications of Deweyan thought were shaped and colored by this fundamental element.²⁷

Dewey was not alone in this regard. Philosophers and psychologists like William James²⁸ before and Abraham Maslow²⁹ after Dewey studied human nature, its spirituality and self-journey from the same standpoint. On March 26, 1998, I attended a lecture on *The Spiritual Approach to Education* delivered by Dr. Peter Roche de Coppens, a professor of sociology, psychology and religious studies at East Stroudsburg University, Pennsylvania. In the question and answer period, I raised the above question asking his own opinion about what James, Dewey and Maslow advocated. Dr. Coppens, affirming their ideas, indicated that he was also of the same mind. Like the above pioneer thinkers, Coppens proposed the doctrine of spirituality without any link to supernaturalism.

²⁷ For further information on Dewey's position on the idea of the supernatural see Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 1-6.

²⁸ James expressed his naturalistic view of human spirituality through his work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

²⁹ Maslow expressed his humanistic view of human spirituality through his work *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*.

Coppens, however, did not elaborate whether he was of the same understanding as regards the term supernaturalism.

Dewey like other advocates of natural theology studied human nature as a phenomenon whose origin, abode and departure are from, within and towards the natural world, under the natural causes and laws, and without any interference from an agent beyond the natural and observed realm.

One might see how the above-mentioned philosophers reflected on so-called supernatural elements found in Christian faith. The naturalist thinkers have evaluated Christianity as a supernatural religion in terms of both its foundation and its significant figure Jesus Christ. Jesus has been seen as a supernatural character in terms of his work of redemption, his survival, his message, his power and his future manifestation and consummation.³⁰ Some of the critics of Christianity pointed out that the above supernatural facts function as “the evidences that Christianity is not a human religious system, that it is not the result of a religious evolutionary process.”³¹ Moreover, the doctrines of “incarnation” and “Son of God” or “God the Father” and “God the Son” or “God-Man” are some of the features of Christianity that seem to be supernatural in the sense that one might find no rationality behind them.³²

The above criticism, however, must not lead one to generalize the idea of supernaturalism thinking that Christianity is all but supernatural facts in the above sense of the term. There are other features such as the Christian account of the “Virgin-birth” or of the miraculous works of Jesus, which have been from the beginning held by the Church. They can be labelled as supernatural not in the sense that they are superstitious or product of “a superstitious tendency in the human race to claim for the founders of different religions.”³³ They may be considered supernatural in the sense that they are divine miracles and cannot be performed by ordinary people. The miraculous aspect of the life of God’s prophets has its own logic and rationality. Religious or theological rationalism, as J. E. Gurr mentions, can be applicable to the fact that the revealed

³⁰ See for example Arno Clemens Gaebele, D.D. *Christianity or Religion? A Study of the Origin and Growth of Religion and Supernaturalism of Christianity* (New York: Publication Office “Our Hope”. 1927) pp. 96-98.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³² *Ibid.* pp. 112-13.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 107-108.

religions “although based on divine revelation, expect reason to perform its natural work of inquiry, consideration, and formulation.”³⁴ In Islamic literature, the word *mu`jizah* (miracle), from its Arabic root *`ajz* (inability, impotence, weakness) suggests that ordinary people are unable to do a thing like that. The history of God’s Prophets such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad sheds light on the miraculous aspects of their lives. It shows that the Prophets were able to do something that has been beyond the ability of ordinary people. Their miracles can never be considered to be of magic or witchcraft kind since no one has been able to copy them. These Prophets could do miracles by God’s permission in order to render null and void the false behavior of evil-doers of their times or in order to convince their people, guide and summon them to the Truth. Therefore, the miracles performed by God’s prophets never injected any sort of irrationality into their career; even though, it seems difficult to describe or understand the nature of their miracles.

The problem with Dewey and other naturalist thinkers is in their generalization of the concept of supernaturalism. The problem with their understanding refers to the fact that they want to rationalize or overcome everything by means of their naturalistic approach. However, divine revelation has its own hermeneutic, rationalism and approach and cannot be explained by experimental or naturalistic rationalism.

The divergence recognized in Dewey’s and `Allama’s treatments of the above problem finds its logic behind the dissimilar ontological, epistemological, theological or philosophical principles they presupposed. As a Deweyan thinker, one does not have to put oneself in the predicament of in-depth thought in order to discover anything beyond natural life whatsoever. It is of greater importance to learn and understand how to deal with one’s self, society and nature, rather than to establish any sort of relation or contact with any presumed realm beyond the natural span. Seen from this standpoint, transcendental being or thought is not necessarily the sort that is intertwined with divine being. In other words, what is transcendental is simply that which transcends mere sensory, material and physical desires, pleasures and tendencies. Transcendentalism of this kind does not necessarily suggest the existence of something beyond human mind, or of something celestial. This is the nature of Dewey’s methodology and research.

³⁴ J. E. Gurr, “Rationalism,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 12 (1967): 92.

On the opposite side, if one takes the transcendental divine element³⁵ out of `Allāma's thought, there remains no spirit, heart or meaning for the latter's belief-system. We saw that the Divine Agent was present in every single case where `Allāma had anything to say. In all, `Allāma's mind and thought were seen to be altogether colored by the doctrine of the Supreme Being. He thought, spoke and wrote of nothing except that the same element was present with, before and after that object. His intention was not only to understand and teach others how to treat the self, and interact with society and nature, but also to make known how to understand, recognize and communicate with the Divine through the fulfillment and realization of the self in both personal and social aspects. It is worth attaining the realm of the Divine since the Divine in `Allāma's mind is the wellspring of all life, light, love, good and truth. God as the Highest Being has distributed His existence, His light, His love, His mercy and all His Divine Names and Attributes among the world of creation since He is the only One Creator of the worlds and He is the only One Lord of human beings and all creatures. A world-view and ideology of this kind is manifested in almost all chapters of the Qur'ān and in a huge number of Prophetic and Imāmi traditions and sayings. Besides the Qur'ān and traditions, Islamic philosophy starts and ends with considerable attention given to the question of divinity. `Allāma relies on this religious and cultural heritage of Islam.

So far we have seen how and to what extent Dewey and `Allāma approached the aforementioned "three-where" question. Their positions, however, suffer from a lack of a systematic and sound definition of human nature. It is not clear what they meant by the term *nature*; whether it is character, identity, personality, soul, spirit, self or whatever. They did not employ any of these alternatives to identify the term *nature*. In my view, nature could be all of these options collectively. Each of these alternatives individually mirrors one specific aspect of human nature.

³⁵ We have seen that the term "transcendental" in `Allāma's case was taken to relate to the celestial realm, to the immediate existence of the Divine. In other words, it was meant to be above the natural realm which is not capable of being experienced by ordinary means. In this way, divine transcendentalism has its own rationality and logic. To approve the existence of the transcendent of this kind, one must rely on metaphysical rationalism and argumentation and not on experimental and laboratory examination.

Moral Experience: Integration of Theory and Practice

Dewey's pragmatism led to a more practical and less abstract sense of philosophy. It is a matter of how to do or how not to do; for example how to act in order to create a proper interaction with nature. Regarding the issues of *theory* and *practice*, Dewey's pragmatism affirms that knowledge is not subordinated to action or practice while action on the other hand is involved in knowledge.³⁶ 'Allāma's division of theosophy or wisdom into theoretical and practical aspects on the other hand parallels Dewey's insistence on the togetherness of theory and practice. The above division, however, borrows its logic from the major philosophical idea of *being*. Accordingly, one first comes to believe that there is for example God, the Creator, then it is the time to think how one should deal with Him and His Divine commands and prohibitions. Or, for example, one first accepts that there will be a day of resurrection in an extra-mundane life, then one thinks how to behave in order to attain to felicity and ease in both one's mundane and extra-mundane lives.

Moreover, in their doctrines of morals and morality, both Dewey and 'Allāma placed more or less the same emphasis on the relation between theory and practice indicating that practice always emerges from theory. Theory and practice function as two wings of morality without which the latter is nonsense. In this regard, the structure of their thought-systems is the same but the contents and implications are not. Theory provides the guidelines for practice. Between theory and practice there should be a correlation; thus a theory must lead to an action appropriate to it.

Speaking on a more general level, I believe that any school of thought has two essential foundations; one corresponding to the content of thought, which is its world-view, and the other leading to the product of thought, which is its ideology. The former is a matter of *is* and *is not*, whereas the latter is a matter of *should* and *should not*. As the product of thought, ideology is tied to both theory and practice. Between these two elements there must be an intensive correlation and integrity; otherwise, it is nonsense or illogical to believe in an idea and act in a way that does not integrate with that idea. An example may help us explore this point. Consider a person who believes that lying is an evil practice that harms humanity but he or she still lies. In this case, the presupposed

³⁶ Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder," *The Later Works*, v. 14, p. 13; Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 150.

integrity between one's belief and one's action does not express itself in the area of practice either because of a weakness or defect in one's belief or because of one's inability to decide to act properly. Dewey's and 'Allāma's emphasis on this matter of integrity is considered a strong point in their philosophies of ethics. Their attempts contributed to the foundation and creation of less abstract philosophies.

Concerning moral acts, the immediate relationship between them and self-realization is evident in Dewey's and 'Allāma's works. As was mentioned earlier, Dewey proposed his doctrine of self-realization and formulated it directly as a moral ideal. 'Allāma, on the other hand, discussed moral acts in accordance with their philosophical foundations. He therefore placed more emphasis on a division of moral systems and ethical schools of thought. Another difference between Dewey's and 'Allāma's notions of moral acts appears in their respective views on different orientations for morals. Acting in accordance with social norms and standards and their fulfillment are the ultimate goals of Deweyan morality. Being a good servant of Allah and striving to achieve His pleasure is more a focus of 'Allāma's doctrine. Seen in this way, the fulfillment of personal or social goals of morality, as well as the attainment of any material or spiritual objective, should be to the extent of God's pleasure.

The Arts and Sciences: Means for Realizing the Self

Arts and sciences form another field that provides the groundwork for the process of self-realization. Dewey's remarks on the arts, experimental sciences and technology as the ends of self-realization is more spread out and well-organized as compared to 'Allāma's treatment. In Dewey's mind, "... Art becomes one with fullness of life." And yet, the end of art is more significant than art itself.³⁷ Rediscovering the nature and internal aspect of arts and sciences, Dewey attempted to identify the highest fulfillment which is expected of human beings. Knowledge in its generality may "include all phases of liberation and enrichment of human experience."³⁸ This same enrichment contributes to the fulfillment or realization of the self.

³⁷ Dewey, "Reviews: A History of Aesthetic," (by B. Bosanquet), in *The Early Works: 1893-94*, v. 4, p. 197.

³⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 165.

When it comes to `Allāma's attitude towards the arts, he has more to say of beauty and its divine origin than of the arts themselves. One's inclination towards art and beauty is to a great extent an expression of one's actualization of the social self. The motivation behind the expression or demonstration of one's aesthetic feelings is a way to engage in social communication with others. I add the point that human beings are provided with aesthetic instincts and feelings in order for them to establish a fine interaction with nature on the one hand, with the One Who is the originator of the fine arts and beauties on another, and with human society through the expression or exhibition of the arts and other forms of beauty on the third. Many people, however, do not produce art, in spite of the fact that they may possess deep aesthetic feelings. Perhaps it is the case that they don't know how to activate these feelings, or they don't receive the motivation needed to actualize their feelings and create art.

As regards `Allāma's position on knowledge and its relation to self-realization, the latter drew more attention to the importance of "mental existence" and "knowledge by presence." The most obvious sort of knowledge is knowledge by presence, according to which one's existence, character and specifications are never absent from one's mind or mentality. As far as one's self exists, the consciousness of *I* cannot leave one's awareness. This seems to be one of the most reliable ways and vehicles of self-realization since one is never ignorant of one's self.

Parallelism in the Basic Elements and Manifestations of Self-Realization

In the final chapter of the present study, I touched upon the basic elements and manifestations, as well as the fundamental remarks that Dewey and `Allama made on self-realization. One may conclude that for most part the structure and format feature an appropriate parallelism, though the contents are remarkably divergent. It is enough for the sake of a comparative study to find out at least an existing parallelism in the structure adopted by the two parties. This does not propose that the different contents are of less importance in an analytical comparison.

The Deweyan notion of self-realization finally leads to the fulfillment of one's transcendental ideal ends. The identity and nature of these ideal ends depend on the

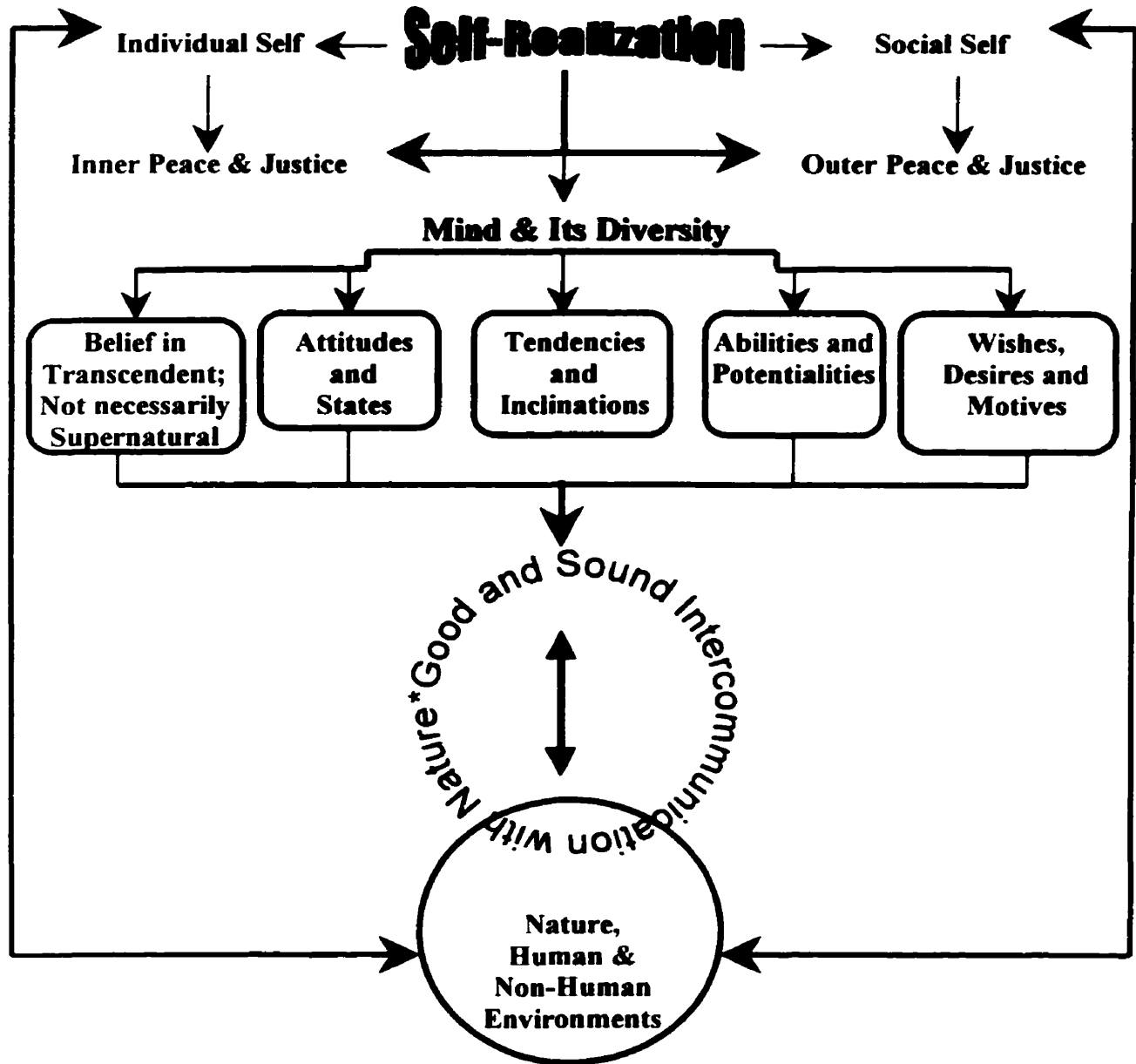
individual's attitudes and inclinations; therefore, they are relative and subjective. According to Dewey's relativism, there is no absolute ideal end whatsoever. His notion of the ideal end, which is an outcome of a personal experience, could be anything, even an image of a so-called subjective God. Therefore, it is as though the experience itself is subject to change and alteration since experience in general is an ever-changing phenomenon. Dewey never opposed those who identify their own ideals as God. Thus, he had no problem with using the term God in such terminology. One might call this ideal end God and one might call it otherwise. In other words, God for Dewey is nothing but the ideal end. This ideal end cannot be fulfilled before being realized.

In the above sense and especially, Dewey's treatment of the fulfillment of the ideal end (here God) in terms of its typical format can be considered parallel to 'Allāma's approach to the idea of *self-realization for God-realization*. This parallelism, however, shows itself in the structure and not in the content, essence or nature of the ideal end. This is because there is a wide gap between what Dewey intended in using this terminology and what 'Allāma proposed. The ideal end for Dewey must be discovered in the natural realm. The ultimate end for 'Allāma is of a transcendental and celestial nature which belong to the Absolute Truth.

Another area where both scholars may be seen as advocating a common ideology is that where *the interaction with nature* is concerned. As was mentioned in a number of places, communication or interaction with nature in general is considered a cornerstone of the Deweyan conception of self-realization. Despite the fundamental changes and evolutions that happened in Dewey's mind, his developed notion of self-realization endured the same and unchanged. Striving for sound communication with nature is a very fine point depicted in Dewey's language; however, it is not the only thing that one should look for. Turning to 'Allāma's perspective on intercommunication with nature, I can find no specific reflection on the issue articulated by him except that he speaks of the environment as "a loving nurse" wherein human beings' growth and development occur.³⁹ The intercommunication with nature is replaced with the intercommunication with the environment. This is for 'Allāma of the nature of nurse-child intercommunication. This suggests the importance of the process of so-called give-and-take sympathy and goodness

³⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, p. 126.

between the two parties. It implies that there must be no burdensome treatment between the two at all. Images of Dewey's and 'Allāma's remarks are manifested in the following diagrams. I illustrate my understanding of their respective doctrines in order to create concise yet intelligible images of their thought.



Self-Realization as Intercommunication of the Self and Nature
(According to Dewey's Interpretation)

The diagram, alluding to Dewey's thought, is to show the bipolar relationship between the self on the one hand and nature on the other. Nature embodies both human and non-human environments. In this case, self-journey, spirituality and faith in something transcendent can be categorized in a natural framework.

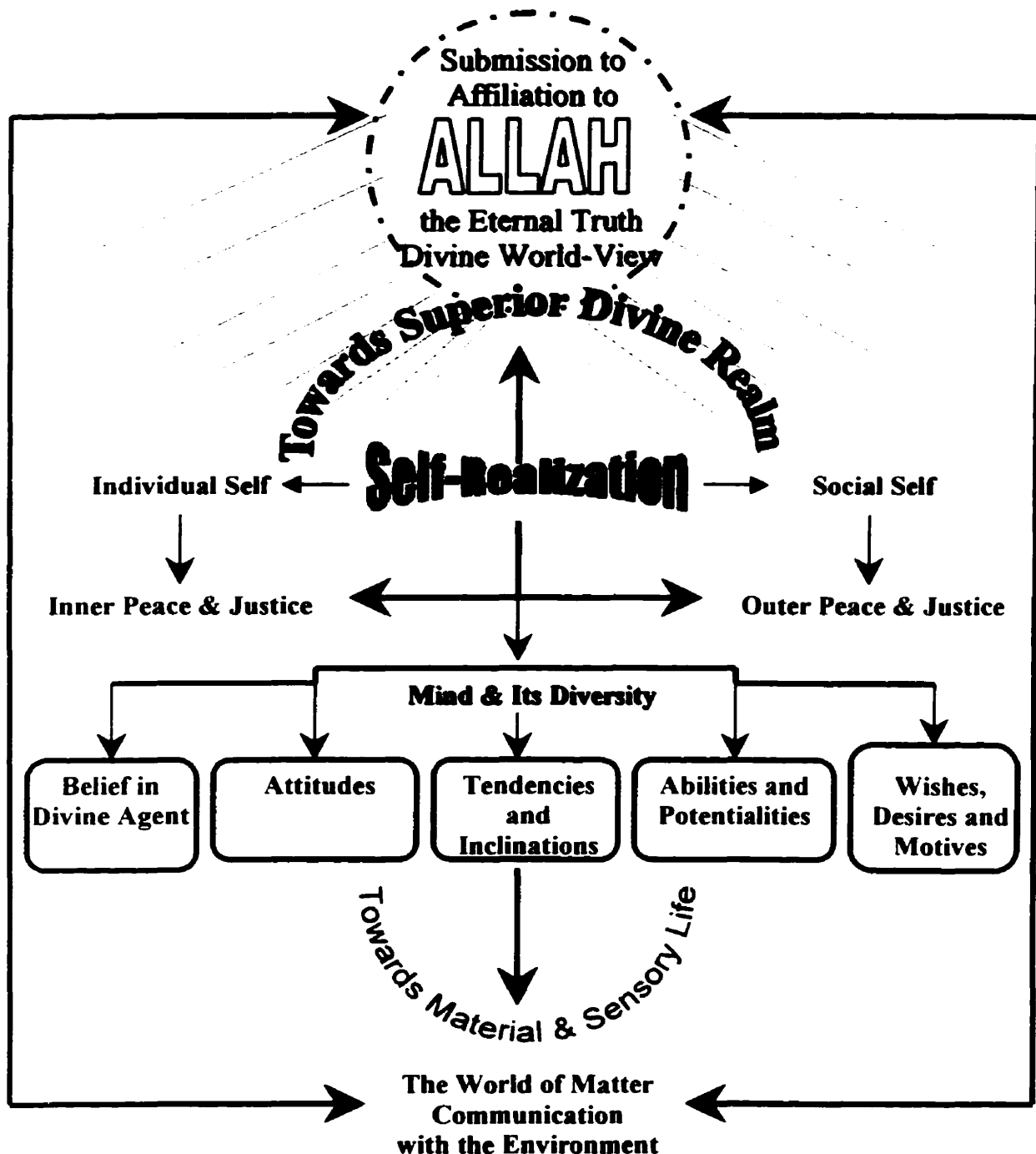
Based on the Dewey interpretation, the best and most successful type of self-realization is the one that helps in creating a good and sound communication between the self and its environment, between the individual and other existences surrounding the individual, either they be human beings or non-human existents. In this framework, the process of self-realization cannot be fulfilled unless one acquires a relatively sufficient and clear concept and knowledge of the self. The self, in its turn, must be viewed in both its internal and external, as well as both its individual and social aspects and orientations. Because of its significant role in the process of self-realization, the human mind has to be studied in its diversity as it corresponds and contributes to the fulfillment of above-mentioned processes. The self, accordingly, connects itself with the real world and establishes a continuous and cumulative interaction with nature. This process in turn produces or develops experience.⁴⁰

Another stage in the process of self-realization presents an image of the material and spiritual-oriented self as advocated by 'Allāma and those who hold to the idea of submission to the Divine God as being the finest or the peak experience in their belief-system. Accordingly, a reconciliation of both poles constitutes the favored form of this divine world-view. In one sense all aspects of the self, whether this be the individual or social self, or the spiritual or material self, are overshadowed by the divine domain and interrelated with one another.

Here faith in God and submission to His Supreme Divinity play a vital role as directors, moderators and guides for human life. As is shown in the following diagram, self-realization functions as a bridge between the individual and human or non-human environment on the one hand and between the individual and the superior realm on the other. This chain of intercommunication includes three links or rings and constitutes three real areas, mainly the divine pole (Superior), the natural pole (inferior), and the world of

⁴⁰ See Dewey, "Art as Experience," p. 224.

the self in between. Accordingly, the Superior and inferior worlds are never disconnected from one another since the Superior is the Creator of the inferior and its first cause.



The Material-Spiritual Intercommunication in the Process of Self-Realization

(According to 'Allāma's Interpretation)

`Allāma did not specifically speak of self-realization as a way to realize how to interact with nature, as was the case in Dewey's articulations. Nevertheless, what he said implies more or less that a sound interaction of the self with nature is not foreign to the conceptualization of self-realization. At least his position is not opposed to the latter. Hence, the two appear to share another idea in common, with the difference that nature to `Allāma is God's creation and an immense sign of His might and existence. Therefore, sound intercommunication with nature can be a way towards sound intercommunication with the Creator of nature. Where Dewey and `Allāma diverge is over the magnitude of nature. Dewey goes deeply into the above ideology, even to the extent of denying any communication with some element beyond nature.

In fact, as a divine theology maintains, the inferior world is not but a manifestation and sign of the Superior Agent, Who is seen as the Creator of all beings. This Superior God is at the same time near to His servants. As is depicted in the Qur'an, Allah says: "And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when s/he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way."⁴¹ Two other verses of the Qur'an introduce Allah as a "Hearing, Nigh"⁴² or "Nigh, Answering"⁴³ Lord. Imam `Ali says: Allah "is with everything but not in physical nearness. He is different from everything but not in physical separation."⁴⁴

In Islamic teachings, human beings are created to be at the service of Allah and for His own sake.⁴⁵ This is a value which is bestowed upon human beings alone among all of creation. Accordingly, human possibilities and potentialities for acting or being are not only meant to help one achieve material prosperity, but also to direct and elevate the individual to a greater end and higher position by means of which s/he will be able to actualize her/his communication with God. In such a way our life surpasses its personal and private status and reaches a point at which communication is facilitated with fellow

⁴¹ *The Qur'an*, 2: 186.

⁴² *Ibid.* 34: 50, "surely He is Hearing, Nigh."

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11: 61, "surely my Lord is Nigh, Answering."

⁴⁴ *Nahj al-Balaghah*, trans. S. Ali Reza, Sermon I, p. 1.

⁴⁵ According to a tradition, "There is no clearer sign in the earth and in the heavens of the elegance of the Beloved than the heart of a true believer (*mu'min*). It is maintained that a true believer's heart is made God's habitation and "the abodes of Divine Honour." See Khumeyni, *Forty Hadith*, part one, pp. 41-42.

human beings on the one hand and with God, Whose creatures we are, on the other.⁴⁶ In this realm, it is advocated that the ways towards God are numerous in terms of the number of human individuals themselves, i.e., each individual soul may discover its own way to establish its own relation to God.⁴⁷

In special cases, such as when one's life is in jeopardy, one often experiences an inclination to a higher and holy authority and feels that he or she is in serious need of being supported and rescued by that authority. This situation compels the one in danger, even though s/he may be an atheist, to enunciate the name of God in seeking His help. Let me relate here a story told me by a friend. Ibrahim, a Canadian citizen explained that he visited a friend who was under treatment for prostate cancer. The following is a short excerpt from the conversation between these two friends:

Ibrahim: Tell me, what did you say when you were told that you had cancer?

Patient: I said: " Oh! God."

Ibrahim: But, you do not believe in God; you are a communist.

Patient: Well, it could be a habit.

Ibrahim: But, you never used to make such a statement, since you've never believed in God.

Patient: Then, I really don't know why I called upon God!

Acknowledging God by an Atheist

The Qur'ān, expressing the same concept in a similar context,⁴⁸ indicates the point that faith in God is something intertwined with human nature and ever present to the human mind.⁴⁹

... When people are in the ship, sailing on in a pleasant breeze and rejoicing at it, suddenly a violent wind overtakes them and the billows surge in on them from all sides, and they become certain that they are encompassed about, they pray to Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience: 'If You do deliver us from this, we will most certainly be of the grateful ones.' But when He delivers them, lo! they are unjustly rebellious in the earth. ...⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Islamic Teachings*, p. 152.

⁴⁷ Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 67, p. 137.

⁴⁸ In three verses the Qur'ān gives an example of riding in the ship in order to show people's attention to God when they are in danger. The spirit of the example is applicable to similar contexts, for instance when people ride in the airplane, etc.

⁴⁹ *The Qur'ān*, 10: 22; 29: 65 & 31: 32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10: 22-23.

The foregoing understanding of God-realization does not make sense for those naturalistic theologies and schools which are invented or fabricated by a human person or by a group of thinkers. To them, the ultimate goal of self-realization and its spirituality would be restricted to something worldly and natural, since there is accordingly no actual spirituality beyond the natural and visible world.⁵¹ The above, on the other hand, makes sense for those who believe in the existence of God.⁵²

Dewey and `Allāma may be also studied in such a way that they may come together through a parallel examination of the self in its four cardinal orientations. As is shown in a third diagram, an overall view of Dewey's and `Allāma's words indicates that they studied the self in its relationship with itself, with nature (including both human and non-human beings), and with the transcendental realm. This so-called transcendental rather for Dewey is of the material world but for `Allāma it is essentially from the celestial domain.

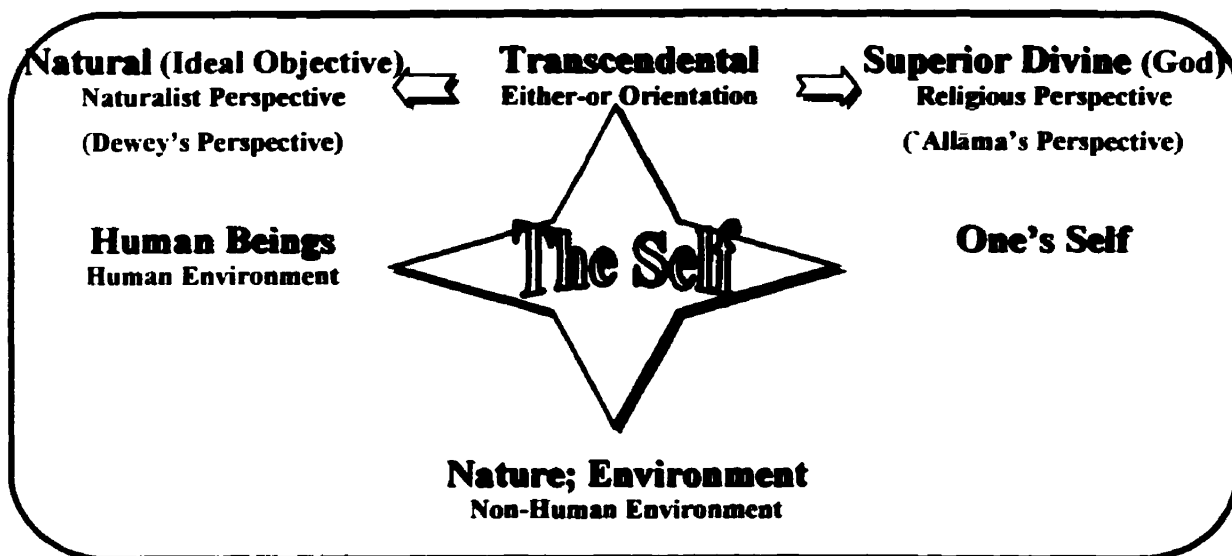
To some extent, the following diagram demonstrates how the above process works. This process, in its own turn, is deeply rooted in the unavoidable relations between the self on the one hand and four other elements on the other. Indeed, the self must be studied in terms of its relationship to: *a*) one's personality and identity; *b*) one's fellow human beings; *c*) nature; *d*) something/someone transcendental. The latter can be either something/someone natural (an ideal objective) or beyond nature (Superior/God).

One can see that both Dewey and `Allāma agree upon the point that the human person, as a rational being who has been equipped with wisdom and free-will, possesses the appropriate instruments for education. An individual's ability to choose freely whether to perform good or evil deeds arises from his freely exercised capacity of discernment. Unlike the life of animals, human life is not based just on instinctive character; rather, it is a composite of rational and instinctive traits. Instinctive forces are considered to be the fundamental elements that render an animal's life that of an animal, whereas in the case of human beings it is their intellect and rational power that functions as the basic element in their human life. An instinctive life goes on pretty much as it began, since its

⁵¹ You may see for instance Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, pp. 7-11, 14-24.

⁵² Cf. Jacob Pandian, *Culture and Religion and the Sacred Self: A Critical Introduction to the Anthropological Study of Religion* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1991), p. 2.

requirements are simple. Animals in general constantly struggle to fulfill their physical demands and to meet their bodily needs. The soul of an animal contains two aspects, i.e., the vegetative and the animalistic. In this cycle there is no trace of rational soul, as there is in the cycle of human life.



The Self in Its Four Cardinal Orientations

According to Islamic thought a human being is always confronted by two paths: one leading towards a better and the other to a worse future; one is true and the other false. By virtue of one's good nature, rationality, and freedom of choice, it is left to the individual to decide which of the two to follow. Sometimes a human individual may improve to the extent that s/he might achieve human perfection, but often s/he falls into leading an earthly life, which may be regarded as living an animalistic existence. In either case, it is the individual person who bears the responsibility for his/her own destiny and his/her good or bad future.

Free-will or freedom of choice in human beings is advocated by both Dewey and Allama, but from different perspectives. In Dewey's mind, there is no Divine Will that plays a role in relation to our actions. Therefore, human beings are both free and independent of any superior agent. To the contrary, according to Allama's doctrine of free-will, a human being is free to act as s/he chooses, but not independently of God's

Will. For God, through our free-will, has willed our actions. God created human nature and willed it to be basically capable of any particular conduct, positive or negative.⁵³

As I understand Dewey's reflection on and objection to Christian theology of original sin, a human being is not born with a sinful or corrupted nature. Dewey did not, however, articulate whether human nature is on the right path. At least he seems to have had no opinion on this point. It may be understood that the right path, according to Dewey's pragmatism and relativism, must be understood from a practical, relative or subjective perspective. To this extent, one would not think of a universal notion of a right or a wrong path. One can see how this pragmatism extends even into the meaning of truth. Influenced by the progressive scientific evolution, Dewey wrote: "in the natural sciences there is a tendency to identify truth in any particular case with a verification. The verification of a theory, or of a concept, is carried on by the observation of particular facts."⁵⁴ Dewey, however, was trying to combine his conception of such an empirical truth with his theory of pragmatism. According to his pragmatic generalization "all knowledge is prospective in its results, except in the case where notions and theories after having been first prospective in their application, have already been tried out and verified." Dewey goes further indicating that "even such verifications or truths could not be absolute."⁵⁵ Dewey's pragmatism may be seen as a modified form of Peirce's pragmatism. Charles S. Peirce was Dewey's master in logic. From the standpoint of Peirce, philosophy deals with fixed formulas. As Dewey himself put it, according to Peirce's philosophy, "matter" and "God" must have fixed concepts "before we can even attempt to reach an understanding concerning the value of our belief in these concepts."⁵⁶ This is while Dewey denies any form of absolutism or fixed concept.

In `Allama's absolutism, there must be a universally right and true path which is distinguished from a universally bad and false path. Truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*Bāṭil*) are accepted by the Qur'ān as two universally recognized characteristics of two precisely opposite ways of life. The following verses of the Qur'ān help us understand this point. Their meaning may be categorized in the following terms:

⁵³ For details see Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 133-135.

⁵⁴ Dewey, *The Later Works 1925-1953*, v. 2, p. 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

1. There is *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil* in a real sense.
2. *Ḥaqq* is from God.
3. God's words are *ḥaqq*.
4. God guides one to the *ḥaqq*.
5. There is an ongoing struggle between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*.
6. The final victory is for the *ḥaqq*. The truth is like water but falsehood is like scum and foam.
7. *Ḥaqq* tarries on the earth but *bāṭil* passes away.⁵⁷

Here are some of these verses:

And do not mix up the truth with the falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know (it).⁵⁸ The truth is from your Lord, therefore, you should not be of the doubters.⁵⁹ He (Allah) relates the truth ⁶⁰ And He is Who has created the heavens and the earth with truth; and when He says: Be, it is. His word is the truth. ⁶¹ That He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, though the guilty disliked.⁶² And say: The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished: surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing).⁶³

With the above in mind, I would say that every human being is born with a good, pure and sound nature and has been guided to follow the truth. This implies that irrespective of any external agent such as racial, tribal and ethnic affiliations, human nature is substantially formed so as to follow the right path and equipped with the potentiality to pursue truth and avoid falsehood.

Generally speaking, in a religious sense the philosophy of human creation includes the human being's realization of her/his self and of the Creator. Accordingly, the Creator fashioned humans according to the very best design, creating them from a male and female couple and then splitting them into tribes and nations so that they may be distinct from each other. In the eyes of the Creator, however, no single nation or race has superiority over another. "The only criterion of superiority and respectability is the

⁵⁷ For the above notions and implications see *The Qur'ān*, 2: 26, 42, 147; 3: 60, 71; 6: 57, 62; 7: 118; 8: 8; 10: 32, 35; 13: 14, 17; 18: 26; 28: 53; 31: 30; 42: 24.

⁵⁸ *The Qur'ān*, 2: 42.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 147 & 3: 70.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6: 57.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 6: 73-74.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 8: 8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17: 81.

element of piety.”⁶⁴ A successful moral education will help an individual to attain this human objective.

In the process of self-realization, the human soul must exceed its animalistic and vegetative faculties. It must surpass these two elements and encompass the rational faculty as well. It is the result or fruit of good or evil deeds, which determines the latter. This does not mean that the human soul is restricted to just these three dimensions; indeed, in the cycle of life it has the capability either of ascending to an angelic status or of descending to a satanic one. These two opposite types of self-journey manifest themselves in the real sense of human life. One would look at the reforms or constructions introduced by good-doers on the one hand and at the corruptions and vitiations created by evildoers on the other. Since everything has been created for the sake of humans' welfare and happiness, they themselves should have been created for a superior goal. As depicted in Islamic traditions, God's servants are created to discover their Creator, worship Him, and express their thanks and appreciation to Him Who gave them life, light, insight – in short everything- and guided them to the right path.⁶⁵ Or as 'Allāma put it, human beings are expected to realize and “rely upon a permanent Reality through which they gain and by means of which they enter into existence.”⁶⁶ This Reality which is immutable and imperishable is God. A true understanding of human soul contributes to the discovery of the potential sacredness of human nature and its dependence to the Necessary Being, God.

The above explanations are not foreign to 'Allāma's mind since they are basically found more or less in Islamic resources. This is while from Dewey's point of view, the above interpretation of sacredness and independence do not make sense though he never objects to the possibility and importance of spiritual life. Dewey insists that human beings are able to achieve the richest and fullest experiences possible for them, a fact that differentiates human life from that of the beast and elevates the human individual “into the so-called ideal and spiritual realm.”⁶⁷ The development of the human personality can be achieved in accordance with its capacities and energies and with respect to the

⁶⁴ The *Qur'ān*, 49: 13.

⁶⁵ Cf. Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 11, p. 121, no. 55; v. 15, p. 33, no. 48; v. 39, p. 48, no. 15.

⁶⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 123-24.

⁶⁷ Roth, *Dewey and Self-Realization*, p. 6.

fulfillment of certain ideals. The question is: What are these ideals and how can they be fulfilled?

The ultimate aim and extension of self-development is not precisely evident in Dewey's proposal. As Roth indicates, Dewey himself was aware of this problem, and acknowledged that it was a weakness in his thought.⁶⁸ In fact, the most important consideration for him was to work out the necessary conditions and requirements for the development of human individuality.⁶⁹

There are still many other fields of discussion where Dewey and 'Allāma either confirm or contradict one another. Their discourses, addresses, writings and teachings may be considered to be perhaps evolutionary movements in the philosophical foundations of education. They are still fresh and credible enough to lead to further investigations and discoveries. A brief look at their thought both before and after their scholarly careers began indicates how great was their contribution to the development of academic studies and research. The humanities in both the Western and Islamic contexts, owe a huge debt respectively to Dewey and 'Allāma. These scholars provided the answers to many educational and philosophical questions and especially those that have been occupying the minds of youth. Neither Dewey nor 'Allāma were ever persuaded, respectively, by the teachings of the churchmen or the clerical seminaries of their time. Their reactions, however, were not the same. Dewey attempted to create or develop an evolutionary progressive thought and modern interpretation of religion and religious teachings. 'Allāma, on the other hand, endeavored to construct a modified and deeper understanding of religion and religious teachings by injecting philosophy into the curricula of the Islamic seminaries and advancing the reconciliation of religion and philosophy. Due to 'Allāma's efforts and contributions, wisdom and revelation once more stood side by side. The fruit of this reconciliation soon appeared in a sound, logical and rational interpretation and understanding of religion and religious teachings. For Muslim philosophers in general, reason and rationality play the primary role in approving the

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 5. For additional details see: *Individualism Old and New*, pp. 99, 146-148.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 4-5. This consideration does not imply that the importance of social dimension was neglected in Dewey's perspective. Indeed, according to him, the self can be developed by the individual's entering into proper relations with others. However, as Roth maintains, "It would be a mistake ... to suppose that Dewey's emphasis on the social group will result in the submersion of the individual in the mass. He has insisted with great

divine world-view. Islamic philosophy would even argue for and teach the necessary existence of God, of the divine revelation and of the Resurrection Day in rational terms, and not only in accordance with religious narratives.

In 'Allāma's time, philosophy and philosophical forums and research used to be on the margin, and little attention was paid to them. There were those narrow-minded Muslim traditionalists who proposed that philosophy had nothing to do with religion and religious applications. Philosophy to them was originally a product of the pre-Islamic era and had its roots in Greek thought. They were thinking that philosophy, by means of pure rationalism, would destroy religion and weaken religious images and implications. In their minds, to discover Islam and Islamic thought, the students of Islamic seminaries must restrict themselves to the Qur'ān and Prophetic or Imāmi traditions. They were encouraged not to go beyond this limit; otherwise, they wouldn't understand or present Islamic thought correctly or as well as it merits.

There were a small number of devoted philosophers and mystics who always engaged in philosophical discourse and contributed to the creation of the well-established discipline of Islamic philosophy.⁷⁰ They considered philosophy and mysticism to be two effective and powerful trends in Islamic thought. They proposed a positive reconciliation between religion and philosophy, between rationalism and divine revelation. Their doctrine of reconciliation has been much appreciated and followed by Muslim philosophers after them. They all tried to challenge the pessimistic and negative image of philosophy and soon attracted hundreds of young students who were interested in the subject. They even, based upon philosophical argumentation and orientation, challenged defective or false understandings of Islamic traditions.⁷¹

The academic institutions in the West in Dewey's time were in a similar situation. It was the time of radical changes. The victory of Darwinism, neo-Hegelianism, modern pragmatism and humanist religion were a threat to the church and Biblical teachings. In this atmosphere, Dewey, appreciating and advocating the modern trend of thought, challenged Biblical teachings and helped in the promotion of a forum for scientific and

emphasis on the importance of the initiative and creativity of the individual." Thus, all social arrangements and conditions function as means for creating individuals. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁷⁰ Among this group of victorious philosophers and mystics were Mullā Ṣadrā and Mirzā 'Alī Qāḍī who lived before 'Allāma. 'Allāma followed them in both their philosophy and mysticism.

⁷¹ See for example Ḥusaynī Tehrānī, *Mihr-i Tabān*, pp. 35-39.

academic dialogue in many fields including theology, metaphysics, religion, morals, etc. Thus viewed, both Dewey and `Allāma planned for changes and improvements and to a large extent they were successful. Their contributions to the development of scientific and scholarly dialogue have been of great importance for both Western and Islamic research centers, respectively.

Although Dewey and `Allāma produced memorable remarks on the issue of self-realization, their accounts are neither well-organized nor inclusive. There are themes which are of primary importance; however, excluded or ignored. Self-realization, in the first step, is a way towards self-construction. One realizes one's self in order to construct it in an appropriate way, then to prepare it for further accomplishments. Neither Dewey nor `Allāma, however, articulated the view that realizing the self may lead to self-construction as a possible outcome and that the latter in its practical sense is of great significance and worth. This is to say that self-realization, as an instrumental end, serves the fulfillment of self-construction which is a consummatory end as compared to self-realization.⁷²

Neither Dewey nor `Allāma explained how one may practice self-realization or how one can actualize one's self. Introspection or introversion is one of the fundamental stages in the process of self-realization. Every single person, for the sake of a successful form of self-realization, must come into the stage of introspection first and transfer from there to self-realization. Introspection is neither the same as isolationism nor has it anything to do with the latter. This same stage is not clearly voiced in the doctrines of the above scholars.

The conceptual definitions of such qualities as self, realization, actualization, perfection, development, perception, wisdom, knowledge, supernatural, transcendental, metaphysics and so on are not precisely or properly presented. A specific encyclopedic or subjective and conceptual meaning of any of these themes is needed in any field of study. For instance, the word *self* may mean something equivalent to *psyche* in psychology, to *soul* in theology or philosophy, to *spirit* in morality and mysticism. Similarly, for

⁷² This approach was advanced by `Allāma's pupil, M. Taqī Miṣbāḥ, especially through his work *Khud Shināsi barāy-i Khud Sāzi* (Self-Realization [Self-Knowledge] for Self-Construction). The author told me that when `Allāma read his work he declared it a wonderful effort. Miṣbāḥ's writing is very concise yet inclusive and contains many worthwhile observations in the field of self-realization.

example, for the word wisdom you may find a variety of concepts in different fields. *Wisdom* in philosophy has a concept other than that in morality or religion, in psychology or in physiology.⁷³ In addition to the above, with respect to Dewey's and 'Allāma's conceptualizations, a distinction between seemingly similar varieties like realization and actualization, fulfillment and accomplishment, perfection and development, knowledge and science is not evident. Also, a differentiation of self-conception and self-knowledge from self-realization is missing on both sides.

There are further themes and elements which seem not to be spoken of in Dewey's and 'Allāma's writings when speaking of self-realization, although they might evaluate them elsewhere and in relation to other subjects and phenomena. The chain of perfection or accomplishments and the incremental motion towards them, a distinction of human perfection from animal or vegetal perfection, can be some of these missing themes. Whether or not human beings are able to recognize their true or ultimate perfection before they actualize it, and whether or not this sort of knowledge has any influential function and position in the fulfillment of perfection form another category of questions which are left unanswered. These comments are some of the common problems found on both sides of the comparison.

Where the structure and format of each doctrine are individually concerned, Dewey's remarks are more systematic and detailed and yet less rich and invariable, whereas 'Allāma's are deeper and established yet less organized, detailed and comprehensive. 'Allāma's problem with a disorganized form of discussion appears in a number of his works, including his volumes on Quranic exegesis (*al-Mizān*) and those on human nature (*al-Insān*). It was due to the efforts of 'Allāma's commentator and editor that an index of *al-Mizān* was produced. This alphabetically arranged index contains 750 titles that originally discovered in 'Allāma's twenty-volume exegesis.⁷⁴ 'Allāma's remarks on human nature and self-realization, suffering from the same problem, as well as the problem of complexity, are in vital need of rearrangement, systematic retitling and

⁷³ I have already explained that, in my understanding, the self is meant to manifest all elements by which a human person is a human person.

⁷⁴ See Kalāntar, ed., *Dalīl al-Mizān*.

clarification. Those readers of the above writings who are not familiar with `Allāma's approach and style of writing, can hardly understand him.

Further Research and Investigation

One of the results of the present study is that it has opened windows towards further investigation in both philosophical and educational themes and issues. By pursuing this research one can examine how Dewey's and `Allāma's respective thought-systems have influenced or contributed to the flourishing of new fields of inquiry. A comparison between their ideas may suggest various options to be pursued in several different fields of education.

1. Among the more interesting issues to investigate is the extent to which religious and spiritual education should be inserted into the schools' curriculum, or whether or not spirituality must focus on the world beyond the material realm. From another angle, and on a more practical level, research needs to be conducted into whether religious and spiritual instruction contributes to a more comprehensive and fruitful education overall. Connection with some transcendental agent constitutes the core element of both thinkers' notions of spirituality; it is either the individual's connection with his or her ideal ends, as Dewey put it, or with the Divine, as `Allāma explained. In religious education Dewey is on the side of humanist religion, whereas `Allāma supports divinely-revealed religion. Humanism and pragmatism are the qualities that best describe Dewey's perspective. Educational ideals and transcendental truths are, according to this way of thinking, the product of human mind and find their credibility in their practicability. Divinely-revealed truths and ideals, on the other hand, as well as religious transcendentalism, characterize `Allāma's educational perspective. To this extent, God's messengers are the most highly-ranked educators.⁷⁵ Even God Himself is considered an educator.⁷⁶ The fundamental principles are revealed from the Divine to the prophets and distributed among the people. In both theoretical and practical senses, people can look at these principles as guidelines.

⁷⁵ See *The Qur'ān*, 62: 2.

⁷⁶ See *Ibid.*, 55: 4 and 96: 5.

2. A second area of potential research would be to investigate the value-systems underpinning Dewey's and 'Allāma's respective beliefs. When compared in terms of their value-systems, the two scholars occupy, at the same time, a common ground of shared values while at the same time disagreeing over a broad range of distinct values. No matter to which belief-system one adheres, one recognizes righteousness, justice, generosity, humbleness, politeness, dignity and so on as shared values, that is as good and desirable qualities. It is shared values that provide unity and coherence in a society. Distinct values are present and manifested to the degree that tolerance is also a shared value. On the other hand, there are values motivated by one or another specific faith-system. I may label values of this specific type as distinct and faith-oriented values. Regarding the universe as "self-existing and not created," viewing human self as "a part of nature" or as "the result of a continuous process" that has nothing to do with any divine element, "holding an organic view of life," etc., are some of the distinct values that characterize the Deweyan humanist value-system.⁷⁷ Worshipping God as the Creator and the only One Lord of the universe, connecting with the Divine even though through intercommunication with nature, believing in an other-worldly Resurrection, etc., are among the faith-oriented values that distinguish 'Allāma's value-system from that of Dewey.⁷⁸ So there are distinct values just as there are shared values.

Moreover, in values education a combination of character education, values clarification,⁷⁹ liberal values and democratic values⁸⁰ describes Dewey's value-systems. As Halstead and Taylor maintain, the American approach to values education "in the absence of organized traditions of religious or social authority in public institutions, places a stronger emphasis on democratic education"⁸¹ The Islamic approach to values education on the other hand combines both character education and

⁷⁷ See Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ See Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Islamic Teachings*, pp. 145-146.

⁷⁹ Generally speaking, "there is a major debate about whether schools should instil[l] values in pupils or teach them to explore and develop their own values." The first view of values education has been identified as "character education." The second view on the other hand "has been linked in North America particularly to the approach known as values clarification." See Halstead & Taylor, *Values in Education and Education in Values*, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁰ For more on liberal and democratic values see *Ibid.*, pp. 17-32, 68-78.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

values clarification. Values are identified on the basis of both Islamic teachings and rational thinking. Religion and common sense support one another in validating human conduct. Moral reasoning, narratives and ethical implications are some of the appropriate approaches by means of which students learn how to identify values within Islam.

3. Exploring the educational implications of Dewey's and 'Allāma's systems of moral and ethical education is another area and potential inquiry. In moral and ethical education Dewey's moral system implies that people themselves may determine which behavior is moral and which one immoral. There can be no criterion other than the human mind and understanding. 'Allāma's moral system on the other hand maintains the belief in both rational and religious standards of morality. The correlation of both moral reasoning and religious judgments are, for 'Allāma, of the highest significance in moral education. The authenticity of each ethical school is driven by the fundamental principles of that school. As shown in the following table, ethical judgements and moral duties proceed in three directions according to Dewey's thought and four according to 'Allāma's.

<i>Moral Directions</i>	Dewey's Moral System	'Allāma's Moral System
Duties Towards	→ One's Self	One's Self
	→ Other Fellow Humans	Other Fellow Humans
	→ Nature	Nature
	→ The Divine Creator & His Law	

Moral Duties Based on Moral Systems

4. A fourth area of inquiry would be to study comparative models of political education intimate in Dewey's and 'Allāma's philosophies. In politics and political education Dewey's humanistic thought leads to the separation of religion and state. People in the era of enlightenment and technology, according to him, are no longer in need of any revealed religion or religious law. Human beings are mature enough to rely on their own will and power without having to depend upon any agent or power

beyond them. They alone are responsible for the realization of their dreams.⁸² Article nine of *Humanist Manifesto II* reads: "The separation of church and state and the separation of ideology and state are imperatives. The state should encourage maximum freedom for different moral, political, religious, and social values in society."⁸³ Dewey's image of "the democratic state,"⁸⁴ as well as his description of "civil society and the political state"⁸⁵ and his political ideas as a whole suggest that he saw no role for the church or other institutional religion in administering the state. Dewey's constitutional position can be labelled "reform liberalism," which in turn encourages the separation of church and state.⁸⁶

When it comes to 'Allāma's thought, the first and ultimate Lord and Ruler of the universe is God. Basically, ruling over the world and human beings is the right of the Divine, for He is the only One Who created them. He appointed His prophets to be His representatives and caliphs on the earth and invited people to follow them. Regarding the prophetic missions before Islam, the Qur'an explains that even the Jews and Christians were supposed to judge by what God revealed to Moses and Jesus. Generally speaking, the Qur'an indicates that those who do not judge on the basis of what Allah revealed to His prophets are either unbelievers, unjust or transgressors of God's law.⁸⁷ Consequently, a true Islamic state borrows its authority from Allah and establishes its foundations on the basis of the divine laws. The Qur'an, addressing the Prophet Muḥammad, says: "... you should judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, ... Is it then the judgement of (the time of) ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure?"⁸⁸ As a matter of historical fact, both the first Muslim state and the first Islamic constitution were founded by the Prophet of Islam himself soon after he

⁸² Cf. Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 10.

⁸³ Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto II*, p. 19, article 9.

⁸⁴ See Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), pp. 75-109; rpt. *The Later Works of Dewey*, v. 2, pp. 282-303.

⁸⁵ See Dewey, *The Middle Works of Dewey*, v. 5, p. 404.

⁸⁶ See James P. Young, *Reconsidering American Liberalism: The Troubled Odyssey of the Liberal Idea* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 7. As James P. Young remarks, Dewey's major work on political theory (*The Public and Its Problems*) "was not published until 1927. Still, he was much concerned with the themes of community and control and elevated their analysis to the plane of philosophy." See pp. 161-162.

⁸⁷ See the Qur'an, 5: 44-47.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 5: 49-50.

migrated from Makkah to Madīnah in 622 AD. The period of the religious and political leadership of the Prophet provides an example of the reconciliation of religion and state.

From the Shi'i Islamic point of view, to which 'Allāma adhered, the leader and commander of the Islamic state had to be either the Prophet Muḥammad or his successor Imams from his Household [*Ahlul-Bayt*]. During the occultation of Imam Mahdī,⁸⁹ the leadership of the Muslim community [*Ummah*] should properly devolve upon a just [*'ādil*] and pious [*muttaqī*] jurist [*faqīh*]. The leader must be the most qualified among the jurists of his time, "fully aware of the circumstances of his age; courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability; and recognized and accepted as Leader by the majority of people."⁹⁰ The right of such a jurist to rule introduces the significance of the doctrine of the "mastership of the jurist [*vilāyat-i faqīh*]" into the Islamic political system. As it is depicted in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic system can be characterized by faith in God's absolute sovereignty, its pious heading, and people's special participation in political issues.⁹¹ One can see how important is the Islamic educational background in relation to the Islamic State and Muslim leadership.

5. A final line of recommended research would be into a comparative study of the subject of the ends of education and human life. Both Dewey and 'Allāma agree that

⁸⁹ The Twelfth Imam of the Shi'a who is still alive but in occultation. See: the present thesis, Ch. 1, p. 54, notes 97,98.

⁹⁰ I.P.O., *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 1981, p. 20, Article 5. It is asserted that "the task of appointing the leader shall be vested with the experts elected by the people." See [electronic reference] <http://netiran.com/laws.html> [Constitution: Article 107, 1989].

⁹¹ The Constitution "was put to a nation-wide referendum on December 3, and a majority of 99.5% of 15,758,956 voters who participated and voted in its favour." It was revised on April 24, 1989 by the Council of Revision of the Constitution, and approved in a referendum on July 28, 1989. The doctrine of *vilāyat-i faqīh* as the pious heading of the Islamic system "is in accordance with" what is found in Islamic tradition: "The direction of [public] affairs is in the hands of those who are learned concerning God and are trustworthy in matters pertaining to what He permits and forbids ... Such leadership will prevent any deviation by the various organs of State from their essential Islamic duties." This doctrine has been a matter of debate especially after the victory and foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. For further information see I.P.O., *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 1981, pp. 3, 15, 20, 49, Articles 5, 107, 110; rpt. 1989. See also M. Naser Biria [M. N. Biriya], *Vilāyat-i Mutlaqi-yi Faqīh*, a term paper (April, 1994), pp. 1-2. For more on Islamic political system see: M. Mahdi Musavi Khalkhali, *Hakimiyat dar Islam: Barrasi-i Marāḥil-i Dahgānah-i Vilāyat-i Faqīh dar 'Asr-i Gaybat-i Imām-i Zaman* (Tehran: Āfaq, 1982).

“the complete realization of human personality” is the end of a human beings’ life.⁹² As one finds no dispute between them over the proposition that “all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life.”⁹³ Disputes only arise when it comes to determining whether the above end is itself the ultimate end or merely an instrumental and intermediary aim of human life and education. For a humanist thinker, it may be the final judgment. From the Islamic point of view, however, it can only be an appropriate means for the realization of a higher and more invaluable end which is the realization of God. Accordingly, the complete realization of human self is accomplished if the individual realizes that he or she was created by God and depends for his or her existence upon Him. The individual would then realize that he or she lives under the protection and supervision of God “Who made good everything that He has created”⁹⁴ Thus considered, human beings have been created to recognize Him and not to worship any agent or power other than Him.⁹⁵

Final Remark

If Dewey and ‘Allāma had ever met each other, they probably would have engaged in a dialogue on naturalism, experimentalism and pragmatism on the one hand and Islam on the other. Due to their extensive knowledge, tolerance and dignity, all of which comes across so clearly from their biographies, the fruit of such a dialogue would have substantially benefited the felicity of human beings in their personal and social, mundane and extra-mundane, natural and heavenly dimensions. However, even though such a meeting is now impossible, it is not too late for their pupils and companions to sit around a table and open a warm and scholarly dialogue and try to resolve together the problems that human societies and educational systems today confront. This in turn, it is hoped, may constitute a step towards creating a sound and peaceful dialogue instead of a maleficent clash, between cultures and civilizations.

⁹² Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 9. I consider *Humanist Manifesto I* a documentation for Dewey since, as Kurtz (the editor) mentions, Dewey was one of a group of liberal humanist thinkers who in 1933 defined, enunciated and drafted *Humanist Manifesto I*. Ibid., p. 3. For information on ‘Allāma’s description see: Ṭabāṭaba’i, “al-Walāyah,” pp. 271-278.

⁹³ Ibid. The Qur’an says: “He (God) is Who created for you all that is in the earth” 2: 29.

⁹⁴ *The Qur’ān*, 32: 7.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 51: 56. See also Ṭabāṭaba’i, *al-Mizān*, v. 18, pp. 386-88 (Beirut); Ṭabāṭaba’i, “al-Walāyah,” pp. 278-294.

As we enter the twenty-first century we find ourselves faced with a need to understand better human nature and identity. By means of an exchange of ideas we may be able to uncover more facts about the human self, and consequently, discover those elements that all human beings share in common. Greater mutual understanding may help us realize our positions both as individuals and as social human beings. This in turn may allow us to fulfil our goals in life and contribute to the establishment of a more civilized world. I hope my attempt in this regard may be seen as having contributed to the development of such a worthwhile task.

Appendices

The following appendices represent respectively the epistemological and theological principles of Dewey's and `Allāma's belief systems in a condensed yet more direct way.

☐ **Appendix I: Dewey's Horizon of Thought**

➤ *Humanist Religion or Religious Humanism*

☐ **Appendix II: `Allāma's Horizon of Thought**

➤ *The Spiritual Message of Shi`ism*

Appendix I

Humanist Religion or Religious Humanism

Dewey's Horizon of Thought

Edited by Paul Kurtz

We have seen that Dewey's system of thought showed preference for a humanistic religion or a religious humanism. Dewey was one of a group of liberal humanist thinkers who in 1933 "defined and enunciated the philosophical and religious principles that seemed to them fundamental. They drafted *Humanist Manifesto I*, which for its time was a radical document."¹ Religious humanism affirms the following:

First: Religious humanism regards the universe as self-existing and not created.

Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.

Third: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

Fourth: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded to that culture.

Fifth: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet

¹ Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I*, p. 3.

undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relation to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and methods.

Sixth: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of 'new thought.'

Seventh: Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation—all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

Eighth: Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

Ninth: In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

Tenth: It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

Eleventh: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

Twelfth: Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

Thirteenth: Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly

religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

Fourteenth: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

Fifteenth and last: We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive *morale* and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.

So stand the theses of religious humanism. Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task.”²

² Ibid., pp. 8-10.

Appendix III

The Spiritual Message of Shi'ism

'Allāma's Horizon of Thought

'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'i

Translated by

Sayyid Husayn Naṣr

'Allāma's faith and religious doctrines sided with the Shi'ite Islam. 'Allāma wrote a book on the Shi'ite due to the idea proposed in 1963 by Professor K. Morgan of Colgate University and Professor S. H. Naṣr. As the latter mentions, "the aim of Professor Morgan was to have a description of Shi'ism by one of the respected traditional Shi'ite scholars, ..."³ As 'Allāma himself put it, Shi'ite Islam presents the following message to humankind.

"The message of Shi'ism to the world can be summarized in one sentence: 'To know God.' Or in other words, it is to instruct man to follow the path of Divine realization and the knowledge of God in order to gain felicity and salvation. And this message is contained in the very phrase with which the Holy Prophet commenced his prophetic mission when he said: 'Oh men! Know God in His Oneness (and acknowledge Him) so that you will gain salvation.'

As a summary explanation of this message we will add that man is attached by nature to many goals in this worldly life and to material pleasures. ... An in another direction he is attracted to political power, position, reputation, the extension of his rule and dominion and the destruction of anything that is opposed to his wishes. But in his inner and primordial God-given nature, man

³ See Dr. Naṣr's preface to 'Allāma's *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 17-19.

understands that all these are means created for him, but he is not created for all these things. These things should be subservient to man and follow him and not vice versa. To consider the stomach and the region below it as a final end of life is the logic of cattle and sheep. To tear up, cut and destroy others is the logic of the tiger, the wolf and the fox. The logic inherent in human existence is the attainment of wisdom and nothing else.

This logic based upon wisdom with the power which it possesses to discern between reality and the unreal, guides us toward the truth and not toward things our emotions demand or toward passions, selfishness and egoism. This logic considers man as a part of the totality of creation without any separate independence or the possibility of a rebellious self-centeredness. In contrast to the current belief that man is the master of creation and tames rebellious nature and conquers it to force it to obey his wishes and desires, we find that in reality man himself is an instrument in the hand of Universal Nature and is ruled and commanded by it.

This logic based upon wisdom invites man to concentrate more closely upon the apprehension he has of the existence of this world until it becomes clear to him that the world of existence and all that is in it does not issue from itself but rather from an Infinite Source. He will then know that all this beauty and ugliness, all these creatures of earth and the heavens, which appear outwardly as independent realities, gain reality only through another Reality and are manifested only in Its Light, not by themselves and through themselves. In the same way that the 'realities' as well as the power and grandeur of yesterday have no greater value than tales and legends of today, so are 'realities' of today no more than vaguely remembered dreams in relation to what will appear as 'reality' tomorrow. In the last analysis, everything in itself is no more than a tale and a dream. Only God is Reality in the absolute sense, the One Who does not perish. Under the protection of His Being, everything gains existence and becomes manifested through the Light of His Essence.

If man becomes endowed with such vision and power of apprehension, then the tent of his separative existence will fall down before his eyes like a bubble on

the surface of water. He will see with his eyes that the world and all that is in it depend upon an Infinite Being who possesses life, power, knowledge and every perfection to an infinite degree. Man and every other being in the world are like so many windows which display according to their capacity the world of eternity which transcends them and lies beyond them.

It is at this moment that man takes from himself and all creatures the quality of independence and primacy and returns these qualities to their Owner. He detaches himself from all things to attach himself solely to the One God. Before His Majesty and Grandeur he does nothing but bow in humility. Only then does he become guided and directed by God so that whatever he knows he knows in God. Through divine guidance he becomes adorned with moral and spiritual virtue and pure actions which are the same as Islam itself, the submission to God, the religion that is in the primordial nature of things.

That is the highest degree of human perfection and the station of the perfect man (the Universal Man; *insān-i kāmīl*), namely the Imam who has reached this rank through divine grace. Furthermore, those who have reached this station through the practice of spiritual methods, with the different ranks and stations that they possess, are the true followers of the Imam. It becomes thus clear that the knowledge of God and of the Imam are inseparable in the same way that the knowledge of God is inextricably connected to the knowledge of oneself. For he who knows his own symbolic existence has already come to know the true existence which belongs solely to God who is independent and without need of anything whatsoever.”⁴

⁴ Ṭabaṭabāʾī, *Shiʿite Islam*, trans. S. Ḥusayn Naṣr, pp. 215-17.

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