

IN QUEST OF A MEANINGFUL MODEL OF HUMAN SELF AND BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract: There is a growing awareness among many modern psychologists that the will to meaning is a highly distinctive feature of man, distinguishing him from animals. Accordingly, a behaviour model for man, to be truly representative, must include the drive for meaning as a significant dimension of human personality. In the light of this realization, some major psychological models of personality, e.g., the psychoanalytical model, behaviouristic model, humanistic model, and the existential model have been briefly examined, and a model based on transcendental nature of man is proposed. According to this model, the realization of an abiding comprehensive meaning of life and the consequent all-inclusive meaningful behaviour, both at the individual and social levels, is the function of man's perception and belief in a transcendentially anchored integrated framework of life.

Modern man has made unprecedented achievements in the field of science and technology. The fruits of his amazing attainments have tremendously increased his physical amenities and comforts. But unfortunately, these incredible achievements on the physical plane of man's well-being have not been matched by a parallel progress in his psychological well-being. The appalling state of his psychological underdevelopment manifests itself in the high incidence of personality maladjustments, mental disorders, and alarming rise in juvenile delinquency and adult crimes, and finally in the horrible demonstration of racial and ethnic hatreds all over the world. No doubt, man has acquired the technological know-how to an unimaginable level, but at the same

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time he has become tragically devoid of the 'know-why.' In spite of his apparent mastery over the physical environment, he is at a loss as to the meaning of his own existence.

Science observes a painful silence about such questions as 'Who am I?' and 'What do all the things and events mean for me?' Such questions are considered to be outside the domain of positive science. To make the situation worse, science even tells us that such questions concerning meaning are false, because the human race, science assumes, has emerged by chance in a random universe. This has resulted in a widespread state of anomie - an illness of meaninglessness - in the modern man, creating in its wake a hopelessly frustrating feeling of estrangement of the self.

The problem of meaning is unique to human species. Other living beings are presumably unaware of the problem of meaning. Animals live by just acting out their inner drives instinctively. Man, endowed with enormously superior psychic capacities has however, only a limited number of instinctive patterns of behaviour. He must rely on his ability to learn and reason and use the higher faculty of intuition to select the most appropriate and meaningful mode of behaviour from among a multiplicity of seemingly attractive alternatives. He has to make a choice, and this makes him face the unique situation of the problem of meaning and values. He must not only know his own 'self' but also ferret out his proper role in the universe and his precise relationship with the 'Reality'. In short, he must come to grips with the problem of meaning if he wants to grow fully and not merely survive like an animal.

We may take a brief pause here to spell out the implications of the concept of meaning in the context of human life. Although the term 'meaning of life' appears to be somewhat elusive due to its traditional metaphysical association, some observations of the modern empiricists seem to guide us to a better understanding of its implications. For example, in describing the basis of the experience of meaning of life, Maslow¹ has mentioned the feeling of fulfilment and significance. Weisskopf-Joelson² has attributed it to a feeling of integration and relatedness. These concepts become more clear if we consider the views of some other authors³ who have emphasized faith or commitment as a necessary component of the experience of meaning in life. Since 'meaning' in common usage implies a connotation of understanding, some authors⁴ seem to have this in mind when they construe this understanding of life as representing a framework or system within which the individual perceives himself to be living. Frankl⁵ has emphasized another important dimension of this 'understanding' by saying that

this represents some goal or purpose of life which the individual perceives and strives for. Organising all these ideas into a comprehensive order, Battista and Almond⁶ observe that meaningful life implies: (1) a commitment to some concept of the meaning of life; (2) development of a framework or goal from which to view one's life; (3) perception of life as related to or fulfilling this concept of life; and (4) experience of this fulfilment as a feeling of integration, relatedness and significance. The above concepts may be summarized by saying that meaning of life consists in the faith and perception of an integrated framework and goal of life accompanied by a feeling of integration and relatedness as a consequence of fulfilling the implications of this framework and purpose of life.

It appears that the most crucial feature of 'meaning of life', is the development and perception of an integrated framework and goal which can subsume all the possible varieties of human needs and aspirations as a harmonious series of sub-goals and also drive the individual through a continuous and ever higher arrays of fulfilment to the realization of a final goal. Once such a comprehensive and integrated framework emerges, it becomes the contextual anchor with reference to which all the events and experiences of life derive their meaning. The fullness and richness of the meaning of life may thus be said to be directly dependent on the fullness and richness of this life-framework. The above discussion also clearly suggests that a life-framework or model is inseparably linked to the awareness of ones total need-complex. It follows then that a life-framework which would give the highest promise of fulfilment of human needs and aspirations can alone appear most meaningful to human self. Thus the feeling of meaning and fulfilment is conceived to be directly related to the need-fulfilling potentials of this framework of life. If an individual makes continuous progress in realizing his needs and aspirations by acting upon the implications of such a fully promising model of life, his potential and nascent feeling of fulfilment and significance would become empirically more and more real. Since man possesses a highly complex set of drives and needs ranging from the bio-social to the transcendental and spiritual levels, to have a life-model reasonably perceptible to be meaningful, he must look for one which would encompass the full range of human needs and aspirations as well as possess the ability to guide and energize the individual to actualize them in a duly balanced manner.

The transcendental aspects of human self has usually been ignored, or even denied by the more behavioristically oriented psychologists. However with the resurgence of cognitive approach to psychology, a growing number of modern psychologists are becoming aware of the

crucial role of transcendental aspects in the development of a meaningful behaviour.⁷ If a model of human life and behaviour is to be given a semblance of abiding meaning, transcendental aspect of human self must be assigned its due place along with the biological and social aspects of personality. Ignoring this vital dimension of human personality would only strip man of the necessary basis for his perennial strivings for higher meaning and self-transcendence.

Keeping the foregoing in mind, we may make an attempt to review some of the major models of human personality and behaviour which the psychologists have so far developed. We would present here synoptic views of four major behavioural models of western psychology following Coleman.⁸ After each presentation a brief discussion about its meaningfulness will be made.

Psychoanalytic model

In psychoanalytic model, *id* is the reservoir of all energies which are triggered off by such biological drives as hunger, thirst and sex. Sex is the primary reigning drive which energizes personality. *Id* is a highly self-centered irrational system. To cater for the needs of the *id*, *ego* emerges as a mediator between the *id* and the external world. Since society appears to curb many instinctive desires, a third subsystem of *superego* develops in order to avert clash and conflict with the society and ensure a smooth and peaceful satisfaction of *id*'s desires. Though these instincts wear different disguises, they can be identified as basically belonging to the *id*. Thus an interrelationship among the *id*, *ego*, *superego* and the external reality has been shown in a highly ingenious way. But do all these sum up to a complete picture of man and cover all his yearnings and endeavours through the ages? Where is man's quest for the higher meanings of life? How to account for his longing for self-transcendence and communion with the transcendental Reality? How to accommodate the historical accounts of self-sacrifices for society and humanity and for spiritual goals? To explain away all of them as mere disguised manifestations of self-centred biological instincts of *id*, strips man of all the richness and potentialities of transcendental and sublime meaning of his life.

Obviously, this model does not provide man with a pervasive purpose in life. It induces him to consider society as an obstacle only to be tricked off to satisfy his selfish ends. So, instead of instilling a deep sense of higher meaning and purpose, the psychoanalytic model would tend to alienate man from his own inner self as well as from the society at large.

Behaviouristic model

The general format of behaviouristic model comes out of the early works of Watson. Committed to a strict 'scientific' objectivity, John Watson made observable behaviour the focus of his scientific psychology and placed consciousness and all the inner mental states outside the precinct of his brand of scientific psychology. Human behaviour was thought to be completely determined by observable stimulus conditions of the environment, through principles such as conditioning, reinforcement and stimulus generalization. Man or animal has no choice but to give in to the environment and function more or less like a robot. Man is thus divested of all the inner riches of mental contents as well as the freedom to become the master of his own destiny. He is no better than an inanimate natural object, whose course of action can be predicted and controlled if the conditions of the environment could be known and manipulated.

The behavioristic model of man thus presents a highly superficial view of man - a man stripped of his soul. Meaning and values, the major directing forces of his destiny, have little, if any, recognition in this system. This model, like the psychoanalytic one, appears unduly negative and deterministic in nature in presenting man as an empty organism and moulded by physiological and environmental forces. Surely such a model cannot hold any hope to a man who is out to fathom the depth and meaning of his being and existence.

Humanistic model

Humanistic psychologists, such as Allport, Maslow, Murray and Rogers are in disagreement with both the psychoanalytic and behaviouristic concepts of man.⁹ As against the emphasis on the stimulus situation and overt response by the behaviourists, the humanists emphasize reflection, reasoning and creative imagination. The humanistic man also has strong propensities for overcoming the influences of unconscious and irrational motives of psychoanalytic man by having abilities of conscious planning and rational choice. Along with sex, aggression and other biological drives, man is seen as also concerned with values, meaning and personal growth. Man, according to the humanists, is not just a conditioned robot or a reactive organism; he has self-awareness, ability to evaluate and is future-orientated. The unifying principle of man's personality according to this model is self, which has a causal influence on the growth and development of personality through internal psycho-cognitive structure and processes. Man is also capable of resisting the influences of the environment. According to Rogers, the foremost among contemporary

humanistic psychologists, self has an irresistible tendency for growth and actualization.¹⁰ Moreover the versatile potential for learning combined with the peculiarities of the individual background makes each man highly unique.

The humanistic model, with its highly positive view of man and concern for values and self-actualization, treats self as a unifying system which comes closer to a real human being striving to have a meaningful grip on his identity and purpose of life. But the humanistic model, while accepting the fact that each individual has a natural tendency to become his own real self, gives no definite idea about the nature and content of the potentials of self. Self-realisation has been put as a goal without making explicit what that self is which is to be realized. Humanistic psychologists demonstrate no understanding of the transcendental potentialities of human self. The ceaseless strivings of man for self-transcendence through an intimate communion with the Divine Reality have no place in the humanistic psychology.

Existential model

The existential model is similar to the humanistic model in sharing an emphasis on the uniqueness of the individual, his quest for values and meaning, and his search for self-direction and self-fulfilment. However, it is a less optimistic model than the humanistic one. The existentialists hold that finding a meaningful and fulfilling way of life is a highly perilous task of striving. It involves responsibility for making choices to build up one's essence out of one's existence. This is a highly challenging task for modern man due to the breakdown of traditional values, depersonalization of man in a standardized mass culture and the loss of meaning in human existence. Modern man has become, so to speak, alienated and estranged; a stranger to God, to himself and to other men. The existentialists have thus pointed to a painful predicament of modern man. They have tried to glorify the individual with absolute freedom, but at the same time have also loaded him with the agonizing burden of fully independent choice and responsibility, which he must carry out, all on his own, without falling on the authority of religion, tradition or society. Many people may lack the courage to bear this burden of unaided freedom and responsibility and may thus collapse under their unbearable weight with the consequent failure to carve out an authentic mode of 'being' out of their existence.

Finally, an existential theme which adds to the brimming tragedy of human situation is the 'non-being' or nothingness (death in plain language), which is the inescapable fate of every individual. This

awareness of nothingness is unique to man and adds a crucial dimension to his existence. But in this battle with nothingness or death the existentialists do not find hope of a straight victory. If man is perishable, the best he can do is to defy death by living a life of such awareness that death appears to be an unjust fate.

Thus while the existentialists have been able to bring into broad relief some of the crucial and unique realities of human existence - freedom of choice, concern for values and meaning, awareness of nothingness etc., they have failed to give a clear prospect of deliverance out of the existential despair. Isolated and cut off from the transcendental roots of Reality, man is put to a painfully agonizing exercise of making a meaningful and self-fulfilling trek through existence only to end up in the meaninglessness of non-existence. This existential 'black-hole' of nothingness ultimately consumes whatever meaning and values man may have acquired. The grimness of such a goal blows up all meaning of life circumscribed by the inescapable nothingness of death. The success of existentialists in stirring up an awareness of the glories of human role and responsibility helplessly stumbles to doom at the door-step of death. The existentialists have failed to see the light of transcendental Reality which can guide man to the eternal stretch of transcendent life.

The absence of a final and abiding purpose to match the outstanding distinctions of human existence, and the pre-occupation of the existentialists with conferring exclusive authenticity to individual's phenomenal experience, isolated from the transcendental awareness, have reduced existential model to one which lacks some critically important dimensions of meaning.

Transcendental model

This model is, by and large, based on the concepts of the sufis, who have in turn derived them from scriptural revelation, traditions and mystical intuition. Apart from the writings of many notable sufis, some versions of this model are available in the works of Al-Ghazālī and Maulānā Rūmī.¹¹ We have mainly followed these two in developing our transcendental model.

According to this model, man is a *jame^c-ul-khalā'iq*, a microcosm or a copy of the universe. Within his tiny human frame, man represents and combines the entire universe at a micro-level. The divine and the devil, matter and spirit, plant and animal, in all their myriad varieties, have been made to coalesce in man. His soul represents the Divine, and his body the rest of universe. Soul is a substance, which is neither a part

of the body, nor is it directly perceivable by the senses. Its qualities and actions are however, manifested through the body and behaviour.¹² It survives the death of the body and is immortal. It is an indivisible unity and essentially rational and purposive. Being created in the image of God, it bears the imprints of God's attributes in finite measures. Soul is also the real human self and the core of what is called 'personality'. Human personality is thus basically transcendental in nature.

The soul has an inherent yearning for a rational and unifying apprehension of the essence of things and the Reality. In other words, human self has a basic drive or will to meaning. This is the distinctive feature of man, his singular privilege, distinguishing him from the rest of the creation.

True knowledge of self and the Reality would guide man to the realization of the latent divine potentials of self in the fullest measure. This transition of self to a fully actualised personality, however, may not take place because soul as a free agent may opt and strive for it, or may remain entangled in sensuous preoccupations and fail to grow to a self fulfilling way of life.

The basic drives of the body, or the animal soul, are hunger, thirst, sex and other sensuous inclinations. If these drives of the animal self are allowed to dominate, they lead the self to unchecked fulfilment of impulses and passions, at the cost of higher meaning and the Reality. The Qur'an refers to this stage as *nafs al-ammārah bi al-su'* or impelling self (12:53). At the promptings of the *nafs al-ammārah bi al-su'*, the self responds to the immediately perceptible stimuli and goals. Devoid of integrating control of the higher reason, self perceives and responds to the various objects and events more or less as discrete and isolated phenomena and consequently develops multiple dispersions in personality. Thus the sensuous man alienates himself from his real inner self as well as from the Reality, the ultimate Divine Being. Instead of one Allah, the indivisible Unity, he worships multiple gods of wealth, lust, fame, power and his own sensuous self. Lacking the integrating control of soul, the conflicting drives divide the personality into multiple 'selves,' strangers to one another.

In the social context, *nafs* at its full dominance, manifests itself as the undying passion for power. To stabilise and secure their positions, the power seekers strive to gain and use power at the expense of their fellow men. Innocent lives are sacrificed at the altar of their power-god. They become tools and bondsmen of power and wealth. With increased indulgence, *nafs* gains in strength and binds the individual in vicious knots and in the end gives rise to feelings of insecurity. A man in such a

situation seeks relief by creating fear in others and compelling everyone to obey him without question. He does not stop until he becomes a virtual god. Thus by pursuing these self-deceiving measures to secure and defend their unhealthy states, these people gradually alienate themselves from others as well as from their own real selves.

If the self is not absolutely overpowered by passion and lust, the reason may come to the rescue of the self by challenging the lower self. At this time the personality enters the second stage of its development called in the Quran *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* or the 'reproaching self' (75:2). By initiating a process of self-evaluation, reason counters the process of disintegration and regression of the self. In the contest between reason and passion, reason may be able to suppress the passion by trying to live a formally virtuous life. Intellectual self, however, may become prone to hair-splitting criticisms of others' behaviour, while ignoring ones own self. The self thus remains veiled from a fuller perception of the inner transcendental core of personality and its relational unity with the Reality. However, with the aid of reason, the self at this stage attains some formally rational understanding of the unity of Reality or *tawhīd*, the realization that the ultimate cause of everything is Allah (SWT) and the universe and all its events are but the manifestation of His will. Such realization, however, does not take deep roots into the heart and the self fails to form a total self-merging identification with Allah (SWT).

If, however, reason is allowed to grow, self would become aware of the higher potentialities of the ego. Reasoning in this way may lead the self to the threshold of wakefulness; but the final stage of *al-nafs al-mutma'innah* or the tranquil self (89:27) can only be attained through the perception of perfect *tawhīd* and total psychological identification of the self with the Divine Reality. The Divine Being, a supra-sensuous entity, cannot be perceived by the senses. It can be fathomed to some degree in the light of reason, but a fuller realization can only be attained by the inner eye of the heart, when it is dissociated from and emptied of the sense-contents through *mujāhadah* or spiritual strivings, observation of and contemplation on the works and creations of Allah (SWT), and through recitation and meditation of His attributive names etc. At this stage the heart realizes that there is only one Reality, everything else is influenced by this perception, only the all-comprehensive and all absorbing One remains. This is the stage of *fanā'* in sufi terminology. The personality at this stage loses its separate identity and completely identifies itself with Allah. Ascent to this unitary experience of *fanā'* is followed by the descent to the world of physical activity of sense and reason along with the light of transcendental unity found by the identifying self. This may be called the stage of *baqā'*, a stage where

the self permanently stabilizes the supreme gains of the unitary experience. The ego now embarks upon a transcendental plane of eternal extension beyond death, free from the bondages of a particular society, culture and other temporal influences. The psychological experience of union with Allah (SWT) brings a total transformation of personality through an altogether different reorganisation of its system. Since all the ego's need satisfactions - physical, psychological and spiritual - are now perceived to be flowing from the singular source of the Supreme Being, multiple dispersions of personality disappear and the self identifies completely with Allah. The conventional self, developed through society and customs, is now liquidated to make room for the emergence of the real human self to hold the reins of personality. The personality is now converted to a cosmic self. United to Allah, the self becomes united to all that belongs to His universe. Every item of the universe assumes special value and significance as a sign of Allah (SWT), the supreme Beloved. United with the ultimate unity, all the inner divisions merge into unity and the conflicts are resolved to form a totally integrated personality. Passions and lower drives are not smothered to death, but are brought to an integrated coordination with the ego and the divine wisdom of God. They are assured of receiving the due shares under the benign administration of the newly installed ego, the essence of personality. The real and true nature of man's basic personality emanates freely and spontaneously according to the natural pattern after which Allah has created him (30:30). This natural pattern is but the resemblance of God's image and attributes in finite measures. Using the Qur'anic term, the person at this stage may be called the 'vicegerent of Allah' (2:30, 6:165).

Reason and passion are now synchronised to the single goal of total growth of personality through assimilation and reflection of the Reality. Passion and bodily drives assume new meaning for their novel and instrumental roles in self-realisation and functioning of the personality as 'vicegerent of Allah'; so their preservation and nourishment becomes a matter of solemn interest for the ego, once it has established itself as the master-executive of personality. Preservation of his total self, including the physical one, becomes imperative for the ego to enable the fullest actualisation of its potentials, following the divine revelation, "and be not cast by your own hands to ruin..."(2:195).

Eating and drinking are no longer mere subsistence necessity or merry making. The ego engages in these acts in response to divine command: "...eat and drink but be not immoderate and intemperate..." (7:31) to help achieve the divine mission assigned to personality. In a word, the fully functioning person cannot abuse or damage even a single cell of his

body, except of course, for a higher cause, since all these are given to him as a trust to be utilized for the purpose of maximum personality growth of one's own self as well as of the entire humanity. The Quranic verse stands as a solemn reminder to this duty: "...and defraud not your trusts (8:27)." Passion and reason are thus wedded together in the final stage of development to achieve the common goal of actualisation of all human potentialities in harmony with the unitary realization of Reality.

Universal love and concern for all, are the cardinal traits and guiding forces of this vicegerent personality. The Qur'ān refers to an all comprehensive range of love's domain in a number of verses. This pan-existential love, following the Qur'ānic lead, demands expression in loving kindness to parents (2:83), especially to mother (46:15), and further broadened to include kindred, orphans, those in need, neighbours both near and far, the wayfarers, the stranger and the indigent (2:83, 4:36, 90:16). It directs to always deal gently with people (3:159), to be friendly to others and to forgive and overlook their faults (2:109) even though one is in anger (42:37). Love of Allah (SWT) further commands to maintain attitudes of kindness and fairness even in case of ones enemies and adversaries (5:3,9,45), to try to forgive those who plot against you (5:14), and turn off evil with good (13:22, 28:54). It induces the ego to serve selflessly without any expectation of reward or even thanks (76:8-9), and also makes one prefer others to one's own self even in poverty and deprivation (59:9). The identifying ego does not however rest satisfied with its own self-growth and development, it leads others to the ways of growth and self-realization and helps in establishing a social order based on peace, harmony and security (2:193-194).

Discussion and Conclusions

We have tried to present a brief outline of the transcendental model. Clearly, the transcendental model conceives human soul to be the core of personality. Soul possesses the divine quality of *‘aql* or intellect, distinguishing man from all other animals.¹³ A manifestation of this divine attribute is found in the yearning for a rational and meaningful apprehension of the Reality and the relevant urge to realize the purpose of existence.

This model thus recognises the will to meaning as a basic drive of human self. Iqbal further corroborates the purposive nature of the soul. On the authority of the Quranic verse declaring soul to be belonging to the realm of *amr* or direction (17:87), Iqbal interpretes human soul to be inherently directive and purposive.¹⁴

The issue that now remains is how far this innate purposiveness of the transcendental self is able to confer meaning to human situation. To start with, the meaning potential of the model is conspicuously indicated by the proposition that the human beings and the universe are created by Allah. Being creation of the Supreme Rational Being, both man and the universe are synchronized to some meaningful purpose. Together, they form a perfectly harmonious cosmos. So the perplexity of meaninglessness, natural to the believer in a universe emerging out of mechanical evolution, is out of question here. On the other hand, for those believing in transcendental model, meaning is present by logical implication. For them the search for meaning is acceptable and worthwhile. They would not encounter the universe and Reality with doubt and mistrust. By admitting the inherent harmony of the human self, universe and reality, they would approach them with spontaneous trust and faith. Thus, starting with a built-in trust in an implicit meaning, this model would always beckon its votaries to an ever-present possibility of a meaningful relationship with the universe and Reality that will be fully satisfying to the incessant human drive for pervasive meaning.

To be precise, meaning emerges gradually in proportion to the perception of unity of the Reality. Initially, self at its lowest rung of development, fails to perceive Reality as a unity and responds therefore to the promptings of inner drives and external stimuli as discrete and isolated phenomena of multiple kinds and characters. As a result, ego becomes a slave of momentary sensuous drives and of a plurality of environmental forces. But as soon as ego starts to realize the unitary source of all the pluralities and diversities, personality tends to take an integrated direction of development. This realization, of course, grows gradually and by stages as stated before, which finally culminates in the peak experience of *fanā'*, the total identity with God (in a psychological sense). As the ideal stage, we would refer to this state of highest realization of unity in evaluating the meaning potential of the transcendental model.

It follows from the earlier discussion that as the ego approaches the goal of perfect unitary experience, it tends to shed the influences of the immediate external forces of the society and culture and absorb the attributes and colour of Allah (SWT) into an innately divine personality. At the final stage of *tawhīd*, when the self fully gets rid of all the alien influences except Allah, all the latent divine potentialities, including the inherent integrating quality, bloom to maturity. At this stage, ego, holding the reins of personality with a maximally optimum freedom, harmonizes all the dimensions of personality into a system of organic unity. Diversities of the widest range - spirit and matter, egoistic and altruistic, divine attributes and beastly qualities, progressive thrusts and

regressive pulls - coexist in the little framework of man all turned into a constellation of unity and meaning of the richest kind possible.

Assuming the role of Allah's vicegerency, the ego not only harmonizes and subordinates its inner passions to reason, and reason to the divine wisdom, but also rises above all external divisions of race and colour and transcends all bounds of time and territory. United to Allah, it becomes united to all. Once the ego embarks upon the plane of unity, everything within and without assumes special significance and meaning.

The bodily drives, which subject one to a multiplicity of discrete and disparate goals, and which often jeopardize his integrity by bringing into frequent conflict with reason and reality are now endowed with all the richness of meaning which the vicegerent ego enjoys, thus overcoming doubts about any higher and pervasive meaning of life. The animalistic instincts would no longer operate as isolated forces. As functionaries and participants in the ego's mission of divine vicegerency, they become tied to a single goal.

Neither in satisfaction nor in abstinence do these lower drives torture the ego with any devastating feeling of guilt, since both these kinds of acts are performed in accordance with the divine will, and with the conscious awareness of their meaning for personal and social integrity. Resisting the satisfaction of one's physical drives often brings the ego closer to divinity. When a hungry person, for instance, feeds others by suspending his own hunger, he may enter far deeper into the realm of unity and meaning, since this brings into relief the ego's resemblance to Allah (SWT), who feeds and sustains others but does not need or take food himself. Such self-denial enables the personality to ascend to a higher echelon of unitary experience. In fact, it is this divine spirit of sacrificing one's own needs and rights in favour of others, which forms the basis of integration and unity at social, national and international levels. This was demonstrated in the history of Arabia when the ever-conflicting tribes of the desert peninsula were organized into a unified and indivisible single *ummah*.

All these were made possible due to the divine love bred by *tawhīd*. Divine love, turned into universal love for Allah's creation, organized and arranged diverse drives into an hierarchical schedule of satisfaction and suppression. At the time of conflicts, the deep supra-human potentialities surged up spontaneously to bloom into actuality.

These supra-human feats of behaviour are not, however, tortuous self-agonizing exercise; for in contrast to the existential man with his crushing burden of absolute freedom and responsibility without any latent divinity and assurance of divine intervention, the transcendental man,

with a finite degree of freedom, manifests his latent divine potentials spontaneously with an implicit faith in Allah's help and support. The ego is endowed with sufficient initiative to direct the course of his own development, but not let to writhe in existential despair under the merciless burden of unintervened freedom. The meaning of ego's self-sacrifices are not of the contrived metaphysical kind. It is the self-revealing outcome of ego's realization of its status as representative of Allah (SWT). Allah being perceived as the ultimate source and context of the ego's status, self-denial becomes the means of self-enrichment, as it paves the way to assimilate Allah's transcendental attributes into the personality by bringing the transcendental nature of self into the focus of consciousness.

Moreover, the uniqueness of the individual, highlighted by the humanist, is also implied in the transcendental model as following from the Qur'anic revelation. To quote Iqbal, "The Qur'an in its simple forceful manner emphasizes the individuality and uniqueness... It is in consequence of this view of man as a unique individuality which makes it impossible for one individual to bear the burden of another, and entitles him only to what is due to his own personal effort..."¹⁵

Thus a full-grown transcendental self, by incorporating an adequate measure of personal initiative and divine intervention, turns the challenge of human responsibility and freedom into a highly pleasurable and bearable asset. This freedom, though moderate, also makes the human striving for meaning, meaningful by barring the possibility of blind, compulsive and instinctive acting out like the animals. The incorporation of the individual uniqueness in the model further enriches it in consonance with the positive view of the humanists.

In fact the total universe is brought under a unifying and harmonious relationship by the vicegerent self. Bearing and revealing the signs of unity, each and every particle of the universe confirms and strengthens ego's faith in meaning. All its resources are perceived as the universal trust to be tapped and utilized for establishing a society where all should be able to realize the potentialities of their lives in the most meaningful way.

Finally death, the stumbling block in the way of life's meaning in all the other behavioural models, has been turned by the transcendental model into a royal gateway to the inexhaustible treasure of meaning. Meaning is inseparably related to life. Without life meaning has no other repository to settle on. Death, considered as a blind alley of life, becomes synonymous with meaninglessness. In other models, where life is viewed as having emerged by chance through the process of evolution,

without any transcendental purpose, death looms large at the horizon of life as its most profound despair. In contrast to this hopelessly constricting view of human life foredoomed to meaninglessness, the transcendental model gives a promise of eternal life and enduring meaning. Life on this earth, oriented towards the transcendental potentialities beyond death, becomes highly significant and meaningful, for it is a veil to be lifted for the most intimate and blissful experience of Reality, the Unity and Meaning par excellence. It is this burning desire to see the Reality without the veils of plurality that made its seekers embrace death as the most welcome event. That is why on the occasion of the Iraqi expedition Hazrat Saa'd (r) wrote to Rustum the General, "Rustum: there are people with me to whom death is more attractive than wine is to the people in your army."¹⁶ Thus both life and death are equally meaningful in a transcendental model, for they are positions and stages on the same extension of transcendental existence leading to the same goal of unity and meaning.

The prospect of life's eternal continuation beyond death significantly contributes to existential meaning in yet another way. The life on the earthly side of death's fence at times appears random and chaotic, considered as an isolated and discrete phenomenon. Many a times, righteous deeds seem to go unrewarded while falsehood appears triumphant. These tend to rob life of all its meaning. Meaning can only be restored if there is provision for justice and restoration of balance in the extended phase of eternal life. Transcendental model based on revelation is however unequivocal about this final justice and recompense on the Day of Judgement. Thus life considered as a cosmic whole, including its eternal extension beyond death, becomes a meaningfully symmetrical configuration of perfect balance and harmony.

In line with the foregoing discussion it can now be said that human self, by achieving a transcendental experience of unity or proximity with the Divine Reality, enters into the threshold of a realm where his existence and the universe would become a meaningful unity. In the wake of such an experience one may instantaneously realize that unity is meaning and meaning is unity. Even if the peak mystical experience of unity is not attained, the meaning of life will still continue to unfold itself with increasing clarity to a believer in *tawhīd* as he gradually approaches the final stage of the unitary experience. It is also evident from the preceding discussion that the experience of transcendental unity first organises the personality into a nucleus of such a meaningful constellation of all its elements that the self perceives perfect meaning in a perfectly balanced system for the satisfaction of the totality of his drives and desires. This individual nucleus of meaning then continues to grow

to a fuller system to incorporate finally the whole humanity and the universe within the unitary fold of meaning. That these are not mere flights of imagination of fantasy but flesh and blood realities of history are borne out by the empirical reports about the seekers of meaning and unity in authentic biographical accounts.¹⁷

One possible criticism likely to be raised against the transcendental model presented here would be that this model is concerned with goals and ideals which are outside the domain of positive science and thus is appropriate only in the non-empirical disciplines like philosophy and theology. This sort of objection however, seems to be beside the mark here. First, because the goals and ideals referred to above have all been empirically actualized in the past in the lives of significant personalities in different degrees, and similar efforts may as well be traced among the current human strivings too.¹⁸ Secondly, experimental or scientific study of these phenomena can always be made, since reports of the observable behavioral correlates and their manifestation are available in reasonably precise details in authentic biographical accounts of the individuals who have actualised the said goals. In this way specific plans for empirical studies could be justifiably developed. Comparative studies of behaviour can also be conducted between those who believe in and strive for actualizing these ideals and those who have ideals of completely different kind. The different cognitive processes and behavioural routes leading to the formation and realization of these goals and ideals may then be operationally specified. In this way such normative and idealized models can significantly contribute to the science of the development of behaviour.

Notes

1. Abraham M. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1953).
2. Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, "Meaning as an Integrating Factors" in C. Bucher and F. Massarik eds., *The Course of Human Life* (New York: Springer, 1968).
3. See for example, Joseph Fabry, *The Pursuit of Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), and Archiball MacLeish, "The Promise of Meaning" *American Scholar* (1972), 357-363.
4. Dane Rudyhar, *The Astrology of Personality* (New York: Doubleday, 1936).
5. Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969).
6. J. Battista and R. Almond, "The Development of Meaning in Life" *Psychiatry*

(1973): 409-427.

7. Some of the psychologists who can be considered as representative of what we call transcendental model include a diverse group of scholars including, for instance, Muhammad Ajmal, *Muslim Contribution to Psychotherapy* (Islamabad: National Institute of Psychology, 1986); Frankl, *Search for Meaning*; M. Huq, "Concept of Personality Development in the Light of Islamic Thought," *Bangladesh Journal of Psycho-log*, 7 (1984): 118-128; J. Nuttin, *Psychoanalysis and Personality: A Dynamic Theory of Normal Personality* (New York, Academic Press, 1962); J.C. Coleman, ed., *Psychology and Effective Behavior* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1969) 519-529; P. Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1952); Mir F. Zaman, "Qur'anic Model of Human Behaviour," *Bangladesh Journal of Psychology* 6 (1980): 311-315.

8. Coleman, *Effective Behaviour*, 519-529.

9. Ibid.

10. Summarized by C. Hall and G. Lindzey, *Theories of Personality*, 3rd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1978) 42-43.

11. For a summary of Al-Ghazālī's thought see M. Umaruddin, *Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazālī* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1962); for Maulānā Rūmī, see Reza Arasteh, *Rūmī: the Persian, the Sufi* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1947); for a more recent but noteworthy contribution see, Qari Muhammad Taiyyab, *Jame^e-ul-khalā'iq* Bengali tr. M. Gharibullah (Dhaka: Azizia Kutubkhana, 1977).

12. M. Abul Quasem, "Psychology in Islamic Ethics," *The Muslim World* (1985): 213-226.

13. M. Umaruddin, *Al-Ghazālī* 65-68.

14. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1962).

15. Ibid., 76.

16. Muhammad Zakariyā, *Stories of Sahaba* trans. A. Rashid Arshad (Lahore: Idar-e-Islamiyat, 1983).

17. See for example, T.W. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam* 2nd ed. (Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House, 1984), 10-44; S. Fariduddin [°]Attār, *Muslim Saints and Mystics* trans. A.J. Arberry, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966); Athar Hussain, *The Glorious Caliphate* (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publication, 1974); Ebrahim Khan, *Anecdotes from Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1947); Abul Hasan Ali Nadwī, *Islam and the World* trans. Muhammad Asaf Qidwai (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1961); Shiblī Nu[°]manī, *Life of the Prophet* trans. Tayyib Bakht Badauni, (Delhi: Hindustan Publications, 1983); Muhammad Yusuf, *Life of Sahāba* vol. 1, trans. Majid Ali Khan (New Delhi: Idara Ishaat-e-Diniyat, 1981); W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and the Integration of Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 87-91.

18. Mir S. Basri, "Idries Shah: Bridge between East and West," in L.F. Rushbrook Williams, ed., *Sufi Studies, East and West* (Kent: Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge, 1974) 28-32; Mohammad Yahya Haschmi, "Spirituality, Science and Psychology," in Rushbrook Williams, *Sufi Studies* 114-132.