

**A SEMANTICAL ANALYSIS OF
THE CONCEPTS OF SPIRIT AND
SOUL IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY**

A Thesis Presented

by

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to

**The Institute of Social Sciences
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in the Subject of
PHILOSOPHY-LOGIC-HISTORY OF SCIENCE**

**Middle East Technical University
Ankara, Turkey
September, 1989**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my indebtedness to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alparslan Aıkgen for his invaluable guidance and encouragement ever since I came into contact with him as a student.

I would like to thank also to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Akın Ergüden to his helpful suggestions and criticism in shaping my research.

I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam for his assistance and guidance throughout my studies.

for men who think

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INTRODUCTION

As the title of my thesis suggests, this study consists primarily of the method by which *semantical tools* are applied to the concepts "spirit" and "soul" in **Islamic philosophy**.

I have a presupposition in this study that a *semantical analysis* of these concepts in Islamic philosophy coincides with their analysis as they are used in the Qur'an, although both attempts are not necessarily the same. Since the source of these concepts in this mode of philosophizing is the *Qur'an*, my semantical procedure will be applied first to the *text* or the *conceptual analysis of the material* used by the Qur'anic vocabulary. Therefore, a semantical analysis of these concepts in Islamic philosophy presupposes and indeed requires first their analysis as they are used by the Qur'an, which is why I have claimed that the analysis of these concepts in Islamic philosophy and in the Qur'an coincide.

This means, in a sense, employment of *semantics* to the *Qur'anic terms*, which I shall attempt to analyze in this study. However the concept of semantics, today, is used in different meanings. I shall thus try to elucidate what is meant by it here and thereby analyze the meaning to be used in my study.

As a technical term **semantics** is used to refer to the **study of meaning**.¹ In other words, it is a science which is concerned with the **phenomenon of meaning** in the widest sense of the word. So anything that may be considered to have any meaning is entitled to constitute an **object of semantics**.² But the phenomenon of meaning covers many aspects of a language; therefore, semantics lacks harmony and uniformity,

1. F.R. Palmer. *Semantics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.1; see also G. Leech, *Semantics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), p.IX.

2. Toshihiko Izutsu. *God and Man* (Tokyo: Keio University, 1964), p. 10.

thus making it hard to give a universal definition of semantics. It is also for this reason that we have different theories of meaning. But it is also easy to say that semantics is a component or level of linguistics of the same kind as phonetics or grammar; at this point, if we regard a language as a communication system it will associate with meaning.³ Accordingly we may assume that a **word** is one of the basic units of semantics.

I would like put down a theoretical postulate which may prove to be useful whenever we need an analysis of the meaning of a word. *Semantics*, as I understand and shall use in this case, *is the analytic study of the key terms of a language with a view to arrive at the conceptual grasp of a specific world-view*. We shall use the key terms for those words that play actually a decisive role in making up the basic conceptual structure of people's world-view. For the world which surrounds them is reflected and interpreted by these concepts.⁴

In this context, it is a study of a nature and structure of the world-view of a society in any period of its history. How can we accomplish this task for a private language that belongs to a particular community? I suppose that this may be achieved by means of a methodological analysis of the **fundamental concepts** which that community has produced for itself.

It will be easy, with this perspective, to see that the semantical analysis of the Qur'an in this study includes the Qur'anic vision of universe. *My task is to concentrate on examining analytically the concepts of spirit and soul which seem to play a decisive role in the formation of the Qur'anic world-view*.

For the Qur'anic text, in this place, I shall use a technical distinction offered by T. Izutsu instead of the distinction used by Lyons who maintains this distinction between the **sentence meaning** and **utterance meaning**.⁵ On the other hand, Izutsu classifies sentences into the **basic meaning**

3. Palmer, op. cit., p.5.

4. Izutsu, op. cit., p. 11.

5. Palmer, op. cit., p.8.

and **relational meaning**, as one of the methodological concepts of semantics. *The first*, whether it is found *in the text or outside the text*, has no specific meaning. Where it is found does not cause much problem for analysis. *The latter* refers to the **textual situation**, and thus it is related to specific context. In the relational meaning, the words stand in a very close relation to various different concepts.⁶ There is no proof that knowing the meaning of a sentence does not entail knowing the context in which it is used. So we are not only concerned with *words* but also with **sentences**. For the meaning of the words is derived from their function as a part of a sentence.⁷

In addition, the concept of **semantic field** of a word is especially important in determining the nature of the Qur'anic concepts. The concepts or words are interdependent and their meaning can be derived from the *entire system of relations* reflected in the text.

When the Qur'an uses a particular word within a certain context it puts that word into a close connection with other words. One may claim that if that word remains outside its system, it will never bear the meaning attached to it in that system. Thus, we find that in a particular context relational meaning is either **something connotative** which is added to the basic meaning or a **new concept** with its particular position in a particular field. For instance, if we take the word "**yawm**" which literally means "**day**", and examine it, we will find that this word also refers to **resurrection** which may be called **eschatological field** that is constituted by the term **yawm** in a specific context. Therefore, in this special semantical field, the word **yawm** does not refer to "**ordinary day**", it rather means the "**last day**".⁸

We know that most words used in the Qur'anic text have **pre-Qur'anic** meaning; that is, they were taken from the pre-Qur'anic period. Therefore, before they are used in the Qur'anic text they belonged

6. Izutsu, op. cit., p.19.

7. Ibid., p. 38.

8. Ibid., p. 20.

to a **different conceptual system**. When the Qur'an puts them into completely **new system** by connecting each of them in multiple relationships, some words in the completely new system lost most of their **original conceptual meaning** and thus from the situation dependent of the context arose a new meaning or meanings. We can claim that it is from that situation in which the teaching of the Qur'an came into existence by *the universal rearrangement of concepts and redistribution of values* which those words carry. Thus the pre-Qur'anic period is necessary for our special purpose here in order to shed light on the basic meanings of the words.⁹ That is why I shall devote space in their convenient instances to determine semantical usage of both concepts, i.e. *spirit* and *soul* in both periods.

The historical development of the meanings of these concepts are not relevant to my study. **Historical semantics** as the temporal study of meaning is used to refer to the development and change of meaning. However, Saussure showed that the history of a word may give a seriously inadequate account of its meaning.¹⁰ For him, basic relation in language is relative to the words that stand in relation to one another, which is described as **synchronic**¹¹; and it must logically precede the **diachronic** one. For we cannot study the change in meaning until we have obtained the usage of that word in the present language.

As we pointed out above, defining the meaning of a concept needs to discover where the words are used or connected to each other. Yet, understanding of this process is not independent of *any interpretation*. In this case, we face a question: How can we understand a given text correctly? All human studies, as Dilthey remarked, are founded upon the interpretation of a specific text or texts. Hence, correct or valid interpretation is crucial to all subsequent inferences in these studies. For the task of interpretation can be described as the **construction of textual**

9. Ibid., p. 36.

10. Jean Piaget. *Structuralism* (New York: Basic books, 1970), p. 76.

11. Palmer, op. cit., p. 12.

meaning. So it explicates those meanings which are explicitly or implicitly introduced in the text.¹²

Here I need to lay down the basic assumptions of my study, at least in principle, for a correct and objective analysis of the concepts "**spirit**" and "**soul**" in the Qur'an. **First** of all, in this context, it may be said that there are different styles and there is no unique way of analyzing a text. **Secondly**, my idea of method is a progressive transition from one case to another in order to solve the problem. **Thirdly**, it necessarily implies a principle of unity and thus it is a method based on uniformity. **Moreover**, to use the methods for conceptual analysis is not to adopt them into a study in the same procedure. I believe that every theory just by itself cannot be adequately and universally applied to the Qur'anic text for the purpose of semantical analysis and therefore, we must express our needs for more than one respective theory. **Finally**, although for a work a variety of logically incompatible interpretations may be offered, it does not follow from this that there cannot be **any objective semantical interpretation** of that work.¹³

For instance, if we take the **structuralist movement** which was developed as a new approach in the social sciences we will find that still cogency and adequacy of some theory is discussed among the concerned scholars.¹⁴ Yet the English anthropologist Edmund Leach has applied the structuralist method to the **Biblical materials**.¹⁵ He studied three episodes of the *Bible* to show closer parallels among each episode feature in a complex diagram and concluded that:

I don't claim that this kind of structural analysis is the one and only legitimate procedure for interpretation of *myth*. It seems to me that whether any particular individual finds this kind of thing interesting or stimulating must depend on *personal temperament*.¹⁶

12. E.D. Hirsch. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 210.

13. D. Juhl Peter. *Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 201.

14. Howard Gardner. *The Quest for Mind* (New York: Knopf, 1974), p.9.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

In addition to this, we also know that neither Levi-Strauss nor Piaget defines structural approach in the same way.¹⁷ If we turn to linguistics, in point of several linguists, structuralism is chiefly a departure from the *diachronic* study isolated from linguistic phenomena and a return to the investigation of a synchronously functioning unified language system.¹⁸

In spite of all these numerous structuralist approaches, we can sum up the idea of structure which is based on two peculiarities:

a- to have an ideal of intrinsic intelligibility by the postulate that *structures form one self-sufficient whole*, and that to grasp them, we do not have to make reference to all sorts of *extraneous elements*

b- Although structures are thought to have a general diversity, the structuralist also has certain insights that attribute certain common and perhaps necessary properties to them.¹⁹

I believe that it will be useful now to mention the principles which serve as a basis for any kind of **structural analysis**. For I have participated in and applied some of these rules to my thesis. Therefore, I think that, it is more appropriate to discuss them here as they are implimented in my study. **First of all**, each phenomenon and myth is analyzed individually; a procedure used by the structuralists that I shall make use of in my semantical analysis. **Secondly**, the story used in that myth or phenomenon is broken down into shortest possible sentences. **Thirdly**, each sentence is then written on an index card bearing a corresponding number of the sentence. Here each card shows that a certain function, at a given time, is linked to a given subject. In addition, each gross constituent unit consists of interwoven units of relations. **Finally**, such relations are grouped according to a two dimensional time referrent which is simultaneously **diachronic** and **synchronic** so that they will produce a meaning.²⁰

17. Ibid., p. 10.

18. Piaget, op. cit., p.4.

19. Ibid., p. 4.

20. Claude Levi-Strauss. *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic books, 1967), p. 208.

In using this procedure Levi-Strauss takes the **Oedipus myth** as the paradigm case and explains it in the following manner:

We shall not interpret the Oedipus myth in literal terms. We shall attempt to perform the same kind of operation on the Oedipus myth, trying out several arrangements of myths until we find one which is in harmony with principles enumerated above.²¹

He adds that "*if we want to understand the myth, we will have to disregard one half of the diachronic dimension (top to bottom) and read from the left to the right column each one being considered as a unit.*"²²

It is clear that the **idea of wholeness** is the key idea in the notion of structure. Roland Barthes, who used this procedure in the literary realm, has formulated a theory of structural analysis and applied his techniques to literary documents.²³

When we again return to the **problem of interpretation**, for many structuralists it is not a matter of recovering some meaning which lies behind the work. It is rather an attempt to participate and observe the play of possible meanings which the text gives.²⁴ It is evident that with this view one cannot speak of the correct or objectively valid semantical analysis of a text. They suggest to use the concept of "*plausibility*", "*implausibility*" or such concepts as "*reasonable*", "*admissible*", "*inadmissible*", "*not possible*" instead of "*correct*" or "*valid*" interpretation.

It is true that the **structure of analyses** has some peculiar characteristics. Although several interpretations of a word, sentence or passage is possible, I believe that this is not *limitless*. It may not be claimed that a textual meaning depends on the *reader's purpose*. A reader cannot construe a work in any way he likes. For instance the rules of language sets limits to the possible interpretations.

21. Ibid., p. 210.

22. Ibid., p. 211.

23. Gardner, op. cit., 229.

24. Peter, op. cit., p. 197.

On this subject, I intend to follow Hirsch's claim that we ought to accept the author's intention as the decisive criterion of what a text means. Otherwise, interpretation will be hopelessly subjective and therefore would not enable us to prove genuine knowledge about the meaning of texts. Hirsch's claim is that:

The meaning of a work depends on the author's intention only within the limits of what the text could-given the rules of the language-be construed to mean.²⁵

With this claim he has united two extreme views on the validity of interpretation of a text. The first view insists on the **author's intention**; the second, only on the **text**. In other words, the rules of language in question-what he calls the principle of sharability-constitute the only constraint on how a critic properly interprets a text.²⁶ From this claim it appears that even the author's intention as a *discriminating norm* is not the only satisfactory criterion for interpretation.

From the above considerations, at this point, in order to clarify the nature of the question, I propose to examine as well as to provide a perspective for dealing with them. I would like to briefly mention several points that offer various answers to the problems faced in this context, especially concerning the *semantical procedure* followed in this study.

First, the Qur'anic text itself differs from other books, even from the scriptural books, in that its concepts form a complicated web of unity. **Second**, textual features of a text are regarded as part of **internal evidence** for semantical analysis. **Third**, internal evidence for a certain interpretation is discovered through semantics, syntax, grammar of a language and through the literature which provides sources for a dictionary of that language. **Fourth**, unlike many other texts, the Qur'anic text, I believe, puts down for its readers the **principles** required for a grasping

25. Ibid., p.9.

26. Ibid., p.117.

author's meaning or its world-view as their normative rule. So its verses may be divided into two kinds; 1. **basic verses**, 2. **allegorical verses**, as mentioned in 3/Āl-'Imrān, 7. **Fifth**, when we appeal to the text in supporting any meaning of a concept we will need some general criterion such as **coherence**, because there is a **logical connection** between the **meaning of a text** and the **author's intention**. For an author's beliefs, feelings and intentions are closely related to his choice or use of words. Then, a claim about the meaning of the concept within a text is at least in part a claim about the author's usage of the words in question.²⁷ **Sixth**, seeking coherence is an appeal to the *author's implicit intention*. If a work is not complete in itself, how can we get a standard by which to measure the validity of our understanding? Therefore, the Qur'anic text presents itself to be free from contradictions or any inconsistency within itself as stated in 4/Nisā', 82. **Seventh**, when we face a particular word or passage that is obscure within a given text, we shall use **similar passages** as a structuralist would do, in order to clarify the meaning of these words or passages. For the meaning cannot reside in the isolated elements but only in the way those elements are combined. It is then determined with the relationship among basic elements. In this case, **semantical analysis is beyond the formal structure of a word and it sheds light on the original meaning of the concept within a context**.

In the light of these considerations, I shall attempt to determine the meaning of the concepts of **spirit** and **soul** in the pre-Qur'anic period mainly by using dictionaries which include this kind of material.

Semantically I shall regard this part as a **diachronic study** of the whole static system in order to compare and contrast with another **surface** which is one and same language i.e., the Qur'anic period.²⁸ I shall try to avoid, on the lexical level, the danger of interpreting single words without due attention to the latter semantical developments.

In order to grasp the meaning of a concept in its original sense, every occurrence of a term within the text will be noted and classified into

27. Peter, op. cit., p. 51.

28. Izutsu, op. cit., p. 38.

dating suggested by Nöldeke for discovering the development inherent in the meaning of these concepts through the four periods of revelation.²⁹ The usage of the Qur'anic concepts within its text will be regarded as a **synchronic approach**. I have drawn some tables to show the **inner semantical transformation** between the pre-Qur'anic and the Qur'anic period and the **conceptual usages** of these terms in the text of the Qur'an.

In some cases, I shall consider different meanings of a Qur'anic sentence by reconsidering *the antecedents of pronouns* used. I shall not prefer the literal translation of obscure passages more particularly of **allegorical verses** on the same subject. They will be interpreted in accordance with its *specific context* in harmony with the *whole text*.

In order to complete my analysis of the concepts "soul" and "spirit" in Islamic philosophy, then, first a semantical analysis of these concepts will be carried out with respect to the Qur'an. I have tried here to present my procedure for this, which will be done in the **first chapter**. Then an analysis of these concepts in Islamic philosophy shall follow in the **second chapter**. I shall try to summarize here the views of dominant schools in Islamic philosophy. This shall enable us to see what kind of a semantical transformation these terms underwent after the post -

29. I shall not follow in this study the dating of passages and verses by Muslim scholars, because of several defects. The reasons for preferring Nöldeke's chronology are from the point of view of;

a- the chapters are usually taken in accordance with internal evidence,

b- the attention has also been paid to considerations of style and vocabulary,

c- the Qur'anic text has been subjected to severe scrutiny according to method of modern literary criticism. [see for further investigations *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'an* revised by W.Montgomery Watt, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), pp 108-111.] He divides chapters into mainly those that are revealed at Mecca and those that are revealed in Madina. The first is also divided into three periods. It is the change of style that enable us to coherently divide the Qur'anic period into the following four stages under two main divisions:

- The chapters of the First Meccan Period are: 96,74,111,106,108,104,107,102,105,92,90,94,93, 97, 86,91,80,68,87,95,103,85,73,101,99,82,81,53,84,100,79,77,78,88,89,75,83,69,51,52,56,70, 55,112,109,113,114,1.

- The chapters of the Second Meccan Period are: 54,37,71,76,44,50,20,26,15,19,38,36,43,72, 67,23,21,25,17,27,18.

- The chapters of the Third Meccan Period are: 32,41,45,16,30,11,14,12,40,28,39,29,31,42,10,34, 35,7,46,6,13.

- The chapters of the Madinan Period are: 2,98,64,62,8,47,3,61,57,4,65,59,33,63,24,58,22,48,66, 60,110,9,5.

Qur'anic development. In order to ground my conclusions in these two chapters, I shall try to develop what I call a **phenomenology of spirit and soul**, by which I mean the **science of investigating the concepts "spirit" and "soul" as phenomena**; this will be done in the **third chapter**.

Therefore, I counterpose **"spirit"** and **"soul"** as phenomena in **Chapter III**, rather than mere concepts. This way, I believe, I shall provide a foundation for my semantical analysis of these phenomena as concepts. Since concepts that refer to phenomena must denote and hence correspond to those phenomena completely, if I show such a denotation and correspondence between the concepts of **"spirit"**, **"soul"** and the phenomena they refer to, then, I will be justified in my analysis done in the first and second chapters. Thus, my procedure in this study shall begin **first** from a semantical analysis of **"spirit"** and **"soul"** as used in the Qur'an, which provides both the cultural and philosophical background of these concepts in Islamic thought. **Then**, an investigation of these concepts in Islamic philosophy shall follow. **Finally**, the basis of my analysis will be given as a phenomenology of spirit and soul.

CHAPTER I CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

This chapter deals directly with a semantical analysis of the terms to be studied in this thesis; these terms are the concept of *spirit* and *soul*. In order to present a systematic exposure of these concepts as they are used in the Qur'an I shall divide this chapter into two sections, each of which will discuss respectively *spirit* and *soul*. My analysis in both sections will first attempt to demonstrate the general semantical usage of the concepts in question; and then their specific usages in the relevant text of the Qur'an.

A. SECTION ONE THE CONCEPT OF *RÛH*

1. Semantical Usage

Here, I shall first attempt to show the semantical usage of the concept *rûh* in Arabic by referring to the dictionaries and relevant literary works. This investigation will give us not only the precise common semantical meaning of the term, but also how the term *rûh* is adapted to the philosophical usage from the everyday meaning. In this way we can easily grasp the semantical transformation from the everyday usage to the philosophical nomenclature. However, this transformation unlike the concept of *nafs* is from the metaphorical, spiritual usage in everyday meaning to the philosophical terminology as an *abstract* and *invisible meaning*.

Now, to acquire a precise semantical meaning of the term *rûh* and its derivatives used in literature we have to mention sentences concerning their context.

The Arab lexicographers¹ say that the word *rûh* is derived from a root verb, **R-H**, which may have in the middle radical letter *waw* or *yā*.

1. Ibn Manzûr. *Lisān al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar Lisān al-Arab), Vol. I, p. 1247; and also Isma'il b. Hammad Al Jawhari. *Sihāh* (Beirut: Dar al-'ilm. 1979), Vol. I, p. 367.

According to the middle radical letter *waw* the verb would be *rāha*, *yarūhu*, in which case the infinitive noun would be *rāwh* and *rawāh*; whereas according to the middle radical letter *yā* it would be *rāha*, *yarīhu* in which case the infinitive noun would be *rīh*. Both of these are denominative from the nouns *rūh* and *rīh* meaning *rest*, *wind*, or *odour*.²

The word *rawh* means wide space, comfort, rest; and the noun *arwāh* is the plural form of *rawh*, *rūh* and *rīh* (wind). The word *arwāh* is also used with the metaphorical applications to mean evening, rest, comfort and pleasant odour.³

Let us try to show in what senses, the Arabs used these terms in order to obtain their precise meaning:⁴

<i>Rāha</i>	: He journeyed, or did a thing in the evening or in the afternoon (from the declining of the sun, from the meridian until night)
<i>Rahat al-Ibilu</i>	: the camels returned in the evening
<i>Ruhtu ileyhim</i>	: I came to them in the evening or afternoon
<i>al Rawāh</i>	: Part of the day, but it is used by the Arabs in the sense of journeying at any time of the night or day

From the saying of a poet:

"*Idha dalakat shams al-nahāri bi-rāhin*" means "when the sun has set or become dark."⁵

The word *marāh* shows a place from which people go or to which they return in the evening.⁶

2. Raghīb al-Isfahānī. *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharib al Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah), p. 205.

3. Edward William Lane. *An Arabic English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du liban, 1968), Vol. III, p. 1178-1180.

4. Ibn Manzûr, op. cit., p. 1251 and Al-Jawharī, op. cit., p. 370.

5. Lane, op. cit., p. 1181.

6. Al-Jawharī, op. cit., p. 369.

In all these usages, as we have seen, the semantical construction is either verbal or as a noun referring to mainly an action which occurred at the rest of time and may remind us of *quietness* (silence) and *the camouflage of action*. The following two usages are more significant to our subject,⁷ in order to indicate the relationship and transformation between the usage of pre-Qur'anic and Qur'anic periods:

Rāha al-Shajaru : The trees felt the *wind*
Rihat al-Shajaru : The tree is shaken by the *wind*

The last two usages signifies another meaning of the verb *rāha* which shows us that there is one invisible thing and known, but, it has important effect and sometimes its influence increases to the highest degree; though the two examples bear the sense of the verb which expresses an invisible but somewhat known effect of the phenomenon signified by it. For the effect of a phenomenon as expressed by a verb in our language may not be invisible but known through its effect on other senses. Now we shall give more interesting usages of this verb:⁸

Rāha al-shay'a : He *smelt* the thing,
perceived its smell or odour
Arwahtu minhu tayyiben : I *perceived* from him a sweet
odour.

These two examples show that the meaning of the term refers especially to a psychological state, i.e. *sensations*. This usage expresses more explicitly a mutual affection between a thing and a person. It is clear that in this case there is a person under an affection.

All these show that there is no difference between words *rūh* and *rīh*. In other words, if we speak semantically, though both words have different forms, they refer to the same meaning; i.e they are *synonymous*. As the result of the above investigations, we may say that the term *rūh* with its derivations is a substantive which has become broadly equivalent in meaning to *wind*, *odour* and *rest*.

7. Ibn Manzūr, op. cit., p. 1248.

8. Al-Jawhārī, op. cit., p. 370.

If the concept of *rûh* in the *pre-Qur'anic Arabic* does not seem to be used in the meaning of *spirit* to refer to *human soul*, how is it transformed into the meaning which is used in the later *post-Qur'anic Arabic* to refer to *soul*? The common opinion of the scholars on this point is that *it is the Umayyad poetry which uses the term nafs for the first time to refer to the human soul*.⁹ We shall examine in due course *whether such a use exists in the Qur'an*. This point undoubtedly constitutes what I have called the post-Qur'anic development.

After this exposition of the general semantical usage of the term *rûh*, we pass on to see the specific usage of it as it occurs in the Qur'an.

2. Qur'anic Usage of the Term *Rûh*

The revelation of the Qur'an took place in a gradual way. It is, therefore, possible to observe stages or periods in the development of the revelatory process. I shall follow the customary classification of this revelatory process, which distinguishes four periods.¹⁰ The first three periods belong to the Prophet's stay at *Mecca* and the last period belongs to his revelatory experiences in *Madina*. We may date these periods approximately as; **1. First Meccan period 610-?**¹¹, **2. Second Meccan period ?-?**, **3. Third Meccan period ?-622** **4. Fourth period, i.e. Madinan period 622-632**. These dates are not precise, and they cannot be pinpointed with a historical precision. But I still take them as essential in my study. Since they will be guides of the chronology of revelation. It is in this order that I shall discuss the concept of *spirit* as it is unfolded in the development of the revelatory process.

a. The Development of the Concept of *Rûh* in the First Period: The term *rûh* does not appear in the earliest chronologically ordered thirteen chapters of the Qur'an. The earliest example of the Qur'anic usage of this term is in the sense of *divine inspiration* which occurs

9 See, for example E.E. Calverly. "Doctrines of the Soul (Nafs and Rûh) in Islam" *Muslim World*, 33 (1943), p. 256.

10 See the chapters considered in these periods on p. 10

11. Although it is possible to divide the Qur'an according to this chronological order, it is impossible to determine the exact dates when these periods begin and end. But some dates are certain, and we have indicated them here. I shall use question marks for the ones that cannot be ascertained with certainty.

in chapter 97 (Qadr) verse 4; "In the night of Qadr the *Spirit* and the angels descend": This translation is the traditional understanding of this phenomenon. However, when we interpret the conjunctive preposition *waw* as a beginning particle the meaning of the term *rûh* dramatically changes. For in the traditional interpretation *rûh* is said to refer to the *Angel of Revelation*, viz., Gabriel, whereas according to my semantical analysis it refers to the *inspiration* itself. Accordingly in this interpretation the verse must be rendered as "the angels deccends by their Lord's permission bearing the inspiration in that night."¹²

The next occurence of the term spirit is in chapter 78/Nabā', verse 38, which is the eighteenth chapter in the chronology used in this study. Here, in this verse it may be the Angel of Revelation, namely Gabriel, who seems to be distinguished from other angels because of his higher rank among the angels. The traditional understanding renders this verse as "the day that the *Spirit*, i.e. Gabriel, and the angels will stand forth in ranks; none shall speak then, except any who is permitted by the Merciful. And he shall say what is right." The traditional semantical approach seems to be a plausible one here; For the verb *stand forth* (*qāma*) requires a concrete subject, which, in the verse follows immediately. Therefore, *rûh* in this context cannot be interpreted as *the revelation*.

When we examine the chapters that follow the chapter 78, we do not find any occurence of it until chapter 70/Ma'ārij, verse 4. This verse describes the *Spirit* as ascending to God together with the angels. The semantical structure of this verse resembles the chapter 78, viz., verse 38, because a similar verb is also used in this case, which is *ascend* (*ta'ruju*). This verb as the one (i.e. stand forth) in 78/Nabā', 38, needs a concrete subject. Therefore, the *spirit* must refer again to the Angel of Revelation in this case, as the traditional semantical analysis also accepts.

We do not find any other occurence of the term *Spirit* in this period of the Qur'anic chronology. The general semantical characteristic of the

12. See also Muhammed Asad. *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andulus, 1980), p. 1605.

usage of this term is that it is always used in conjunction with the angels and with the definite article. Two occurrences of it (in 78/38 and 70/4) is interpreted as referring to Gabriel, whereas its first occurrence (in 97/4) refers to *the revelation*.

b. The Development of the Concept of *Rûh* in the Second Period: The first occurrence of the term *Spirit* in this period is in 26/Shu'arâ', 193, which is the fourth occurrence since the beginning of revelation in 610 A.D. Here it is used in the phrase *al-rûh al-amîni*.e. the *Trustworthy Spirit*; with a literal translation the text runs from the verse 192-194 as: "Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. With it (revelation) came down the *Trustworthy Spirit* to your heart, so that you may admonish."

The second occurrence is in 15/Hijr, 29, which seems to be a metaphysical usage of the term *spirit* (*rûh*); "Behold! your Lord' said to the angels: I am about to create man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape. When I have fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of *My Spirit* (*min rûhî*)." The next occurrence is in 19/Maryam, 17 where it is said that "Mary placed a screen(to hide herself) from them; then, We sent to her *Our Spirit* and he appeared before her as a man well-shaped." The fourth occurrence repeats what is said in 15/Hijr, 29 in which the breathing of God's Spirit into man is mentioned. The next five chapters in the chronology of revelation employed here does not contain any occurrence of the term *spirit*.

The concept of *spirit* appears for the fifth time in this period in 21 (Anbiyâ, 91, which refers to Mary's conception of Jesus and declares thus; "We breathed into her of *Our Spirit* and We made her and her son a sign for all peoples." The last and sixth occurrence of the term in question is in 17/Isrâ', 85, which is extremely important for our study, because in this verse there is an explicit question about the nature of *spirit*, viz, *rûh* and an answer regarding this question: "*They ask you* (O Muhammed) *about* (the nature of) **the Spirit** (*rûh*). *Say: The Spirit is from the command* (amr) *of your Lord, and only a little of its knowledge is given to you.*"

We may, then, make the following observations on the usage of the term *rûh* which is often used in the Qur'an to denote *divine inspiration*. The occurrence in 26/Shu'arā', 193 may have this meaning, but the context of the verse indicates that the prophet had light from on high upon his heart.¹³ It is clear that in this usage the term *rûh* either refers to the revelation, as pointed out above, or to the Angel himself, who brings the revelation. God's breathing from his *rûh* into Adam in 15/Hicr, 29 and 38/Sād 72 will be analyzed below. The verse 21/Anbiyā', 91 involves the allegorical expression with reference to Mary's conception of Jesus. It has been widely and erroneously interpreted specifically in relation to the *birth of Jesus*. Though it is hard to precisely determine the referent of our concept in this context. It is at least clear that it must be interpreted independently of the phenomenon of *Mary's conception* and *the birth of Jesus*. It must, I believe, be interpreted in the light of similar semantical evidences occurring in previous verses (e.g. 15/Hijr) as *the inspiration* or *revelation in general*. *What is the nature of revelation? It is this question that is handled in 17/Isrā', 85*. The answer given on phenomena of revelation is that it is a spiritual mystery beyond the capacity of man. It cannot be explained in terms of general human experience. Therefore, it is stated that only a little of its knowledge is given (i.e. revealed in the Qur'an) to us. Hence, we are unable to know its nature.

Some philosophers and theologians¹⁴ took the term *rûh* here to mean *soul*. In this case, they interpreted the verse to mean that people asked the prophet about *soul* in the philosophical sense. However, this is misleading, because, as we have shown above, it is not used here to mean the concept of *soul*. It must, therefore, refer in this context to the *phenomenon of revelation* par excellence. If we do not penetrate in this way into the precise sense in which this concept is semantically used here we will not be able to ascertain the philosophical signification of the term in question. We shall see in the next chapter how this concept was borrowed from the Qur'an to be used philosophically and successfully applied to the *ontological - cosmological terminology* borrowed from the *Greek philosophy*.

13. Muhammed Asad, op. cit., p. 572.

14. Al-Ghazālī seems to be such a person in his *Madnûn al-Saghîr*.

If we take the term in its proper context, it would become obvious that here the word *rûh* implies the *phenomenon of divine revelation*.

c. The Development of the Concept of *Rûh* in the Third Period: We find the term *rûh* in the chronologically ordered first chapter of this period 32/Sajdah, 9. It mentions again the breath or inspiration into Adam. Next in the chapter 16/Nahl, 2 "God sends down the Angels to descend with divine inspiration of his command". Then, the concept of *rûh al-Qudus* is introduced in the same chapter 16/Nahl, 102. *Rûh* is not mentioned in the next four chapters. In the chapter 40/Ghâfir, 15 the term *rûh* is repeated in the same sense as in the 16/2. In later verses such as 42/Shûrâ, 52 the term *rûh* is used to refer to the prophet. God explains that "He sent unto the Prophet a *rûh* by his command". As it is seen the term is repeated *five times* in this period. The following observations are in order; A special manifestation of divine power in *Christian* theology defined as the third person of the trinity i.e. *Holy Spirit*, has specific activities such as the inspiration of scripture writers. Although the literal translation is the *Holy Spirit* in the Qur'an *rûh al-Qudus*, which bears our concept *spirit* and occurs in 16/Nahl, 102, *is not equivalent to the Holy Spirit of the Bible*. It would be more correct to interpret it as the **spirit of holiness**. So the verse must be translated as: "Say : *Spirit of holiness* has brought from your Lord." Here the traditional approach takes the word *holy qudus* as an *adjective* in its semantical analysis. Our analysis in this case, however, does not allow that interpretation; and hence takes the term *spirit* as referring to the *Angel of Revelation* himself. In this case, we analyze this phrase as a *genitive construction* (idāfah) rendering it thus; **the Spirit of Holiness**.

Breathing or sending of inspiration is cited in the 32/Sajdah, 9. Breathing of inspiration needs pre-supposition of the existence of man having a *soul* in him. *For it is the soul which is solely capable of receiving any inspiration at all as stated* in the verses: 2/Baqarah, 97 which belongs to the *Madinan Period* to be examined below; and 26/Shu'arâ', 192-194 which belong to the second *Meccan Period*. The verse in 16/Nahl, 43 explains that "we did not send before you any, but men to whom we sent inspiration."

Indeed, *God could not send inspiration to man before bringing him into existence. Therefore, since the soul* (in the sense *rûh*, i.e. spiritual existence) *must have already existed prior to any revelation, or inspiration in general* (for which again the term *rûh* is used), *the concept of Spirit in this phenomenon cannot refer to the human soul*. But, unfortunately our commentators could not perceive this truth, therefore, Allah's breathing of inspiration to Adam was taken by them as giving of *soul* to Adam.¹⁵

4. The Development of the Concept of *Rûh* in the Fourth, i.e. Madinan Period: The first usage of the concept in question in this period occurs in the chronologically ordered first chapter 2/Baqarah, 87 and 253 repeated twice. It is stated that God strengthened Jesus with *holy revelation* i.e. *rûh* ; "We vouchsafed unto Jesus, the son of Mary, all evidence of the truth and strengthened him with *holy inspiration*." The term does not appear in the next chronologically ordered seven chapters, until it is used in the 4/Nisâ', 171 concerning Jesus, where it is said that he is a *rûh* from God; meaning that he is a message (kalimah) from God: "The Christ Jesus, son of Mary, was but God's Apostle, *His word* which He conveyed unto Mary and a *rûh* from Him." In the chapter 58/Mujādalah, 22 the true believers have been strengthened with inspiration i.e. *rûh* from God. The breathing of revelation to Jesus in the 66/Tahrîm, 12 includes another occurrence of our concept; "We breathed of *Our rûh* (Spirit) into it."

In the next chapter 5/Mā'idah, 110 the term refers to Jesus meaning that he was strengthened with the *Spirit of holiness* i.e. *holy inspiration*. In this period with the exception of one occurrence, (58/22), all the others are used to refer to *Jesus* and his mother, *Mary*.

I would like to make the following observations on the usage of the term in question as it occurs in the verses of the final period of the revelation: We have interpreted the term *rûh al-Qudus* in 2/86 as holy revelation in order to stress the fact that Jesus was chosen as a prophet. Further, the other verse 4/171 stresses the purely human nature of Jesus and

15. Abdullah M.R. Muhammad. *Al-Qur'an Rediscovered* (Bangladesh: 1982), p. 50.

refutes the belief in his divinity. Moreover the Qur'anic text points out that Jesus is like all other human beings:

3- General reflections On the Usage of the Term *Rûh* in the Qur'an

The term *rûh* appears twenty one times in the Qur'an. The six occurings belong to the *Madinan Period*. These can be subdivided into the following table

1.st	Meccan Period	3	References
2.nd	" "	7	References
3.rd	" "	5	References
	Madinan Period	<u>6</u>	References
	Total	21	References

Now, if we consider carefully and examine the Qur'anic text, we will find easily that the term *rûh* never occurs in the Qur'an with the meaning *soul*; however, later theologians interpreted the Qur'anic usage in that sense.

The Qur'anic word for soul is nafs. Its plural is anfus. But no plural of rûh appears in the Qur'an. as we have seen, it is used to mean *revelation* or *inspiration* and rarely individual angel. But the plural used for angels in the Qur'an is always *malā'ikah*. In fact, we claim that the concept of *rûh* in the sense of revelation or inspiration comes into Arabic language only after the usage of the Qur'an. For we have seen that the roots *rûh - rîh* already existed in Arabic, but only to express the ideas concerning *wind, rest* or *odour*. **The verbs and its derivations do not express any of these meanings.** In other words, the structure of the concept of *rûh* was transformed from this primitive usage into a *new system as a key term by the Qur'anic usage*.

The whole theological and philosophical development of the doctrine among muslims goes back to the usage in 17/Isrâ', 85, which is

often quoted to prove that *rûh* has been used to mean soul. In this verse, it has been stated that "the *rûh* comes by command of my Lord". If we pay due attention, we shall see that *soul* does not come by command of Allah. For He simply said that he had created the soul for men to understand as in the 42/Shûrã, 52; 19/Maryam, 64)

Further, the sentence "*of its knowledge only a little has been given to you*" also indicates that this *rûh* is inspiration, because we have been given much knowledge about nafs in the Qur'an. If the number of occurrences indicates the knowledge given about these concepts, then the proportion of their occurrences will give us some idea concerning this. For the term *nafs* with its plural *anfus* is repeated 295 times, whereas the term *rûh* appears 21 times. The sense which our analysis produced is supported by the verse that follows this sentence immediately: "If it were our will, we could take away what we gave Us".

Moreover, there is no mention in the Qur'anic text of man having a *rûh* in his breast. But the term *nafs* is used in this kind of meaning. In addition to this, *rûh* is expressed as the *command of God* in this verse. Yet another verse states that "the human soul (*nafs*) is prone to evil (12/Yûsuf, 53)". If *rûh* in 17/Isrã', 85 means *human soul* which is called the command of God, then, since human soul is prone to evil as indicated in 12/Yûsuf, 53 one wonders why God's command (i.e. soul as *rûh*) should be prone to evil.¹⁶

As a result, the word in the verse again must mean *inspiration* or *revelation*, it does not denote the *soul*. There is confusion of *rûh* with *nafs* among scholars. **The Qur'anic idiom *rûh* is related to Revelation.** It is also associated with the term *amr*. We must remember the distinction which the Qur'an draws between *amr* and *khalq*. As Ikbāl states "*halq* and *amr* express the two ways in which the creative activity of God reveals itself to us. *Khalq* is a creation. *Amr* is direction."¹⁷

16. Ibid., p. 38.

17. Muhammad Ikbāl. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahor: Kashmiri Bazar, 1958) p. 103.

The revelation is called *rûh* in the Qur'an because *it brings a new way of life that is of crucial significance for humans*. In a way it brings new life to the dead, which is in the life dimension that is *un-Islamic*. In the pre-Qur'anic period, as we have shown, the word *rûh* and *rîh* meant wind which bears clouds and causes rain-water that brings life to a dead earth. The more interesting usage in the Qur'an of the word *rîh* is its usage to mean *power*, which is the case in 8/Anfâl, 46 and the word *rûh* is also regarded by the Qur'an as a kind of power as stated in 58/22. The relationship of semantical transformation of the term *rûh* between the pre-Qur'anic period and the Qur'anic usage may be compared on the following diagram.

PERIOD	ORIGINATOR	CHANNEL	CONTENT message	RECEIVER	RESULT
General usage of the term <i>rûh</i> in Qur'anic period	God →	→	Inspira→ tion	Men→	Practical Life
the term <i>rûh</i> in Pre-Qur'anic time	Wind →	Cloud →	Water	earth→	causal Life
Special usage the term <i>rûh</i> as a Key word in Qur'anic period	God→	Angel→	Revela→ tion	Prophet→	Religious life

Root of Verb	Verb used	Preposition	Subject	Direct Object	Indirect Object
A-YA-DA	1. Ayyadna	bi(with)	God	he (Jesus)	Rûh al-Qudus
	2. "	"	"	" (")	"
	3. "	"	"	" (")	"
	4. Ayyada	"	"	People	Rûh
NA-ZA-LA	1. Yunazzilu	bi	Angels	--	Rûh
	2. Nazzala	"	Rûh al-Qudus	--	Revelation
	3. Nazala	"	Rûh al-Amin	--	Prophet's qalb
SA-'A-LA	1. Yas'alûn	an (about)	They	--	Rûh
LA-Q-YA	1. Yulqî	ala (upon)	He (God)	Rûh (Inspiration)	People
'A-RA-JA	1. Ta'ruju	ilâ(to)	Rûh	God	--
QĀ-MA	1. Yaqûmu	-	Rûh	--	--
WA-HĀ	1. Awhayna	ilâ	God	Rûh	Prophet Muhammad
RA-SĪLA	1. Aرسالنا	ilâ	God	Rûhuna (Angel)	She (Mary)
NA-FA-KHA	1. Nafakhna	fi(hā)	God	Rûhina (inspiration)	She (Mary)
	2. "	fi(hi)	"	Rûhina (revelation)	He (Jesus)
	3. Nafakhna	fi(hi)	"	Rûhî (revelation)	He (Adam)
	4. Nafakhtu	fi(hi)	"	Rûhi (revelation)	" "

This table shows us the usage of the term *rûh* in the Qur'an

The characteristics of periods in detail can be described on the following table.

Periods	Phrase in which it is used	Verses in which it is used	The interpretation or meaning reached as result of our semantical approach
First Meccan Period	<i>Rûh</i>	97/Qadr, 4	Inspiration
	"	78/Nabâ', 38	The Agent of Revelation
	"	70/Ma'ârij, 4	" " "
Second Meccan Period	<i>Rûh</i>	17/Isrâ', 85	Phenomenon of divine revelation
	"	" " "	Divine revelation
	<i>Rûhî</i>	15/Hijr, 29	My Spirit (i.e. revelation)
	"	38/Sâd, 72	" " (" ")
	<i>Rûhuna</i>	19/Maryam, 17	Our spirit (i.e. Angel)
	"	21/Anbiyâ', 91	Our spirit (i.e. divine inspiration)
	<i>al-Rûh al Amin</i>	26/Shu'arâ', 193	Trustworthy Spirit (i.e. revelation)
Third Meccan Period	<i>min Rûhî</i>	32/Sajdah, 9	His spirit (i.e. revelation)
	<i>Rûh min amrihi</i>	16/Nahl, 2	Inspiration
	<i>Rûh al-Qudus</i>	40/Ghafir, 15	"
		16/Nahl, 102	The Agent of revelation
	<i>Rûh min amrina</i>	42/Shûrâ, 52	Revelation
Madinan Period	<i>Rûh al-Qudus</i>	2/Baqarah, 87 and 253	Holy revelation
	" "	5/Ma'idah, 110	" "
	<i>Rûh minhu</i>	4/Nisâ', 171	for Jesus a message
	" "	58/Mujâdalah, 22	Inspiration
	<i>min-Rûhina</i>	66/Tahrim, 12	Inspiration

B. SECTION TWO
THE CONCEPT OF *NAFS*
1. Semantical Usage

Following the same procedure as we conducted with the concept of *rûh*, here too I shall first try to determine how the the concept *nafs* is used in Arabic through reference mainly to dictionaries and other literary work. This shall, I believe, enable us to show more precisely how the term in question is transferred to the philosophical use from everyday usage. This semantical procedure is also quite effective in determining the philosophical import of a term.

I am aware of the fact that once a term is borrowed for the philosophical nomenclature, it may loose significantly its everyday meaning. But, in fact the aim of this study is to show how semantical distinction in the usage of the terms at hand occured in the intellectual history of Muslims. The development of this semantical process requires a more detailed study which can not be done within the scope of this thesis.

Therefore, I shall proceed on general lines in order to determine **first**, the common semantical usage of the term *nafs* in its everyday meaning; **second**, its common semantical as well as philosophical usage in the Qur'an and **third**, its philosophical usage in the milieu of the development of speculative thinking in Islam, which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

In order to reach a precise semantical meaning of the term *nafs* in its common usage, let us examine the following sentences, idioms and clauses in which this term is used in reference to a specific context, for no precise meaning of a concept can be obtained in isolation from its proper context.

Qatala fulān <i>nafsahu</i>	: Such and such a person killed <i>himself</i>
Ra'aytu fulānan <i>nafsahu</i>	: I saw such and such a person <i>himself</i>
Jā'anî bi <i>nafsihi</i>	: He came to me <i>himself</i>
<i>Nafs</i> al jabalî muqabîlî	: The mountain <i>itself</i> is facing me

In all these usages,¹⁸ as it is seen, the semantical output is that the term *nafs* has a *reflexive meaning*, when it is, thus, used with verbs it signifies *the reflexive character of actions*. There are similar usages of this term, but not in conjunction with verbs that are more apt to receive a reflexive pronoun. The following usages shall exhibit this character of the term *nafs*:¹⁹

<i>Nafs</i> al-Shay'	: thing <i>itself</i> , the very thing.
Fi <i>nafs</i> al amr	: <i>in reality</i> , in the very thing.

The usage that is more significant in this context is the following,²⁰ where it is used to mean *mind* in the first occurrence and to mean *in reality* in the second.

1. Qallala fî *nafsihi* wa in lam yakun qalilen fî *nafs al-amr*: He held it to be little in *his mind* though it was not so *in reality*
2. Fî *nafsi* fulānî 'an yaf'ala kadha wa kadha: It is in the *mind* of a one to do and so.

Next we see the usage of *nafs* as an unfolding semantical process leading to more abstract employment of the term. Here it is used to mean *soul*, which is the sufficient evidence that the term is used commonly in the philosophical sense as well. This everyday usage makes it possible for the term *nafs* to be employed in the philosophical nomenclature as a *pure concept*.

¹⁸ Ibn Manzûr, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 688 and see also Lane, op. cit., Vol. VIII, p. 2827.

¹⁹ Lane, op. cit., Vol. VIII, p. 2827.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 2827.

Kharajat <i>nafsuhu</i> ²¹	: His <i>soul</i> went forth
Najā Salīm wa <i>nafs</i> min-hu bi-sīdqihī ²²	: Salīm escaped when the <i>soul</i> was in the side of his mouth

It is probably the last two usages, which led to another usage of *nafs* to signify a *person*, because it is intelligible to conceive a person as identical with his soul, which is the main motive of the body, an idea which was commonly held well before the usage of the term in the philosophical sense. The following occurrences of *nafs* illustrates this point.²³

Ra'aytu thalāthah <i>anfus</i> (in plural case)	: I saw three <i>persons</i>
Mā ra'ytu thamma <i>nafsan</i>	: There, I saw no <i>one soul</i> or no soul

More interesting common usage of *nafs* occurs in the following examples. It seems again that these semantical functions of the concept involved are derivative of the last three significations of it. One must note, however, that the *more abstract must be based on the more concrete*, and following this principle it is intelligible to conclude that the more abstract semantical process must be from the more concrete. It is again this principle that allows us the philosophical employment of a concept, which is perhaps the most abstract semantical operation. We must, therefore, use a more rigorous procedure to analyze its speculative semantics. Here are the examples:²⁴

Sālat <i>nafsuhu</i>	: His blood flowed
<i>Nafs</i> sāilah	: Flowing <i>blood</i>
La'ibat <i>nafsuhu</i>	: He was sick in the <i>stomack</i>
Asābat fulana <i>nafsuhu</i>	: An <i>evil</i> or <i>envious eye</i> smote such and such person

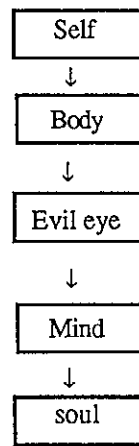
21. Ibn Manzūr, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 688.

22. Al-Jawharī, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 984.

23. Lane, op. cit., p. 2828.

24. Ibid., p. 2828.

In the light of above considerations, we may list the meaning of *nafs* in its everyday semantical usage. In this list I shall follow the principle cited, namely put them in order of abstractness and thus list them from the more concrete to the more abstract



Now, I would like to investigate the occurrence of *nafs* in the Qur'an trying to determine in what sense it is used in these occurrences with regard to their adequate context. I shall aim to extract meanings in order to locate where it is used to denote soul in the semantical process. This will enable us to see in what extent this semantical usage affected its philosophical signification in *Islamic philosophy*.

2- The Usage of the Term *Nafs* in the Qur'an

Here I shall first attempt to show the development of the term in the four periods as it is, then, to analyze and compare my conclusions with the ones elicited about the term *rûh*

a. The Development of the Term *Nafs* in the First Period:

The most common usage of the term *nafs* is represented in its meaning *self*, as seen in the expression *he himself came*. We cannot isolate this meaning from the meaning in which *nafs* is used philosophically to mean *soul*, because this meaning is perhaps derived from the original usage of *nafs* in the sense *self*. But in this context, we are trying to examine and analyze the

derivative meaning as it is used in the Qur'anic text. The meaning which is closest to this derivative meaning is *human being*. The earliest example of the Qur'anic usage of the term *nafs* in this sense appears in the chronologically ordered chapter 74/Muddaththir, verse 38: "*Every human being will be held responsible for his deeds*". There is also a usage of the term *soul* in English that is similar to this usage of the term *nafs* in Arabic, as in the case of this expression *poor souls*; i.e. poor human beings.

The next twelve chapters in our chronology does not contain any occurrence of *nafs*. Then the chapter 86/Tāriq, 4 states thus: "There is *no soul* (*nafs*) that does not have a protector over it". This usage is again has the same signification as the above one. Next in 91/Shams, 4-10 *nafs* is used in a way that can be interpreted as both *human-self* and *soul*; "By the night as it conceals it; by the firmament and its (wonderful) structure; by the earth and its (wide) expanse; by the *human-self* (*nafs*) the due-proportion given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; truly he who purifies it (i.e. *his self*) succeeds; and he who corrupts it (i.e. *his self*) fails". *Soul* in this chapter is used in the sense *personality* or *human-self*, as it is evident from the context. "Whatever you send forward is for *yourself* says 73/Muzammil, 20 in which *anfûs*, the plural of *nafs* is used as a *reflexive pronoun*. Further in 82/Infitar, 6 states: "*a human being will comprehend what he has sent forward and kept back.*" Moreover, it is stated in the same chapter verse 19 "in the next world *no human being* (*nafs*) shall pay anything for another human being"; thus, "all human beings (*nufûs*) are held with their own deeds alone" stated in 81/Tekvîr, 7.

Another occurrence that may well be interpreted as meaning *self* is in 79/Nāzi'ât, 40: "those who had restrained *their selves* (*nafs*) from lower desires shall abide in the Garden". This usage is also interpreted as *soul*, but I do not think that it has any abstract connotation attributed to this term by philosophers. The 35th chapter in our chronology, viz., 89/Fajr, 27, uses the term *nafs* with an adjective as *satisfied human-self*, which can be rendered, as in the previous case, to mean *soul*. This usage which does not in particular mean *soul* as in, for example, Aristotle's *De Anima*, can be

distinguished as "soul in general", whereas Aristotle's *Psyche* can be called conveniently in this context "*soul* in particular" or "*soul* in the philosophical" sense. Therefore, when I refer to *nafs* (soul) as "philosophical soul", I shall mean the peripatetic signification, which is also used by Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina, al-Fārābī, Ibn Rushd, etc. We must state at the same time that even the later theologians such as al-Ghazālī are all influenced by the *Peripatetic* usage and thus interpret these and similar verses in similar lines.

The next usage of *nafs* is again in conjunction with an adjective: "I call to witness the *reproaching self*. Does man think that we cannot assemble his bones?" The usage of *nafs* in 75/Qiyāmah, 2 refers to the *self*, and the usage of the term "*man*" (*insān*) in the succeeding verse makes it clear that when *nafs* is used to refer to a *human being*, the Qur'an makes a reference to the conscious states of man rather than his purely material being. As these two verses (75/Qiyāmah, 2 and 3) makes this distinction clear, they are important for my study. Therefore, I can conclude that the usage of the term *nafs* in the sense *self* or *human being*, expresses the *inner being of man* rather than his material being. It is perhaps this distinction that later led Muslim thinkers to attribute the Peripatetic connotation to this term

The final occurrence of our term in this period of revelation is again in the same sense as I have outlined above; this one is in 51/Dhāriyāt, 21: "There are signs on the earth for those who are assured of faith, as also in *your own selves*; will you, then, not see?"

b. The Development of the Term *Nafs* in the Second Period: There is a parallel development in the usage of the term *nafs* to the first Meccan Period. I can summarize these usages in the second Meccan Period, leaving out the usage of *nafs* as *reflexive pronoun*, as follows: the connotation in 37/Saffāt, 113 is "wrong done to *their own selves*"; in 50/Qāf, 16 it is stated that "God knows what *his inner most self* whispers to him." Here *nafs* is interpreted as inner most self rather than just the personality of

a man; as the former analysis brings out more vividly the meaning intended in this context.

An interesting usage is in 20/Tā hā, 40 where Moses is addressed as "You killed a *man* (*nafs*), but we saved you from trouble." Since killing cannot be but physical, as is obviously the case here, the term *nafs* cannot refer to the *self*, i.e. inner being of man, but man himself. This usage makes it clear that the Qur'an uses *nafs* to refer to man's *physical being* as well. This usage, however, must be distinguished from the one mentioned above, namely, the inner being of man. As we shall see, there are a few more occurrences of *nafs* as referring to man's physical being.

The next occurrences again seem to refer to human beings in the first signification, which is the *inner self* or *conscious states of man*, the second signification being man's *physical being*: viz., man as a material being. The first occurrence in 23/Mu'minun, 103 states that "those whose balance is light are those who have lost *their own selves*"; second is in 21/Anbiyā', 35 which states that "*every self* is bound to experience death". The third one is in the same chapter verse 102: "Some persons will abide in all that *their selves* (*nafs*) have ever desired." Then, both 17/Isrā', 7 and 15/Hijr, 33 have the same connotation as the one just mentioned. Although the usage in 27/Naml, 14 has again the same reference to *human self*, I think that it points more to the *mental states* of man. For *nafs* is used in conjunction with the verb to be convinced (*istayqana*); and it is evident in the context that *their minds* were convinced of the proofs sent by God. The verse puts it in this way: "They rejected (God's) Proofs (signs) out of arrogance, though *their selves* (i.e. minds) were convinced." This signification of *nafs* as used in the Qur'an must also be distinguished from the two significations of *self*, i.e. *inner being* and *material being*; I shall thus call it the *mental aspect of the self*; viz., man's mental being.

The next occurrences refer to the self as a person which is in 18/Kahf, 28: "Restrain *yourself* with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening." The final occurrence of this term in this period is in

the same chapter verse 74: "(Moses asks) have you killed an *innocent person*."

We must point out that all the three significations of self (*nafs*) singled out above are not a separate and detached existence of man, but rather aspects which may be manifested by him with a different intensity of degree at different times. Therefore, when the context requires the Qur'an makes a shift from one aspect of the self to the other. In that case, the original and general meaning of *nafs* is still preserved in the Qur'an, which is Self in the sense *person*.

c. The Development of the Term *Nafs* in the Third Period:

All the following occurrences of *nafs* in this period reveal the usage of the term as *self* in the sense person; 45/Jāthiyah, 4; 16/Nahl, 88 and 111; 30/Rûm, 21; 38/Sād, 28; and in 12/Yusuf, 68. But verse 53 in 12/Yusuf seems to interpose an interesting duality to the personality of man in which Joseph is quoted as saying "I do not claim that *my soul* (*nafs*) is innocent; for surely man's *inner nature* (self) incites to evil." I do not, however, see this semantical usage as leading to a duality. For it only emphasizes the aspect required by this context, which is the *self* as a *conscious being*. But the expression *inciting soul* (al-*nafs* al-*ammārah*) is never used in the Qur'an, though it is derived probably from this verse.

We see again the same signification of *nafs* in all these occurrences: 12/Yusuf, 77, 42 and 142; 6/An'ām, 12 and 24. The final usage of the term in this period bears again the same signification which occurs in 13/Ra'd, 33.

d. The Development of the Term *Nafs* in the Madinan Period:

The Fourth period of the prophet's revelatory experiences is distinguished as the Madinan Period as they took place in Madina, as opposed to the first three periods which took place in Mecca. The Qur'an

had already developed its concept of *nafs* with the new significations it attached to it. Besides using it in the function of a reflexive pronoun, *the Qur'an had used it to refer to the human person in three aspects; 1. the aspects of man's consciousness that includes all kinds of his desires as well, and I called this man's inner being or his own nature; 2. the aspects of man's mental existence, which refer to all cognitive operations of a person; and finally 3. man's physical aspects, which refer to his material body.* All these three aspects refer to the Qur'anic view of a person or human being. As I have shown above, **the Qur'an also uses the term *nafs* to him in this sense; whereas in most other cases, the reference or rather the emphasis is on one of the above three aspects of man.** It is again within this analysis that I shall examine the occurrences of *nafs* in the fourth period.

The following occurrences of *nafs* clearly refer to the *personality of human beings*, though some of them may have a different shift in emphasis to one of the above three aspects: 2/Baqarah, 9, 44, 90, 155, 187 and 228. The emphasis in 8/Anfāl, 153 seems to be on the *inner most self*, which is the first aspect delineated above; but 3/Āl-'Imrān, 28 seems to refer to the *personality* as a whole, which is also the case with verse 164 in the same chapter, as well as with the following verses; 4/Nisā', 128; 33/Ahzāb, 6; 49/Hujurāt, 11

3- Analysis of the Verses Concerning the Term *Nafs* in Relation to the Term *Rûh*

Our analysis of Qur'anic texts has now brought us to a specific question; what is the relationship between the concepts "*nafs*" and "*rûh*" in the Qur'anic usage? This question can be approached from the perspective of the death - sleep relationship mentioned in 39/Zumar, 42 of the *Third Meccan Period*: "It is God that causes the *souls* (anfus) to die at their death and (*the souls*) that do not die during their sleep. Those on whom He has passed the decree of death He keeps back, but the rest He sends for a term appointed." Here the verb *yatawaffa*, which means to *cause to die*, is used in

connection with *nafs* not with *rûh*. Therefore, according to the Qur'an, only the *nafs* shall experience death. As our analysis of the concept *rûh* has shown, *rûh* is never used in conjunction to the concept of man or person. Hence, the Qur'an clearly uses *nafs* and *rûh* in distinctly different ways;²⁵ whereas *rûh* refers to either the *revelation* in general or the *angel of revelation*, the term *nafs* is always used in connection with *man* and the *states of his existence*.

In distinguishing these two clearly different usages E. William Lane gives the following insights: ²⁶ **1.** It is stated that "God has blown into Adam from *His Spirit* (*rûh*), not from *His Soul* (*nafs*); **2.** In 5/Mâidah, 119 Jesus is said to tell: "You know what is in *myself* (*nafs*)", not in *my spirit*; **3.** In the *reflexive usages of nafs*, it would not be correct to use *rûh*, as in the case of 8/Anfâl, 9 the expression *within themselves* cannot be transformed to *within their spirit*; **4.** In 39/Zumar, 57 it is stated that "a *person* (*nafs*) shall say." The Arabic usage does not allow to substitute *rûh* for *nafs* in such semantical contexts.

In the light of these consideration and more particularly of this verse, i.e. 39/Zumar, 42 we may consider *nafs*, having **two aspects**. The **first** is *that of perception and consciousness*. This peculiarity is lost during sleep and the **second** is called among man *soul and rûh*, which accompanies the body during life and departs at death. Thus, we may say that the term *nafs* shows two different situations in connection to the body and thus forming a triad of signification outlined above.

After seeing the passages concerning the term *nafs*, then, we can attempt to examine the form of Qur'anic usage. The Qur'an uses *two verbal forms* which are derived from *nafs*:

a-tanaffasa means when the morning breathes, which occurs in 81/Takwîr, 18;

25. See Calverly's article in *Muslim World*. op. cit., p. 254.

26. Lane, op. cit., p. 2827.

b- the other **fal-yatanaffas** which occurs in 83/Mutaffifin, 26. It is probably derived from *nafisa* "he desired"

It is clear that the first usage has a metaphorical meaning. The plural form of *nafs* comes *anfûs* and *nufûs*. The Qur'an mostly uses *anfûs* as a plural form of *nafs* instead of *nufûs*, which is used commonly in most of the Qur'anic periods; The Qur'anic usage may be classified in the following manner:

a- Functioning as a *reflexive pronoun*: it functions as the object of a verb concerning the action that occurred on the subject. In most cases, they refer to the *human self* or *person*, such as 3/Al- 'Imrân, 61 "let us call ourselves and yourselves". However, in some cases, it is used as *indirectly reflexive with a preposition*, for example (3)Al-'Imrân, 93 with *alâ*, 41/Fussilat, 46 with *li*). In six verses *nafs* refers to Allah,²⁷ rarely to gods.²⁸

b- as soul referring to *the human person* as a whole. e.g. 74/38; 3/164

c- as *inner self* e.g. 12/68; 50/16 or *one's own nature* 41/53

d- as *mind* e.g. 27/14

e- as *man's conscience* e.g. 75/2

f- as *man's physical being* e.g. 20/40

As a result, the term *nafs* is frequently employed by the Qur'an to refer mainly to *person* or *self*. The term *nafs* in the Qur'anic text is used only in a few places, where it is open to interpret it as *human soul*, e.g. 39/Zumar, 42. As to such phrases as *nafs at mutma'innah* or *nafs al-lawwamâh* they must be understood as *states* or *tendencies of the human personality*. These, as Fazlur Rahman has pointed out, may be regarded as *mental in nature*, provided the mind is not construed as a *separate substance*.²⁹ In brief, *nafs* has been used to indicate dominantly the *human personality as a whole* in the Qur'an.

27. Such as 5/Mā'idah, 116; 3/Al- 'Imrân, 28; 6/An'ām, 12 and 54.

28. e.g. 23/Mu'minûn, 3 or 13/Ra'd, 6.

29. Fazlur Rahman. *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), p. 17.

Actions which are ascribed to the term of *nafs* as a reflexive in the Qur'an:

I. POSITIVE CHART				
1.	Whoever	does good deeds	<u>for</u>	himself
2.	"	will effort	<u>"</u>	"
3.	"	attains purity	<u>"</u>	"
4.	"	chooses to see	<u>"</u>	"
5.	"	" the right path	<u>"</u>	"

II. NEGATIVE CHART

1.	Whoever	disbelieves	<u>for</u>	himself
2.	"	chooses to remain blind	<u>from</u>	"
3.	"	falls astray	<u>from</u>	"
4.	"	hurts	<u>from</u>	"
5.	Who	acts niggardly	towards	"

The following table contains the actions which are ascribed to the term *nafs* in the Qur'an

Verb	Verses	Meaning
1 Kasaba	74/Muddaththir, 38	labour
2 'Alime	82/Infitār, 5	Comprehend
Ta'lamu	32/Sajdah, 17	Know
3 Qaddima	82/Infitār, 5	Sent
4 Tuwaswisu	50/Qāf, 16	Whisper
5 Tas'ā	20/Tā hā, 15	labour
6 Sawwala	20/Tā hā, 96	prompted
7 Istayqana	27/Naml, 18	Convince
8 Tahwe	2/Baqarah, 87	desire
9 Tanzuru	59/Hashr, 18	look
10 Tazhaqa	9/Tawbah, 55	depart
11 Ta'kīlu	32/Sajdah, 27	eat
12 Tujādīlu	16/Nahl, 111	plead
13 Tashtahî	41/Fussilat, 31	desire
14 lāmu	14/Abraham, 22	blame

CHAPTER II DOCTRINES OF *RÛH* AND *NAFS* IN THE SPECULATIVE TRADITION

In the preceding chapter we have examined how the concepts "*spirit*" and "*soul*" are used both in the pre-Qur'anic period and in the Qur'anic period. We have argued that the Qur'anic period exhibits development in the meaning of these concepts, and thereby both the intention and the content of these terms acquired different status. In showing this development, the Qur'anic period is divided into four main stages, all of which demonstrate a consistent process of unfolding the Qur'anic signification attached to the concepts "*soul*" and "*spirit*".

Our present discussion shall concentrate on the semantical analysis of these concepts as they are projected in Islamic philosophy in general, which can be taken as a post-Qur'anic development. This justifies us to divide the process of **meaning-acquisition**, which the concepts "*soul*" and "*spirit*" underwent, into three broad periods; **1- the pre-Qur'anic period, 2- Qur'anic period, 3- post-Qur'anic period.** It is the third one that will be discussed here on general lines.

So far as the early post-Qur'anic is concerned, viz., 650-750 A.D. we can make the remark that the intentional content of these concepts did not undergo much change; hence they preserved their original meanings as they are understood and interpreted in the main Qur'anic period. The actual change was gradual after 750 A.D. But after the first decade of the 9th century A.D. the change was rapid as foreign influence on the original Islamic thought increased after this century. Especially through the influence of *Greek philosophy*, there arose *Islamic Peripatetism*, which changed the intentional content of these terms significantly. It is this shift of change in the meaning and semantical usage of these concepts that I shall try to trace here in this chapter.

When one examines the post-Qur'anic Islamic thought, one sees that it is the *psychological teachings or doctrines of the thinkers* that lay bare theories related to *soul* and *spirit*. It is, therefore, in this sphere that we shall trace the intentional development of these concepts. The psychological teachings of Muslim thinkers are not, however, clearly formulated as *psychological theories*. The majority of them are only psychological speculation by Muslim Mystics, and the moral reflections of philosophers.¹ We must be clear, then, that for Muslim thinkers, psychology in this context, refers to the *traditional* or *rational psychology*, which is a speculative study of the human soul or consciousness.

Both Philosophers' and Sufis' psychological explanations include theory of soul, theory of the faculties of the soul and the soul-body relation. In this chapter, we shall discuss on general lines philosophers' views about *soul* and *intellect* as they are related to my thesis. For this reason I have chosen al-Kindi, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sina as the main representatives of *Eastern Islamic Aristotelianism* and al-Ghazālī as the major figure of *orthodoxy* or *kalām*, Ibn Rushd as the main figure of *Western Islamic Aristotelianism*, and finally Ibn Arabi as the major *muslim mystic*. My treatment of this post-Qur'anic period so far as the concepts "*soul*" and "*spirit*" are concerned, shall reveal **three main currents of Islamic thought**, which developed doctrines related to the Qur'anic terms "*nafs*" and "*rûh*";

A- **The philosophical current**, which can be called *Islamic Aristotelianism*

B- **Orthodoxy**, which is mainly represented by *dialectical theologians*

C- **Mysticism**, which is known as the *sufi way* of thinking.

My purpose, now, is to discuss these three approaches and their

1. M. Abu'l Quasem "Psychology in Islamic Ethics" *Muslim World*, no.71 (1981), p.218.

sources by comparing and contrasting them with the Qur'anic world-view as it reflects its semantical usage of the terms "*nafs*" and "*rûh*". I shall at the same time present my comments on it.

A- The Philosophical Approach or The Islamic Aristotelianism

The most important and influential current in the post-Qur'anic period that developed a doctrine of *soul* (*nafs*) and *spirit* (*rûh*) is the *Islamic Aristotelianism*. These are the Muslim philosophers who are influenced by the Aristotelian philosophy. The main representatives of this movement are al-Kindi (d. 866), al-Fārābî (d. 950) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037) as the *Eastern Muslim Peripatetics*, and finally Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) as the *Western Muslim Peripatetic*. Since it is mainly the Aristotelian philosophy that dominates the psychology of these philosophers there is a uniformity in their doctrines concerning *nafs* and *rûh*. Before examining the doctrines of these philosophers individually it will be convenient to discuss briefly some aspects of Aristotle's doctrine of soul, because it is the main point of departure for these philosophers. This shall enable us to see the elaborations of Muslim thinkers on the Aristotelian conception, thus, grasping the similarity and differences between the *Greek conception of soul* and its *Islamic counterpart*. In this way, the gap between the philosophical approach to the problem and the Qur'anic teaching concerning the same subject shall become more distinct.

According to Aristotle all inorganic beings and living entities differ from each other only through a **principle** i.e. soul. He claims that the knowledge of the soul contributes to the advance of truth in general and all to our understanding of nature. For the soul in some sense is the principle of animal life, or rather life in general.²

On the one hand, the soul in living entities constitutes *the form*; and on the other hand, the body corresponds to its *material side*. He adds that there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without

2. Aristotle. *De Anima*, 402 a 5.

involving the body. He regards the *soul* as **the cause or source of the living body**.³ Let us see what he means by the term of cause in this case:

The terms cause and source have many senses. But the soul is the cause of its body alike in all three senses which we explicitly recognize it is the source of movement, it is the end, it is the essence of the whole living body.⁴

Aristotle's understanding of *soul* may be regarded as a biological rather than psychological doctrine. He expresses that the soul is an actuality of the first kind of a natural body having life potentiality in it.⁵

We should remember that in Aristotle's system the *soul* as a form is a substance, but it is the substance which corresponds to the account of a thing.⁶ He mainly accepts three divisions of the soul. **The first** is *vegetable soul*, it is common to all living beings.⁷ **The second** is *animal soul*, which belongs to all animate beings. It has two main powers: Imagination and movement. **The third** is *rational soul*, which is knowing and thinking.

The *rational soul* unites in itself the powers of the lower souls. But it has a peculiar advantage in the possession of *nous* or *intellect* in the vocabulary of Islamic Aristotelians. It is also this division of soul as *intellect* i.e. **aql**, which is more relevant to our discussion. For all the powers of the soul are inseparable from the body except *nous*, which is not perishable like the other powers. Thus, for Aristotle, *nous* also pre-exists before the body and it is *immortal*.⁸ On this assumption, there must be a close affinity between the concept of *rûh* i.e. spirit and *nous*. In this claim we would like to make it clear that Aristotle must have thought of *nous* to be of a **spiritual character** as distinguished from the body.

3. Ibid., 403 a 5.

4. Ibid., 415 b 9-12.

5. Ibid., 412 a 27-28.

6. Ibid., 412 b 11.

7. Ibid., 414 b 1.

8. Frederick Copleston. *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Image Books, 1962), Vol.I, part 2, p.70

As we have seen, for Aristotle the *soul* is not a separate substance which is capable of existing independently of the body. It is the *entelechy*, a naturally organized body. This formula, Fazlur Rahman says, must not be understood in the sense that there exists an organized body and then a soul comes and enters it. It is indeed the soul itself which, as an *immanent principle*, organizes the body and gives it its specific characteristics.⁹

As to the problem of intellect, he accepts two intellects:

a- *Passive thought*, it is called potential knowledge and it is mortal and perishable

b- *Active intellect*, it is immortal and eternal. This intellect exists before the body, so it lives after death of the body. He says that this part comes into man from outside when man gets the form.

The relationship between *active* and *passive intellect* in Aristotle's system seems more obscure. Later, Alexandar of Aphrodisias identified the *active intellect* with *God*. But Muslim Aristotelians identify it with the **Tenth Intellect** in the sphere of the moon, thus calling it **Active Intellect** (al-'aql al-fa'āl), After this brief consideration, we may return to evaluate the doctrines of **Muslim Peripatetics** who based their theories of soul on the Aristotelian conception.

1- The Psychology of al-Kindi and al-Fārābî

Al-Kindi is the first Muslim peripatetic philosopher who readily accepted the *Neo-platonic doctrine of emanation*, though he ascribed it to Aristotle. According to this theory, God did not create the world through an act of volition. For creation implies consciousness and will. But these include some desires and limitations for God; therefore, they cannot be ascribed to God. He used the emanation theory to describe the origin of the world. In his view, the world comes into existence through some **spiritual**

9. Fazlur Rahman. *Avicenna's Psychology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p.3.

agencies and these intermediary agencies have various grades, forming thus an existential hierarchy.

Human souls are supposed to have originated from the *world soul* which is independent of the body and belongs to the super sensible sphere of the world soul. It stands between the last spiritual agencies and the material world. Thus, al-Kindi places *soul* between the divine and created things as immaterial though susceptible of conjunction with matter.¹⁰

He assumes that heavenly bodies must possess both life and intelligence. For they are not composed out of the four elements.¹¹ Therefore, the *world soul* is uncompound, simple and imperishable. From this reasoning he deduces *immortality of the soul*:

The soul is a simple entity whose substance is analogous to the creator's own substance just as the light of the sun is analogous to the sun.¹²

The *soul* is thus regarded as something spiritual and divine in essence, but distinct from the body and in opposition to it. He accepts three faculties of the *soul*. These are the *rational*, the *passionate* and the *appetitive*.¹³

Al-Fārābī's account of *nafs* or *human soul* is similar to al-Kindi's, except that he added some new theories onto it, and thus developed a more comprehensive psychology of human nature. He also claims that from the **Necessary One** (i.e. God) there flows or emanates only one other by virtue of itself. The first emanation from the first being is the first intellect, which is capable of conceiving both its *author* and *itself* i.e. knowledge. This is the emanation of the first intelligence. This knowledge equals creation. In order to exist, a thing must be conceived.

10. Al-Kindi *Resā'il al-Kindī al-Falsafiyah*, ed. by M. 'Abd al-Hādī Ebū Rīdā (Egypt: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1950), Vol. II, p. 10 Henceforth referred to as *Resā'il*.

11. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 248.

12. Ibid., p. 253.

13. Ibid., p. 273.

Therefore, by conceiving its author, the second intellect is also generated and in the same way it results in the *third intellect*. This process goes on until the *tenth intellect*. Every sphere has its specific *soul*. Thus, there are nine souls.¹⁴ It is this emanatory process that brings us to the emergence of human soul, which, according to al-Fārābî, comes into existence from the Tenth *Intellect called* by him and other Muslim Peripatetics as the **Active Intellect** (al- 'aql al-fa'āl). This Active Intellect governs the sublunary world in which also man lives.

What we can deduce from the above considerations is that both for al-Kindi and al-Fārābî, *soul* is a substance whereas *spirit* is a state of existence. In this sense, soul can exist only in the state of spiritual existence, and it is thus a kind or rather a species of spirit. The relationship between the two is just like that of the one between genus and species. But we must not forget that not every aspect or faculty of nafs is spiritual, such as *al-nafs al-haywānî* or *al-nabātî*; viz. the animal or vegetative soul. For it is only the **Rational Soul**, *al-nafs al-nātiqah*, that is of spiritual character. This rational soul is actually intellect, and is emanated from God with a series of the emanatory chain. In order to understand this point of Muslim Peripatetics we need to examine the theory of *intellect*, which I would like to discuss briefly.

Al- Kindi's theory of intellect is found in his treatise "*On the Intellect*". His theory is based on the **metaphysical dualism of the sensible and spiritual**. According to him, our knowledge is acquired either through body or through spirit; in other words, through senses or through reason. The function of senses is to apprehend the particular or the material but reason conceives the universal or spiritual, because both belong to different realms. Referring to aristotle, al-Kindî explains each intellect in the following way:

14. M.M. Sharif. *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1963), Vol. I, p. 457 see also Majid Fakhri, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; London: Longman, 1983), p. 119.

Aristotle's view concerning the intellect is that the intellect is of four kinds, the first of these is the intellect which is in act perpetually, the second is the intellect which is in potency and it belongs to the soul, the third is the intellect which in the soul has emerged from the potency to act.¹⁵ The fourth is the intellect which we call the "emergent"¹⁶

Thus, for al- Kindî, human beings have three *innate intellects* in their souls, and one more intellect which they acquire from without. It is only this fourth one that is independent of his body and it is stamped upon our nafs by **Active Intellect**, i.e. the Tenth Heavenly Sphere. This intellect, as we shall see below, will be identified with the **Angel of revelation**, Gabriel by Ibn Sina. The importance of this doctrine is that it is this angel which is call *rûh* by the Qur'an, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

Al- Fārābî's theory of intellect is derived again from al-Kindî and further developed as a foundation of the theory of prophecy. It is, in fact, this aspect of this theory that juxtaposes it as a doctrine of *nafs* and *rûh*. We do not yet see the theory of intellect in al- Kindî as a *foundation of prophecy*. It is thus put forward by al- Fārābî and further developed by Ibn Sina.

He first classifies the **intellect** into *practical intellect* which deduces what should be done and theoretical intellect which helps the soul to attain its perfection. Then, *the latter* is again divided into *material*, *habitual* and *acquired*. Al- Fārābî sometimes identifies the material with *potential* and this is the **initial capacity** shared by all human beings. The *habitual intellect* is one of the levels of the ascension of mind in the acquisition of a number of intelligibles. The *intellect in potency* is just a receiver of sensible forms, *intellect in action* retains the intelligibles and comprehends concepts, and finally the *acquired intellect* rises to the level of **communion, ecstasy and inspiration**.¹⁷

15. Al- Kindî. *Resā'il*, Vol. I, p. 353.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

17. Sharif, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 461-462.

The actualization comes into existence in this way: the active intelligence sends out a light which renders images of sensible things, stored up in man's memory, abstracts and thus transforms them into *intelligibles* or *universals*.¹⁸

Al- Fārābī says explicitly that the forms which come to exist in the intellect do not flow from the active intelligence, its function is to render both sensibles and the potential human intellect.¹⁹ According to him, the relation of active intelligence to the potential is as light is related to the *faculty of sight*.²⁰

The function of acquired intellect is to contemplate the active intelligence itself, when this happens, then, the active intelligence becomes the form of the acquired intellect and **perfect philosopher** or **prophet** comes into existence. Even, in this case, there are certain degrees of the active intelligence.

He accepts the *prophet* as a man endowed with the gift of communion with God. This communion is also possible through imagination; he marks that a **true dream** is one aspect of prophecy.²¹

2- Ibn Sina's Prophetic Psychology

Ibn Sina's theory of *soul* and its diverse faculties is epistemological and cosmological as well as psychological. In spite of that his notion of the *soul* varies in his different treatises on the *soul*. He gives a careful and systematic classification of *soul*. He affirms that there are three distinct parts of the *soul*.²² The general scheme of his classification can be ordered in this manner:

18. Fakhri, op. cit., p. 120.

19. Fazlur Rahman. *Prophecy in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p.12.

20. Sharif., op. cit., Vol. I, p.462.

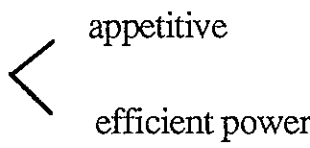
21. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 464.

22. Fazlur Rahman. *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 25.

1- *Vegetative soul* has three faculties

- a- Nutritive
- b- Power of growth
- c- Power of reproduction

2- *Animal soul* has two main faculties. ²³

- a- Motive faculties 
 - appetitive
 - efficient power
- b- Cognitive faculties
 - b₁- external (five senses)
 - b₂- internal (common sense, imagination, memory etc)

3- *The Reasonable soul* or human mind. ²⁴

He tries to explain the origination of the universe as an eternal procession or emanation from the one. The *world soul*, in his view, emanates from God in a hierarchical order. The first emanation from the necessary being is the first intelligence. From this intelligence emanates *three being* :

- a- **the first soul**
- b- **the second intelligence**
- c- **the first sphere of the fixed stars**

This process of emanation continues until the **Tenth Intellect**, which is called the **Active Intellect**, from which the **Rational Soul** in man emanates. The human soul is called by Ibn Sina "Rational soul" (al-nafs al-natiqah), which is described thus in the following passage:

23. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

24. Ibid., p. 34.

The human rational soul is also divisible into a practical and theoretical faculty, both of which are equivocally called intelligence. The practical faculty is the principle of the movement of the human body which urges it to individual actions characterized by deliberation and in accordance with purposive considerations... The function of the theoretical faculty is to receive the impressions of the universal forms abstracted from matter. ²⁵

Ibn Sina's classification of *intellect* serves as a preparatory for the introduction of the *prophetic intellect*, therefore, we have to examine his view on prophecy. In his treatise on the proof of prophecy, he attempts to show how the conception of prophetic knowledge is possible and prophetic revelation must exist in some individual. He gives us two types of prophetic knowledge.

a- The first is the imaginative representation by a prophet's imaginative faculty of particular imaginative knowledge from the celestial souls as distinct from the celestial intelligences.

b- The second is intellectual representation of a higher form of prophecy that involves the reception by the prophet's rational faculty of the universal intelligibles from the *active intellect*. ²⁶

Prophets of the first type receive the particular knowledge possessed by celestial souls as impressions on their imaginative faculty whereas ordinary man receives this knowledge usually in dreams.

The second type receive the particular knowledge possessed by celestial souls as impressions on their imaginative faculty whereas ordinary man receives this knowledge usually in dreams.

25. Ibid., p. 33.

26. Michael Marmura, *His Introduction to the Proof of Prophecies*, a translation of Ibn Sina's *Fi Ithbāt al-Nubuwwāt* (Beirut; Dar al-Nahār, 1968) p. XIII.

The second type of prophetic revelation involves Ibn Sina's *theory of abstract thought*. As it is known, in his view, the intelligibles are not abstracted from the particulars, but are received as emanation from the *active intellect*. The intelligibles, he thinks, are related to two things:

a- The first is *primary concepts*, self evident, propositional truths, most men can derive these directly;

b- The second is received only by those capable of interaction reasoning. Most men can receive after certain preportatory cognitive activities, such as estimation and imaged thinking. But, the prophet, he says, can receive the *secondary intelligibles* directly, and differs from the rest of this class.²⁷

For the second type, he uses, the term *intuition* as an argument. If a man can acquire knowledge from within himself, this strong capacity is called intuition.²⁸ **A faculty capable of direct reception of the secondary intelligibles from the active intellect** is called by him **the holy intellect**.²⁹ The characteristic of this faculty is the ability to apprehend the *middle term* directly without learning.³⁰

It is clear that Ibn Sina's concept of *holy intellect* (al- aql al-qudsî) corresponds to the Qur'anic notion of *rûh al- amin*, i.e. the Trustworthy Spirit, which is thought as the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel. This conclusion of Ibn Sina is very important in this context, since it shows how the Qur'anic concept of *spirit* is transformed into a *purely philosophical outlook*. Since this theory has bearing on my conclusion in this respect, I shall dwell more on Ibn Sina's notion of *prophecy* and *revelation*. The *Prophetic cognition*, according to Ibn Sina, *differs from ordinary philosophical or mystical cognition in that; 1. the ordinary mind has to exercise itself on data of perceptual experience, in this case, the sensitive*

27. Ibid., p. XIV.

28. Fazlur Rahman. *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 35.

29. Marmura, op. cit., p. XVI.

30. Fakhri, oh.cit., p. 142.

and cognitive processes are necessary . But, in the case of the prophetic mind this is not necessary, because *it can contact directly the Active Intellect*; 2. the ordinary mind receives intelligibles only partially and one after another. *The prophet's mind receives all knowledge at once.*³¹

It may be said that the doctrine of intuitive religious cognition demands that the creative principle of knowledge begin with the mind as a part or *faculty of the rational soul*, as he argues in the following passage:

Revelation is this emanation (from the universal intellect into the prophet's soul) and the angel is this (extra) faculty, or, power received (by the prophet as a part of his nature) and emanation from the Active Intelligence as if it emanates into the prophet being continuous with the universal intelligence, flowing from it not essentially but accidentally.³²

Thus, in Ibn Sina's system, *creative knowledge* is called *active intellect* and it is identified with the *angel of revelation*. The giver of revelation is in one sense **internal** to the Prophet, in another sense **external** to him. One may also say that Ibn Sina has regarded *the appearance of the angel and hearing of the angel's voice as purely mental phenomena*.

3- Ibn Rushd's Psychology

Ibn Rushd is known to be a pure Aristotelian because of the fact that he was not misled by the apocryphal Theology of Aristotle, as opposed to the **Eastern Muslim Peripatetics** who took this book to be the genuine work of Aristotle. As we know today this work is an epitome of Plotinas' *Enneads*. Although this unfortunate mistake makes it possible for the **Western Muslim Peripatetics** to be purer Aristotelians, yet it does not change our conclusion about their conception of the Qur'anic terms *nafs* and *rûh*.

31. Fazlur Rahman. *Prophecy in Islâm*. p. 32.

32. Ibn Sina. *Fi Ithbât al- Nubuwwât*, p. 47.

The term *nafs* is conceived by Ibn Rusd as a substance, just like Ibn Sina and al- Fārābî. The term *rûh* is also conceived in the same way. The term intellect is interpreted fairly differently by Ibn Rusd. But since these differences do not affect our result in this context I shall not discuss them. The important point is that the essential elements of Ibn Rusd's psychology coincide with those of Ibn Sina's.

Our analysis reveals that the Qur'anic term *nafs* is interpreted by the **Muslim Aristotelians** as the *life principle of a naturally organized body*. But the lower faculties of *nafs*, or soul are biological. It is only the rational faculty of *nafs* that is spiritual, and hence it cannot be of a biological origin but a spiritual one. That origin or source of the spiritual soul, i.e. al-nafs al-natiqah is the **Active Intellect** in the **Tenth Heavenly Sphere**, which emanates from a purely *Spiritual Source*, viz., God, through a successive step of emanatory chain. This Active intellect is also identical with the Agent of Revelation, namely *Gabriel*, to which the Qur'an sometimes refers by the term *spirit (rûh)*, and Ibn Sina by the term Intellect ('aql).

B- The Theological Approach: Al-Ghazālî

The second comprehensive stand in *Islamic philosophy* which developed doctrines related to the Qur'anic terms "*rûh*" and "*nafs*" is the theological approach represented mainly by the **Mutakallimûn**, i.e. Muslim Theologians. The main figure of this position is undoubtedly al-Ghazālî, who refused Islamic Aristotelianism. That is why, I have chosen his doctrine of human psychology as a prototype for my study. There are of course differences of opinion between al-Ghazālî and other *Mutakallimûn*. But I believe that these differences do not alter my conclusions to be drawn here. Therefore, I would like to argue that it is possible to distinguish a general perspective that represent the semantical signification of theological usages of the terms "*spirit*" and "*soul*".

Another problem we face here is that al-Ghazālî can be also taken as a *mystic* (Sufî) and hence we must classify him within the perspective that

develops a sufi approach so far as the concepts "*spirit*" and "*soul*" are concerned. It is true that al-Ghazālī's psychological doctrines are influenced by mystical outlooks. But it is his psychology that brings the concept of *rûh* from the mystical outlook to the theological perspective as meaning human soul. Thus, the Qur'anic usage of *rûh* suffers here a major shift from its original usage to a new signification. This primary perspective dominated later developments in **kalām**, i.e. Islamic Theology. Therefore, all the subsequent theologians owe their psychological doctrines to al- Ghazālī. That is why I have chosen him as a major figure in the theological approach.

Unfortunately al-Ghazālī's doctrine of *soul* is very complicated; this is mainly because he does not have a single work that systematically treats this subject. We are, therefore, in a position to outline his view of *soul* from all of his works. When we consider his works in general we see that he first postulates three cosmological worlds; **a) the divine world b) the celestial world, c) the material world**. He claims that every thing which is devoid of quantity and dimension belongs to the divine world, which he calls the world of **amr**; for it proceeds from the *Command of God*, i.e. *amr*. The Ghazālīan psychology places human soul within this sphere as well. In order to see how al-Ghazālī places his concept of soul within his cosmological scheme, let us examine his analysis of these four concepts as carried out in his Magnum Opum, **■ Ihyā' ■ 'Ulûm al- Dîn** (The Revival of Religious Sciences); **qalb, rûh, nafs, and 'aql**.

According to al- Ghazālī, we may assign for each concept both a *physical* and a *spiritual* meaning.³³ In the physical or material, namely bodily, sense the *qalb* (heart) refers to a bodily organ. But in the spiritual sense it is the subtle, divine principle which constitutes the reality of man. *Spirit* or *rûh* in the physical sense refers to the vital spirits in the blood; but in the spiritual sense it denotes the substance in man which acts and understands. Again, *nafs* in the physical sense refers to the sum total of man's passions and the source of his blameworthy qualities, whereas in the spiritual sense it means man in his reality but as such man is capable of being

33. Al- Ghazālī. **■ Ihyā' ■ 'Ulûm al- Dîn** (Qāhire: Dar nahr al-Nîl, 1967) Vol. III, pp. 3-4.

qualified by different attributes according to his own soul, such as controlling his carnal desires. According to Ghazālī, in the same way *'aql*, as a physical faculty, refers to the faculty of knowing, which has its seat in the heart. But as a spiritual faculty it is the seat of all knowledge; in other words, it is the faculty which digests, so to speak, knowledge.

It is clear from the above analysis that *soul* (*nafs*) and *spirit* (*rûh*) are used in a different way; in the **first place**, *rûh* is used to refer to *human soul*, because human soul is of spiritual nature; **second**, *nafs* is used to refer only to the *lower faculties of human soul*, which are of a physical nature, such as, to use the Aristotelian terminology, the *vegetative soul* (*nafs*) or *animal soul*; **third**, the term *rûh* is also used in the wider sense to refer to the *ontological realm of spirit*. Therefore, so far as the concepts *rûh* and *nafs* are concerned, al- Ghazālī develops two concepts in his psychology: **1.** the concept of human soul, to which al- Ghazālī refers to by the term *rûh*, namely, spirit, since it is of spiritual nature; **2.** the lower faculties of human soul, to which al- Ghazālī refers to by the term *nafs*, namely soul which is of biological nature. That is why we must be careful when we use these terms in Ghazālīan psychology.

The human soul is regarded by al- Ghazālī as a spiritual principle having life in itself, which vitalizes, controls and regulates the body which is the instrument and vehicle of the soul.³⁴ Having thus defined it in his psychology he goes on to describe human soul a spiritual substance which exists in itself. It is not spaced inside the body or impressed upon it, neither is it connected nor disconnected with the body. Moreover, al- Ghazālī also divides *human soul* into *three parts, just like the Muslim Aristotelians*. Since we have already discussed these divisions, I shall not repeat them here. However, we find a more elaborate classification of *rûh* in his mystical treatise, *Mishkat al- Anwar* (The Niche for lights). Since this classification gives us more insight into the subject, I would like to discuss it briefly. The six classes of spirit are the following;

34. Sharif, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 620.

a- Sensory spirit (al-rûh al- hassas) meets what the senses bring. All animals have this by the fact that they are animals.

b- The imaginative spirit (al- rûh al- hayâlî), which registers and retains what the senses bring. It develops in man during childhood; some animals also possess it.

c- The intelligent spirit (al- rûh al-aqlî) perceives the ideas which come from the senses and from image - forming power. This is a special characteristic of man and therefore, it is not found in the lower animal. Its precepts are universal and necessary knowledge.

d- The rational spirit (al- rûh al- fikri) attains knowledge by syllogism.

e- The transcendental prophetic spirit (al- rûh al- qudsî al-nabawî) is the power of prophets and some saints by which the unseen world is immediately revealed to them.³⁵

We find the sharpest distinction maintained by al- Ghazâlî between the human soul, i.e. rûh and the animal soul in his treatise *Risalah al-laduniyyah*. He says that the Mystics call the rûh "nafs". This is a confusion, adds al- Ghazâlî, claiming that *rûh* is neither something physical nor accidental, it is on the contrary a divine power just like the *first reason*, which is called by the **Muslim Peripatetics** the *rational soul* (al- nafs al-natiqah); this same faculty is called by the Sufis *qalb* (heart).³⁶ This is indeed the spirit from God's Command, which is called *rûh amrî*, because of its origin.³⁷

He concludes that all schools give a special name to the rational soul, philosophers call it *rational soul*, the Qur'an calls it the *nafs at peace* and *rûh* i.e. inspiration which descends from the word of God. The Sufis call it the

35. Al- Ghazâlî. *Mishkat al- Anwâr* (The Niche for Lights) translated by W.H.T. Gairdner (Lahor: Ashraf Press, 1952), pp. 150-153; see also Macdonald's article "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam II" in *Muslim World*, (1982) p. 157.

36. Al- Ghazâlî. *Risalah al- Laduniyyah*, (ed. Muhyu al-Din al-Kurdî, Qāhire: 1328) p.8.

37. Ibid., p. 10.

qalb. These are simply differences in terminology but they indicate a single meaning with different words, semantically they are synonymous. All of them names the *rational soul* (aql), which is the substance endowed with life, action and perception.³⁸ He thus unites all of these concepts in his psychology as being aspects of man's existence here and in the life beyond.

C- The Sufi approach: Ibn 'Arabî

For the sake of refining the human soul, Sufis assert the eternal existence of the soul and try to relate their doctrine of *soul* and *spirit* to their ethics. Also philosophers have claimed that the soul is the main reality. The highest aim of its existence is to live devoted to the *intellect* which is the essence of the soul. Both *Sufis and Philosophers agree on a dualistic hypothesis that includes the forms of good*. Al- Ghazâlî, as we have seen, develops a theory that is influenced both by Philosophers (mainly Muslim Aristotelian) and the Sufis. What we shall examine in this section is the Sufi position, which also developed a comprehensive stand in Islamic philosophy concerning the concepts "*nafs*" and "*rûh*". The philosopher we shall examine in this approach is Ibn Arabî who attempted to unravel human nature in a system of psychology.

I have chosen Ibn 'Arabî as the main figure of the *Sufi approach*, because it is this philosopher who developed a mystical philosophy of *soul* and *spirit* in Islam. It is possible, of course, to find the fundamental ideas of his doctrine in his predecessors, such as Ibn Sina, al- Ghazâlî, even Aristotle and Plotinus. But he skillfully constructed from these diverse sources a unified psychological doctrine that projects the concept of *spirit* and *soul*. That is probably why his doctrine of *soul* sometimes becomes intricately complicated. I shall try to outline his views on human psychology in a manner to pinpoint the relevant ideas about *spirit* and *soul*.

Ibn 'Arabî divides things into three classes:

38. Al- Ghazâlî. *Al- Ihyâ'*, Vol. III, p.4 See also A.S. Tritton's article "Man, Nafs, Rûh, Aql" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 34 (1971) p. 493.

a- the Absolute Existence, namely the Creator

b- the World

c- undefinable tertium quid of contingent existence which is joined to the eternal reality. This is also regarded as sources of substance and a specific a nature of the world.³⁹

He places man as a vicegerent between the *Absolute Existence*. i.e. the Creator and the created world. He recognizes three distinct elements in man. These are *body*, *soul* and *spirit*. His *animal spirit* springs from the *divine breath* (32/Sajda, 9) and his reasoning soul is from the *universal soul*. As it is clear, according to him every part of the human soul is of a spiritual nature.

Ibn 'Arabî defines body as a material form which has extension in space and duration in time. It is perishable and changeable, it is a particular mode of universal body (al- Cism al- Kullî). *Soul* is defined by him as *a vital principle in the human organism. It is a particular soul of the universal soul*. And lastly he defines spirit as the rational principle, the sole purpose of which is to seek true knowledge. It is a mode of universal reason.⁴⁰

As we can see Ibn 'Arabî's doctrine of *spirit* and *soul* has similarities to both the *philosophical* and *theological approaches*. In order to show the difference we can say that he uses the term *spirit* for human soul, but he reserves it only to the highest part of it, which is called *rational soul* by the **Muslim Peripatetics**, and again is called simply *spirit* by the **theologians**. Moreover, although Ibn 'Arabî uses the term *soul* (nafs) to refer to the lower faculties of the soul he does not assign these a biological nature, but rather a spiritual one. Yet he admits that their function is biological; and that is why they are inferior to the higher faculty of soul, whose function is of purely spiritual character. Let us examine his doctrine further in order to see these points mere clearly.

39. E.E. Claverly. "Doctrines of the soul (Nafs and Rûh)in Islam" *Muslim World*, 33 (1943), p. 262.

40. A.E. Affifi. *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnu'l- 'Arabî* (Lahor: Ashraf Press, 1964)), p. 120.

According to him, the chief function of the *vegetative soul* is to seek food and assimilate it into the organism.

- a- attraction
- b- retention
- c- digestion
- d- expulsion

As to the *animal soul*, it is a subtle vapour which has its seat in the physical heart. The *rational soul* he believes to be a *pure spirit*, therefore, it is indestructible, eternal and everlasting. This soul is identical neither with *intellect* nor with the *body*, but intellect is one of its subordinate powers. He maintains the independence of spirit from the body even in case of sleeping and other similar conditions.⁴¹

Ibn 'Arabî explains that divinity and humanity are not distinct natures, but rather two aspects which find their expression at every level of creation. On the one hand, *divinity corresponds to the hidden or inward aspect of any reality*, on the other hand, *humanity corresponds to the external or outward expression of divinity*.⁴²

He accepts the reality of Muhammed as an archetypal nature of pre-existence. This reality is identified by Ibn 'Arabî with the first intellect or universal reason. *The general class of prophets are direct manifestations of this intellect*.⁴³ He takes dreams and khayal (Imagination) as a stage between the real and phenomenal life.⁴⁴

The world *qalb* (heart) is only a symbol for the rational aspect of man and is identified with the Qur'anic concept *al-nafs al- mutma'innah*, like al- Ghazâlî. Therefore, For Ibn 'Arabî, *qalb* is superior to *intellect* and is a higher faculty of the *human soul*. It is the seat of pure spiritual experience.

41. Ibid., p. 123.

42. Fakhyr, op. cit., p. 253.

43. Ibid., p. 253.

44. Affifi, op. cit., p. 131.

CHAPTER III

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT AND SOUL

In the previous chapters we have seen, on the one hand, that the semantical usage of the terms "*spirit*" and "*soul*" in the Qur'an follow a pattern of development, which is analyzed in *Chapter I*. On the other hand, we have also seen the usage of these terms in the prominent three schools of Islamic philosophy. The usage of these terms by the *Muslim Peripatetics*, *Theologians* and *Mystics* are demonstrated in *Chapter II*. However, I need to support my semantical analysis of these concepts in the Qur'an in the first chapter and then my conclusions in the second chapter. In order to do this I shall attempt to do what might be called *phenomenology of ruh and nafs* in the sense that I shall try to analyze these concepts as **phenomena**. I believe that this shall provide the ground for my analysis in the previous chapters.

Before doing this I must clarify the following two points: **First**, I must explain what I mean by phenomenology. I would like to confess that I am not going to develop a science of phenomenology concerning *spirit* and *soul*. What I shall do is simply an analysis of these terms as **phenomena**, rather than as **concepts**. For I believe that *phenomenology in this sense is the ground of my semantical analysis provided previously*. **Second**, I must justify myself in delaying this phenomenology, I have just claimed that phenomenology in the sense described here is the ground of my semantical analysis; since it is also its foundation, it must precede such a linguistic analysis. However, in this case we must admit that since we need to know first how these concepts are used in the Qur'an so that we can indeed penetrate into these concepts as **phenomena**, *the semantical analysis must precede their phenomenology*. I acknowledge that this is the only justification I can offer for my procedure.

On the basis of these explanations, this chapter will be divided into **two main parts**, each of which will be examined respectively; **A. The phenomenon of rûh**, and **B. The phenomenon of nafs**.

A- The Phenomenon of *Rûh* (Revelation)

Rûh as a key word in the Qur'an is a phenomenon that occurs between a *man*, who is chosen as the locus of revelation, and *God*, who is the sender of the message, and an intermediary entity who is identified as the *angel of revelation* that carries the message from God to the *locus of revelation*. Our purpose in this part is to examine this phenomenon, which may also be described as the communication between God and man in the light of the term *rûh* used in the Qur'an. For this phenomenon itself gives us a significant clue to understand the semantical usage of the term *rûh*.

When we closely examine the Qur'an, we see that the *phenomenon of revelation* has two aspects: the first is **verbal** or **linguistics**, the other is **non-verbal**, i.e. the actual event itself, which may well be identified as *behavioral*, or metaphysically as *phenomenal*. At certain times in the second aspect, it becomes essentially mysterious, in the sense that it is utterly subjective to the being of the receiver. It does not allow *any rational analysis* and thus remains only as a *matter of faith*. **The first aspect**, however, can be treated by the rational analysis. So it becomes very important in its *linguistic form*. It is also this aspect of revelation, that is of the Qur'an, that I have attempted to interpret and tried to apply semantical analysis to it.

I have reached the conclusion that the term *rûh* in the Qur'an is used to indicate this **verbal aspect of revelation**. In the light of this conclusion, then *rûh* in the Qur'anic sense, is a kind of speech brought down to the heart of the prophet. Hence, it has no mystery in the rules of the ordinary human language.¹ It is, indeed, the Qur'an itself uses the term *kalimah* (logos) in reference to revelation.

At this point, we should ask one question: What is it that turns the concept of *ruh* into a *linguistic phenomenon*? If we examine the textual evidence from the Qur'an, we shall find that there are mainly two ends in

1. Toshihiko Izutsu. *God and Man* (Tokyo: Keio University, 1964), p. 154.

the phenomenon of *rûh* , as stated above; on the one side, there is the **speaker**, who is God and on the other side there is the **hearer**, who is a human person. Thus there are two beings distinctly different in their natures on the both sides of this phenomenon which we have characterized as a communication.

We know that there is no verbal communication between a human and an animal, except in other non-linguistic forms. For their nature is essentially different. **Moreover**, there is no *verbal sign-system* which is common to both beings. Considering the essential difference between God and man on the *ontological level*, can we claim that the same thing is true for the relationship between God and man² i.e. the revelation?

In the case of the Qur'anic *rûh* , though the ontological difference is not removed, God has chosen a *common sign-system* to communicate his will. This is the *Arabic language*.

Now let us ask again, how is such an extraordinary relation possible at two different levels? The textual evidence from the Qur'an makes it clear that this is possible in two ways: Either the hearer or receiver of the message undergoes a deep personal transformation or the speaker comes down and somewhat manifests the attributes of the locus of revelation.³

The Qur'an also makes it clear that there are only three types of *verbal communication* in the phenomenon of *rûh* i.e revelation (42/Shûrã, 51)

- a- *Direct communication*, which involves the subjective phenomenon of a spiritual order,
- b- Speaking from *behind*, which is beyond a veil and this is *verbal* but not *visual*,
- c- *The sending of a messenger*, which is both *visual* and *verbal*.

In all these contexts, the term *rûh* refers to the words which are revealed. **Moreover**, we know that this form occurs in the Qur'an

2. Ibid., p. 156.

3. Ibid., p. 167.

exclusively in this context. Therefore its usage semantically involves **three factors**; *God, the angel* which brings the message and **finally** the *personality of the prophet*. But, according to the Qur'an the prophet is not the final point of this communication; for the message should pass beyond him to mankind, because God does not speak to the prophet simply for the sake of communicating with him, but rather for the sake of *guiding* the community to the right path.

We know in this connection that sometimes the term *rûh* is used as a substantive referring to the *Agent of revelation*. But this is only a *metaphysical usage*, for the Agent himself is of a spiritual nature. In other words he is a spirit. **Moreover**, what is communicated is also related to the *spiritual aspect of mankind*, namely the goal of revelation. Therefore, it is apt to use the term *spirit* for both the **Agent** and for **what is revealed**. Our analysis of the phenomenon of revelation, I believe, has made this point clear, which is also the ground of our semantical analysis of this concept in the Qur'an.

B- The Phenomenon of *Nafs* (human soul)

Our examination of the term *nafs* as it is used by the Qur'an in the first chapter has revealed three semantical aspects of this term, which is now open for a phenomenological analysis; first is the usage of *nafs* to mean *man's physical or material being*, the **second aspect** is *mental*, and finally the **third aspect** refers to man's *inner consciousness* which includes desire, volition, etc. The last two aspects are closely interrelated, because one's desires and volition cannot be independent of his mental states; in other words, processes of consciousness cannot sharply be distinguished from mental states. In that case, we can distinguish the first usage somewhat more distinctly from the last two usages. In order to maintain my distinction, I shall call that usage of *nafs* in its first aspect, **external**; whereas its usage in the last two aspects can be called **internal**.

I must point out that in this phenomenological analysis the *reflexive usage* of the term *nafs* cannot be included, since it is used here merely as a *reflexive pronoun*. Therefore, it is not posed in this usage as a phenomenon. Hence, its phenomenological analysis is not possible. As I pointed out, by phenomenology of *nafs*, I mean its analysis as a phenomenon. In the reflexive usage, if this term is taken as a phenomenon, then this will be identical with the external usage of it, which I have just delineated above.

In the **external sense**, I believe that the *phenomenology of nafs* means the investigation of the body in the anatomical sense, which does not pose any philosophical problem so far as we are concerned with this term here. There are, of course, certain anatomical and neurological problems, which, if solved, would help us considerably in the problem of, for example, *man's physical existence* and its *relation to his mental* and conscious states. It is indeed the mental and conscious state that yield phenomena with philosophical problems. It is this aspect, which I have just called **internal**, that I shall investigate in my phenomenology of soul (*nafs*).

We empirically call certain bodily states mental states. As a result we do not consider some processes in the human body as material kind. Therefore, we do not necessarily reduce them to material properties. All the phenomena which express our thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, anguish and love are of this kind. Some of this internal phenomena has become the subject of study in empirical sciences. for example **telepathy** shows us empirically that a mind can do what no material system can do.⁴ But the external phenomena of *nafs* can be studied empirically only. On the basis of this, we can say that though the *internal aspect of soul* may be undertaken as an empirical study in a very limited sense, it evades almost always any empirical data concerning soul as a phenomenon. But this is not the case with it as an **external phenomenon**; for the body can be studied empirically and hence any problem concerning our bodily state is solvable. On the other hand, I would like to claim that the phenomenological analysis

4. Keith Campbell. *Body and Mind* (Indiana; University of Notre Dame, 1980), p.33.

of nafs in its **internal aspect** must yield a doctrine concerning the nature of soul, which, I believe, is not possible. Therefore, the problems yielded in the usage of nafs as an internal phenomenon cannot be solved.

We may try to face this problem more openly. Why is it not possible to develop a phenomenology of soul in its **internal aspect**? **One reason** for this we have already given above; namely the fact that no experimental and empirical data can be obtained from the soul as an internal phenomenon. This does not mean that *we are not aware of*, namely *do not experience our psychological states*. In fact, this aspect is empirical and is studied in *psychology* but **there is no empirical evidence about the fact that these states explain the nature of nafs as an internal phenomenon**. Therefore, our **second reason** for the impossibility of a phenomenology of nafs in the internal sense is that the human nature as a whole has always evaded human comprehension. No matter how much our knowledge increases concerning the empirical data, the problems will become more complicated.

I have just used the term **human nature as a whole**; what I mean by this is the term nafs taken together with its **external** and **internal** signification. In fact, whenever the Qur'an uses this term it wants to consider **man as a whole**, rather than running into a **duality**. Of course, as we have seen in the first chapter, *nafs* is never used in the Qur'an to refer to an *independent substance*. That is why I draw the conclusion that the Qur'an refers to the **human nature as a whole** by the term *nafs*, but the emphasis shifts from nafs as an **external phenomenon** to *nafs* as an **internal phenomenon**, whenever the context requires.

Be that as it may, the Qur'an introduces two phenomena in relation to the concept of *soul* in 39/Zumar, 42, which I mentioned in Chapter I; **sleep** and **death**.⁵ When we examine that aspect of the human constitution taken in sleep and death as signified in this verse we will find two daily phenomena, which I shall now discuss.

5. For a more detailed discussion of the term *nafs* in this verse See Jane I. Smith's article "The Understanding of Nafs and Ruh in Contemporary Muslim Considerations of the Nature of Sleep and Death" *Muslim World*, Vol. LXIX (1979), pp. 151-161.

1- The phenomenon of *nafs* in sleep: It is certain that sleeping is a biological necessity for human life. What happens during sleep? The verse just mentioned states that "*God takes the soul at the time of their death; and (He also takes) those during the sleep, which are not dead.*" What is taken when one sleeps and what is returned when the sleeper awakes? In the light of this verse, we can claim that the *nafs* taken during sleep is that which has the *power of distinguishing external objects*. When one sleeps these functions are cut off temporarily. In this case the *nafs* (man) is severed **externally**, i.e. interruption of **external experience**, but not personally. Although there are limitations for the empirical science in this field, the experience of sleep and its relation with interrupting of consciousness are **intelligible phenomena**.⁶ For it occurs somewhat in the realm of our observations.

If we notice in the verse, **no duality** is implied; for it is the same subject which suffers a phenomenon. When we carefully examine this verse, it is stated that when the soul dies, or in sleep it is taken away; i.e it is severed from its **external phenomenal aspects**. Therefore, there is still just one subject, which can consistently be interpreted as the human nature as a whole. For it is the same thing that falls asleep and is taken away.

2- The phenomenon of *nafs* at death: As to the *soul* which has life and is taken away at the time of death, I would like to call the **living soul**, which is again generally interpreted as *rûh* , i.e. the *spiritual soul of man* (or in its common usage *human soul*). With the **phenomenon of death**, the *soul* ceases both **externally** and **internally**, whereas in sleep it ceases only externally. Therefore, in sleep there is life but *nafs* is unable to manifest itself as an **external phenomenon**; whereas after death the *soul* cannot manifest itself as a *phenomenon at all*.

Scientific research, unlike in the sleeping state, affirms that death has a permanent character. The difference between sleep and death, from

6. Josephy W. Galloway. "On Johnstone's 'Phenomenology of Death' and 'Philosophy of Sleep'" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXXVIII (1977-78), p. 110.

the empirical perspective, is just **breathing**. Taken the meanings and the usages of different forms that are differentiated from *nafs* (such as *nafas* i.e. breathing) it may well be the case that the soul is unable to manifest itself as a living being at the time of death. Therefore, it ceases as an **internal and external phenomenon** at death.

It can be said that the phenomenology of death can be developed only as an *extrapolation from the phenomenology and experience of daily sleeping*.⁷ So intellectual efforts concerning *nafs* is still open for further investigation.

Today, science has many branches and each branch studies a particular part of the human personality. Therefore, at least today, it seems to leave aside the examination of the human nature as *a whole*. For this reason it cannot accomplish to answer man's main question about *soul*. For this answer needs to regard **man as a whole**. I believe that this can be accomplished only by developing a **universal world-view**. It is easy to see that *science* does not achieve a *comprehensive world-view*. *That is why the Qur'an mainly used the term nafs with three aspects to refer to human being as a whole, not as a separate substance from the body*. It is only after this accomplishment that philosophical speculations must begin.

In these above considerations if we turn to examine that part of the human constitution taken by God in **sleep** and **death** in 39/Zumar, 42, we will find two daily phenomena manifested by man. The term *nafs* used in this verse is generally understood as *spirit*. i.e. *rûh* and it was thought that this kind of study is unknown,⁸ because it is among the affairs of *ghayb*, which God alone knows. Therefore, it evades any scientific investigation and philosophizing.

In spite of some distinctions, I think, two such given examples i.e. **sleep** and **death**, categorically are alike. In this context, both phenomena

7. Henry W. Johnstone. "Toward A Phenomenology of Death", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXXV (1974-75), p. 396.

8. See Jane I. Smith's article in *Muslim World* cited above in footnote 6.

concerning *nafs* are mentioned in order to *stimulate some reflections on the nature of nafs "for those who think"*. At this point, though we have no restriction from the *religious perspective*, however, we have *epistemological impediments*. According to this verse, we may claim that the *nafs* (man) has two phenomenological cases in his life; **sleep** and **death**, which are, as we have seen, not sufficient to enable us to penetrate philosophically into the **phenomenon of nafs**.

In conclusion, then, we can say that *nafs* as a phenomenon refers to **man's nature as a whole**. It does not introduce, at least in the Qur'anic context, a **duality to man's nature**. But there are still problems related to the phenomenon of soul, such as *freedom*, and the relation of **internal aspects of soul to its external manifestation**, which need to be solved philosophically. I believe that this can be done only within the context of a **comprehensive world-view**, which needs to be developed as an independent project.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The history of a concept as it is used in everyday life and applied to speculative thinking may reveal interesting and illuminating results. It is this kind of an investigation that is attempted here. Of course, I cannot claim that my study is a whole-scale investigation into the history of the concepts involved in this thesis. But at least this much is accomplished here; we have claimed that these concepts are not used in later Islamic thought in the same signification they were originally meant to be used. The original signification of these concepts are determined by the Qur'anic usage. Therefore, an analysis of this usage is disclosed as the first step in the history of *spirit* and *soul*. Then our claim focused on how under the influence of the other post-Qur'anic systems, such as theology, philosophy and mysticism, these concepts suffered a radical inner semantical transformation, which at the conceptual level changed the original intention of the Qur'anic thinking.

The semantical development of the concept *nafs*, i.e. soul exhibits that in the early Arabic poetry it is used mostly in the reflexive sense to refer to the *human-self*. Moreover, while the term *rûh* is used, at this stage, to mean *wind*, *odour* or *rest*, the Qur'an transformed these usages to a phenomenological sphere to refer to *the special divine gift or to the angel of revelation*.

The second phase in the semantical development of the history of these concepts, we see that they are used, rather in a confusing way, interchangeably. The original meaning of the term *nafs*, viz., *human-self*, is of course preserved. But through translations, mainly of Aristotle's works, the term is used in the sense to refer to *human-self*, or more specifically to mean the *rational* part of the human soul. In these translations the term *rûh* also suffered a transformation and began to be used more broadly to refer to the *World Spirit*, i.e. *Nous* (*al-rûh al-kullî*); hence it came to mean *spirit*, as opposed to its original intention *revelation* and *angel of revelation*.

Another dimension brought to this picture in the history of *nafs* and *rûh* is that the mystics of Islam claimed that the human soul (*nafs*) as a substance is of a spiritual nature; in other words it is a "spirit", i.e. *rûh*. Thus, they began to refer to the human soul with both concepts, *nafs* and *rûh*. When the theologian also joined with the Mystics in this usage, the fundamental difference between both concepts was lost; instead, a mind-body duality was interposed. This duality, however, cannot be found in the Qur'anic usage, as my semantical analysis in the first chapter of this study demonstrates.

Man's act is single and divisible, according to the Qur'anic usage. So it is impossible to draw a line between the share of the body and the mind in that action. That is why the Qur'anic concept of *nafs* reveals itself as a *whole* and a *unity*. Moreover Muslim philosophers received structurally dualistic soul picture from Greek thought and more or less reflected it in the speculative thinking on both concepts in Islam. Their doctrine of prophecy is also based upon Greek theories about soul and its powers of cognition. Furthermore, While Muslim theologians do not distinguish between the *rûh* and *nafs* philosophers do.

As a last point I began questioning the underlying notion in this semantical investigation. In the last chapter *spirit* and *soul* are thus posed as phenomena; and hence they are suggested in this sense as the underlying notion of my thesis. The investigation of these concepts as phenomena rather than merely pure concepts is called *phenomenology of spirit* and *soul*. The phenomenological analysis is thus posed as the foundation of my semantical analysis of these philosophical concepts.

My investigation into the phenomenology of spirit revealed that this concept denotes the phenomenon of revelation in its most original sense. The analysis of this phenomenon, moreover, revealed that more often than not the Qur'an used this concept not only to refer to this phenomenon itself but also to the agent of this phenomenon, which is designated with different appellations, all of which without exception include the term *rûh*. It is

possible to argue on this basis that the revelation and the agent are held to be identical. But the third element of this phenomenon, which is the person of the Prophet is distinguished as the receiver of this revelatory phenomenon.

The analysis of the phenomenology of soul, moreover, disclosed that as a phenomenon this concept refers to the *inner personality of man* as such. In order to provide a detailed analysis of this phenomenon we need to take it as a *structural unity* composed of aspects, rather than ontologically different entities. As a result, in order to develop a more coherent understanding of human nature we need to inquire into this concept more in its phenomenological sense, which includes also both the mental and the physical states.

In way of suggestion, what we can say as a conclusion is that if a more contemporary outlook of man and religion is to be developed in Islamic philosophy, then we must evaluate the original semantical usages of the terms *nafs* and *rûh* in the Qur'an with relation to the contemporary developments in philosophy. Moreover, if the contemporary philosophy wishes to develop a more unified understanding of man and his nature, then the Qur'anic analyses of these terms may again be suggested as a point of departure. As Hegel, sharing the same view with Muslim philosophers, such as Ibn Sina, al-Fārābî, Ibn Rushd, also stated, the subject of study in philosophy and religion is the same, namely the Absolute Truth. After all what remains for us to do is to search for assistance from every possible source in order to increase our knowledge of universe and our place in such an outlook.

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