

# **Hidden Stimuli in the Human Soul**

A comparative study between religion and philosophy

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# Introduction

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

The human being is a creature with a blend of elements, some of which belong to the perceptible world while others belong to the unseen world. It is, therefore, impossible to ascertain the human's true essence, its features, and what stimulates it except by virtue of the revealed scripture. Only through it do we become able to identify the imperceptible features. By employing pure reason or intuition and guess, seekers of this branch of knowledge have reached different, yet jumbled, conclusions. Whatever the outcome of rational thought or unfounded predictions regarding this topic is, it has fallen short of producing any conclusive and comprehensive knowledge that demonstrates the true essence of the human soul, the hidden stimuli operating within, and how to communicate or benefit therefrom. In addition, empirical research in psychology has not only failed to exceed the borders of predictions but has also put forth some premature hypotheses and theories, constituting no scientific facts.

Believers in the divine revelation, on the other hand, have learned critical facts about the soul and the hidden stimuli affecting it. Since the beginning of creation, the revelation sent down via the prophets and messengers introduced conclusive facts and essential knowledge about the world of the unseen, such as helping the believers know themselves and their connection to the world of the unseen, to enable them to dedicate their lives to the overarching goal they were created to achieve. As a result, they will be capable of fulfilling their servitude to Allah along with endeavoring to cultivate the earth firmly and with tranquility.

This study addresses this epistemological aspect through investigating the unseen stimuli affecting the human soul, as laid out in the infallible texts of revelation, in both the Qur'an and Sunnah. Meanwhile, it also explores the philosophical viewpoint of such unseen stimuli, as put forth by minds unguided by the light of revelation; for opposites bring out the truth of each other.

Research goal:

This study aims at demonstrating the unseen facts pertaining to the hidden stimuli affecting the human soul. It explores some of the perceptions, philosophical and scientific theories on this topic that contribute to educating the human about himself and helping him to

advance it. It also brings attention to this important and much-discussed topic, since the debate around it has veered away from introducing sound knowledge and explicit textual evidence, which coincides with the rise of the so-called Human Potential Development whose essence is emanated from misguided philosophical conceptions.

Methodology and Procedures:

- Employing inductive method by collecting all the relevant scriptural texts and then providing a descriptive method and analysis of the texts.

- Drawing a comparison between the unseen facts pertaining to the hidden stimuli affecting the human soul (subject of this study) and the results of the scientific theories and philosophical conceptions, all in a clear and concise language.

- Brevity is the main feature of this study. I, therefore, disregarded elaborate introduction of prominent figures in the footnotes, rather I limited it to the date of death if such a figure is [presumably] unknown to the reader.

Research plan:

The structure of this study is made of an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion:

Introduction: it explores the the causes of this study, its importance, and plan.

Chapter one: The human and the world of the unseen.

Chapter two: The true essence of the human soul.

Chapter three: The truth about the hidden stimuli in the human soul.

Conclusion: it summarizes the main results and offers a number of recommendations.

## **Chapter one: The human and the world of the unseen**

Existents around the human being are classified into two worlds:

- a. The visible world: it includes everything Allah Almighty created as identifiable to the human senses. It is the world we live in and sense. This includes ourselves, what surrounds us of non-living objects, plants, animals, and everything else seen, heard, or perceived by any sense, not to mention what humans discovered via modern technological innovations that expanded the arena of vision and hearing beyond our normal human sensory devices. Many of the relatively unknown things have become evidently known such as the internal body organs, the bottoms of the oceans, the outer space, etc.

- b. The world of the unseen: it includes everything Allah or His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) informed us

of, whose existence is imperceptible to our sensory devices in this world.  
<sup>1</sup> The most superior aspect of the unseen is Allah Almighty and His names and attributes. Other examples include countless creatures and realms beyond our perception, one of which is our own soul. This also includes stimuli that affect us such as the realm of the angels, the realm of the spirit, and the realm of the jinn, etc.

Philosophically speaking, this category of existents is called “Metaphysics”. Many philosophers do affirm the existence of this world, though they build their knowledge on the basis of their reason and imagination rather than on the revelation from the Omniscient.

And since the human being is a blend of both worlds, the visible and the unseen, it is impossible to identify many of the human-related facts except for those who believe in the unseen and accept the truthful reports about it and reflect properly on the visible world. The infallible reports of the revelation have broadened our knowledge about the human being, pertaining to both the visible and unseen worlds separately or collectively. For example, Allah Almighty informed us about the beginning and origin of the human being saying: {And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels, “I am going to appoint a vicegerent on earth.” They said, “Will You appoint on it someone who will spread corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?” He said, “I know that which you do not know.”} [Surat al-Baqarah: 30] Allah Almighty informed that Adam is the origin of mankind. Allah created him from dust and created His wife from him. Both Adam and his wife gave birth to humans, procreating generation after another. Allah Almighty says: {...Who created you from a single soul, and created from it its mate, and from both of them created countless men and women.} [Surat an-Nisā’: 1]

The scriptural texts have also highlighted the overarching purpose of the creation of the human being and his ultimate destination following this life, so as to enable him to shoulder the requirements of vicegerency and the cultivation of the earth. By virtue of this knowledge, one becomes capable of deciding how to purify himself and discipline it, and how to achieve the purpose for which humans are created. {I have not created the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.} [Surat adh-Dhāriyāt: 56]

Divine revelation conveyed essential knowledge to the human illuminating facts about himself and his intellectual powers in order to

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<sup>1</sup> As reported by the general wording of the Sunnah, apart from the miracles and supernatural abilities, and what is conveyed by the revelation.

learn more about himself, explore the universe around him, and utilize this in favor of achieving the cause of his creation.

Investigating all the relevant scriptural texts about the human intellectual powers highlights the grace of Allah Almighty bestowed on people, as He created them with the knowledge necessary for their lives and servitude to Him. He created them in different shapes and with different powers. He gifted them with certain tendencies to seek knowledge and realize the truth. In addition, He sent them messengers to inform them of the unseen so as to comfort their souls by realizing who they are, who their deity is, why they were created, and where their final destination will be.

The ability of learning is one of the crucial human features through which he learns about the surrounding realms. This knowledge is by no means the product of his own power, but rather a gift and mercy from his Creator Who brought him to this world illiterate and powerless save the inborn knowledge and power He created inside him to lead a life. Allah Almighty says: {Allah brought you out from your mothers' wombs not knowing anything.} [Surat an-Nahl: 78] By virtue of Allah's mercy, Allah granted the human the tools and necessary means to acquire knowledge. Allah Almighty says: {And He gave you hearing, sight and intellect.} [Surat an-Nahl: 78] Allah also granted man the means of knowledge by His mercy: {And has taught you what you did not know.} [Surat an-Nisā': 113] He commanded the human to employ the reason and intellect He gifted him. Allah Almighty says: {Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth and the alternation of the night and day are signs for people of understanding.} [Surat Āl 'Imrān: 190] Allah even invited the human to ask for more knowledge: {And say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge."} [Surat Taha: 114] He informed him that He privileges some of His servants with exclusive knowledge from Him: {There they found one of Our slaves upon whom We bestowed Our mercy and We taught him from Our Own knowledge.} [Surat al-Kahf: 65] Allah also informs man that He unveils part of the unseen to some of His chosen servants: {Nor would Allah reveal to you [believers] the unseen, but Allah chooses from His messengers whom He wills.} [Surat Āl 'Imrān: 179]

Furthermore, Allah informed man about the infinite number of realms known to none but Him. He commanded him to give up his ambitious pursuit of knowing what has not been revealed to him of the unseen and not to speak ignorantly about it. Allah Almighty says: {Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge.} [Surat al-Isrā': 36]

People do not share equal knowledge either of the visible or the unseen worlds. Instead, they markedly vary depending on Allah's preference and their respective skills and gifted powers bestowed upon them by Allah Almighty. The following lines clarify the knowledge-related powers Allah gifted the human being; some of which are purely beyond our human perception, yet known to us through transmitted proofs, while others are sensible in the visible world:

#### A- The Natural Disposition (Fitrah):

As reported by the revelation texts, man is born with innate knowledge, necessary for living this life and learning about his Lord and Creator, and indicators to distinguish the good from the evil. It is natural then that Allah commands man to dedicate his worship to Him sincerely on account of the inborn inclination Allah created in all humans, and the revelation was sent to confirm this and guide humans to it. Allah Almighty says: {Adhere sincerely to the true religion in all uprightness. This is the natural disposition with which Allah has created mankind.} [Surat ar-Rūm: 30] The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) clarified that this natural disposition is susceptible to external corruption, making it incapable of leading one to the truth. This is made clear in his statement: "Every child is born on Fitrah (sound innate disposition to monotheism), and it is his parents who make him Jewish, Christian, or Magian..."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this Fitrah is naturally upright and inclined towards virtues as the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) reported Allah Almighty saying: "I have created all My servants with a sound natural inclination to worship Me alone."<sup>3</sup>

Sound natural disposition guides man to general knowledge of his own soul and its deficiency as well as of his Lord and His Omnipotence. This applies to other matters of the unseen too, however, it cannot guide man to details of the unseen. By virtue of natural disposition, one realizes the existence of an Omnipotent deity behind the creation of this universe and His absolute perfection. However, details of this deity's attributes, actions, and the path leading to Him are beyond the grasp of the natural disposition and are realized only through divine revelation. Likewise, one knows by virtue of his sound natural disposition that this world is not purposeless. There will be reckoning and recompense following the end of this world. However, the human being is naturally

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<sup>2</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of funerals, chapter: Should funeral prayer be offered on the boy who dies immediately after embracing Islam? Narrated by Muslim; book of destiny, chapter: The meaning of "Every child is born on Fitrah".

<sup>3</sup> Narrated by Muslim; book of Paradise, chapter: The traits by which Paradise residents are recognized in this life.

unequipped with knowledge of the details of this recompense, or how and when it will occur. At this point, he is in need of infallible revelation from Allah, the Lord of the worlds, to know the reward of the pious, the punishment of the wrongful, and all the relevant details of the Day of Judgment.

A sound natural disposition is one of the ways to realize the general truth, though completely helpless in pinpointing the details of not only the unseen world but the visible one as well. In this world, one must seek education and use reason to learn about its details. In the world of the unseen, nonetheless, believing the reports conveyed by the prophets is a must. Hence, Allah Almighty clarified how the human is born without any knowledge saying: {Allah brought you out from your mothers' wombs not knowing anything.} [Surat an-Nahl: 78] So, man must learn as much to reform himself, awaken his natural disposition, and cultivate his life and the Hereafter.

#### B- The Senses:

They are man's access points to knowledge. He can inherently recognize them and their effects. Revelation has also brought his attention to those senses by which Allah empowered him to acquire more knowledge. Allah Almighty says: {It is He Who gave you hearing, sight and hearts. How little you give thanks!} [Surat al-Mu'minūn: 78] Another verse reads: {Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His [created] soul. He granted you hearing, sight and intellect.} [Surat as-Sajdah: 9] Allah Almighty urged man to use his senses and scolded the one who disables them: {We have surely created for Hell many jinn and humans. They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle, rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless.} [Surat al-A'rāf: 179] Allah Almighty despises those who disable their senses as He says: {The worst of creatures before Allah are those that are deaf and dumb, who do not understand.} [Surat al-Anfāl: 22]

People vary in terms of their senses' strength. Allah, however, has eased the progression of various branches of knowledge that boosted the senses, expanded its coverage, and unveiled countless details of what used to be unseen and previously inaccessible to the naked senses. Using telescopes and microscopes, for example, has expanded the perimeters of sight far and wide reaching distant horizons or abyssal depths that were inapproachable by the naked eye. Likewise, this expansion applies to areas of knowledge acquired through hearing. Moreover, by virtue of the modern devices and inventions, it is now

possible to surpass time enabling man to see and hear what happened in the past ages as if he were there. He was also able to surpass space via live broadcast devices, thus, witnessing what is beyond the reach of the normal sight and telescopes as well. In this manner, man has become able to learn more about the relatively unseen world.

Allah Almighty urged man to harness his senses and powers while exercising caution against boastfulness and making untenable claims about them. In scolding the doer of such actions, Allah Almighty says: {They regard the angels, who are slaves of the Most Compassionate, as female. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be written, and they will be questioned!} [Surat az-Zukhruf: 19] Allah indicated this prohibition in His saying: {Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, all of them will be called to account.} [Surat al-Isrā': 36] Furthermore, Allah warned man against regression and against confining knowledge to what is perceivable to the senses, denying what is beyond that. As a matter of fact, senses are no more than tools of learning about the visible world only, and they are incapable of encompassing the unseen. Allah Almighty reminded man of his minimal knowledge compared to the expanse of his ignorance saying: {And you have not been given knowledge except a little.} [Surat al-Isrā': 85] He also says: {But above each one who possesses knowledge is the All-Knowing One.} [Surat Yūsuf: 76] The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) has also reiterated this fact. He maintained that the collective knowledge of all humanity throughout history compared to the knowledge of Allah Almighty is like the pecking of a bird in a sea. <sup>4</sup>

C- Reason: Allah Almighty reminded man of the means to knowledge acquisition that He blessed him with saying: {Say, "It is He Who brought you into being and gave you hearing, sight, and hearts.} [Surat al-Mulk: 23] Hearing and sight are windows for both the heart and mind. They expand one's perception of things lying far beyond his senses.

The purview of reason is associated with its perception of the tangibles and natural sciences founded on observation, deduction, and identification of rationales. Accordingly, the farther the information from the span of human senses is, the weaker the reason's ability is to make precise deductions concerning the truth of such information. In areas beyond the perception of senses, however, reason must helplessly learn

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<sup>4</sup> The Hadīth of Al-Khidr with Mūsa (Moses) (peace be upon them) as narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of knowledge, chapter: When a scholar is asked, "Who is the most learned person", it is better for him to attribute knowledge to Allah Almighty. It is also narrated by Muslim; book of virtues, chapter: the virtues of Al-Khidr (peace be upon him).



about them from someone who knows, so long as his authenticity is scrutinized, and only then one can surely learn from him.

In contrast, things that fall within the purview of senses, though their essence is linked with absolute or relative tempo-spatial unseen, such as tracking the origin of the universe by virtue of physical and geological phenomena, and learning about the essence of the soul, means of purifying it, and its hidden stimuli, in such cases some of the conclusions proposed by reason may be accepted though limited to the domain of probability and inadmissible to the domain of certainty. Other conclusions are utterly rejected due to its stark conflict with the real truth of the unseen.

It is worth mentioning that reason is doomed to failure once it transcends its prescribed boundaries. It is possible, thus, that man will deny some truths of the unseen for no reason but ignorance. This is why the righteous predecessors (may Allah be pleased with them) warned against immoderate admiration of reason and the unfavorable consequences of misusing it. They (may Allah have mercy upon them) emphasized the necessity of using reason within its prescribed area so that one is capable of distinguishing the truth from illusion. Reason is admittedly a sound criterion in distinguishing the truth from falsehood, as far as the visible world is concerned, and in distinguishing the truthful report about the unseen from the false one.

Second: Allah privileges some people with favors to the exclusion of others:

Allah Almighty stated that some of His creation is allowed a peek into the unseen with Allah's permission. Allah Almighty says: {[He is] Knower of the unseen, He does not reveal His unseen to anyone, except the messenger whom He chooses, then He appoints angel-guards before him and behind him to ensure that the messengers fully conveyed the messages of their Lord. He encompasses in His knowledge all about them, and keeps count of all things.} [Surat al-Jinn: 26-28] Another verse reads: {Nor would Allah reveal to you [believers] the unseen, but Allah chooses from His messengers whom He wills.} [Surat Āl 'Imrān: 179] This privilege manifests in various forms such as miracles by which Allah supports His prophets and messengers, a mercy on His servants to clarify to them the proper way of displaying servitude to Him, or an act of honor or support for His righteous servants.

Fortunately, there is abundant knowledge on this subject as related to the prophets, the various kinds of revelations Allah sent them through His angels, and the inspirations they received in their visions. History, too, preserved many stories reporting the miracles manifested at the

hands of righteous people. They were privileged with knowing part of the unseen in the form of an inspiration or a truthful vision and the like. It is yet possible that revealing part of the unseen can be a test from Allah gradually leading to destruction. Hence, there is an urgent need to be acquainted with the various types of such powers and gifts and their respective sources and the right method in dealing with them. This way one will lead his life in conformity with the servitude methodology that is approved by Allah Almighty. Further information on this subject are discussed in the following section.

Third: The general features of human knowledge:

Notwithstanding the ever-growing and diverse human knowledge, it is strictly bounded by the limits of the human being and his deficient makeup. The exception to this rule is the reception of revelation, the most superior gift, which is restricted to the prophets (peace be upon them) whose seal is Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Examining all the relevant scriptural texts acquaints us with general human features and traits that constitute the framework of his knowledge and powers. Man is incapable of transcending that framework no matter how much progress he achieves in science and how much knowledge he acquires, and no matter how wise and sharp his mind is, and no matter how powerful his hearing and sight are and how pure his soul and heart are. Those features are as follows:

1. Readiness to acquire knowledge: Man is born weak and ignorant, needing education, upbringing, and direction to awaken his inborn cognizance and guide him to the path of science and knowledge for which he has an innate desire and the tools illustrated earlier.

2. Temporal and spatial limitations: Man's life is short. He cannot live longer than what is destined for him. Likewise, he is bounded by the space on this earth. Going beyond it via technological advancement is eventually tied to an inevitable end, regardless of the human continuing progress. The Noble Qur'an always reminds the human being of his limited knowledge and warns him against attributing something to Allah out of ignorance. Allah Almighty says: {Does he have knowledge of the unseen, so he has insight?} [Surat an-Najm: 35] Allah makes it certainly clear before the human that he is utterly ignorant of other worlds. Allah says: {I did not call them to witness the creation of the heavens and earth, nor even the creation of their own selves.}; [Surat al-Kahf: 51] not to mention his insignificant extent of knowledge as Allah says: {And you have not been given knowledge except a little.} [Surat al-Isrā': 85]

3. Deficiency, incapability, and vulnerability to mistakes: man experiences different stages where his powers vary and that affects his

knowledge. This is clear in the Noble Qur'an where Allah Almighty says: {It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, then after weakness He gave you strength, then after strength He made you weak and old. He creates what He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the Most Capable.} [Surat ar-Rūm: 54] Human is vulnerable to forgetfulness after having knowledge. He may become mentally unstable and he is always prone to mistakes.

It is obvious now how the knowledge-related human features can only go so far as exploring the visible world and cultivating the earth, only to meet their limits when they fail to empower the human to unravel the workings blending both the visible and the unseen worlds, let alone the ultimate truths of the unseen. Therefore, man must faithfully resort to Allah and believe with certainty in the revelation sent down upon the prophets irrespective of how powerful his senses and reason are. Evidently, "The only approach to achieve decisive knowledge is through [following] the guidance of Allah made clear to people. It will always be the case that human knowledge, unconfirmed by Allah, is inconclusive and destined to remain afar from certainty." <sup>5</sup>

Man stands in dire need of knowledge sources in order to overcome his limits and expanding his horizons beyond the tangibles to learn about the intangibles of the unseen. He is not created to be jailed behind the temporal and spatial bars of this world, and his life is certainly not restricted to it. The truth, however, is that Allah created him in this life to test him. In so doing, Allah Almighty endows him with sources that unravel the kind of unseen knowledge required to help him pass the test successfully. This includes his knowledge of his own soul, natural faculties, powers, and what influences him. They are indeed conferred by the Omniscient. By means of His revelation, He instills definitive and truthful answers to questions dominating and benefiting the human mind. The following section will provide further elaboration on this topic.

## **Chapter two: The true essence of the human soul**

Undoubtedly, man will attain happiness and tranquility once he learns the truth about his soul and its hidden stimuli. This will surely help him improve his religious and worldly commitments.

This knowledge is intertwined with an extremely ancient past, such as the human origin story, and a distant future that represents the ultimate fate of the human being after the end of this worldly life. It also

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<sup>5</sup> "Fī Zhiḷāl al-Qur'ān" By Sayyid Qutb: 2/1116.

encompasses the present whose components are simultaneously a blend of the unseen and the visible worlds as well as inaccessible by the limited human powers. Hence, many misguided minds who were under the assumption that reason is sufficient to comprehend such superior facts, were given to illusions and suspicions. As one sociologist puts it: "This great mystery provoking our minds: what is the world? What is the human being? Where did he come from? Who created them? Who governs their affairs? What is the reason behind their existence? How was the beginning? How will they end? What is life? What is death? Which law must our minds follow? Every nation and society has offered its answers to those questions; some are good, acceptable, and constant but others are bad, ridiculous, and shaky." <sup>6</sup> As a matter of fact, only the nations that follow the guidance of revelation have reached a comforting and real answer to that mystery.

This section is an attempt to draw a broad outline of the essence of the human being, as reported by the divine texts. Man is an integral whole and a perfect synergy between matter and soul. There is a strong bond tying perceived characteristics and types of behavior with the hidden stimuli introduced by the revelation; only those relying on the revelation shall be acquainted with such a bond.

By investigating the divine texts, we notice how they sketch a portrayal of the essence of the human soul, orient the believer's mind to reflect on his soul and the universe around him. The most prominent features of this portrayal are:

First: Allah honored the human being and created him in the best form since his first origin. Allah Almighty says: {Surely We have created man in the best form.} [Surat at-Tīn: 4] The human is on an equal footing with the universe in terms of being created and subjected to the servitude of Allah. However, he is preferred above all other creatures by possessing reason and accountability for religious obligations. Allah Almighty says: {We have honored the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, provided for them good things and favored them above many of those whom We have created.} [Surat al-Isrā': 70]

Second: The human is provided with a full-fledged body <sup>7</sup> that enables him to direct his life towards the purpose for which Allah created him. The body is our physical structure, <sup>8</sup> which is tangible. It is mentioned in the Qur'an as Allah Almighty says: {So today We will

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad 'Abdullah Darāz quoted the philosopher Saint Hilaire in "Ad-Dīn", p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: the word "jasad", 13/47.

<sup>8</sup> "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafī" by Salība: 1/402

preserve your body.} [Surat Yūnus: 92] It means your physical structure.<sup>9</sup> The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) mentioned it and instructed us to pay it its due right. He said: "... and your body has a due right upon you."<sup>10</sup> A believer in the unseen considers his body one of Allah's bounties. He knows he must pay it due care so as to be able to perform the duties of servitude to Allah Almighty. Others, nevertheless, believe that the body is the jail for the soul; one must strive to flee from it either through torturing the body, suppressing its lusts, or despising its natural needs. This belief is adopted by the Eastern idolaters and those influenced by them from among the Sufis and philosophers.

Allah furnished the body with powers, like hearing and sight, that are apparent and perceivable. Other hidden powers exist inside the body, but through reflection and unrelenting experimentation, the human was capable of unraveling some of them. The spirit, reason, soul, inborn inclinations, and others are relatively hidden powers; some of which are disclosed by virtue of scientific methodologies and empirical research. Such powers are considered among the relative unseen whose discovery is tied with employing suitable tools. Still, there are parts of the unseen whose access is solely granted through revelation. Any attempt to unravel the essence of this absolute unseen is doomed to mere predictions or stark deviance, in which they rely on the anatomy of the soul, or the etheric body, as inspired by the philosophies of the Eastern religions.

Third: The human being has a soul, spirit, reason, and heart, all of which are mentioned in the divine texts though without clear-cut implications. Information on them is kept to a sufficient degree in order to help the individual lead his life and motivate him to fulfill his duties, at the top of which is the overarching purpose of his existence, namely servitude to Allah Almighty. The following is a brief introduction of those concepts:

Soul (Nafs): it refers to the essence of something<sup>11</sup>. The human soul refers to his totality as composed of a spirit and a body. In this sense, it is synonymous with the human himself. Allah Almighty says: {If We had willed, We could have given every soul its guidance.} [Surat as-Sajdah: 13] Allah Almighty also says: {Allah does not burden any soul greater than it can bear.} [Surat al-Baqarah: 286] The Prophet (may Allah's

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<sup>9</sup> "Mufradāt Alfāzh al-Qur'ān" by Al-Asfahāni: 112.

<sup>10</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of fasting, chapter: the due right of the body in fasting. It is also narrated by Muslim; book of fasting, chapter: prohibition of fasting for a lifetime.

<sup>11</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Nafs: 6/233.

peace and blessings be upon him) said: "None of you is a real believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."<sup>12</sup>

The word "soul" also refers to the spirit that gives life to the body.<sup>13</sup> Once it departs the body, one is dead. Arabs use the word "soul" interchangeably with "spirit" when the latter leaves the body.<sup>14</sup> This appears in the saying of Allah Almighty: {Allah only intends to punish them through these things in the life of this world, and to let their souls depart.} [Surat at-Tawbah: 55] Allah Almighty also says: {Give up your souls!} [Surat al-An'ām: 93] The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Did you not see when the man died and his eyes were fixedly open?" Those present said: 'Yes.' He added: 'It is due to the fact that (when the soul leaves the body) his eyesight follows the soul.'<sup>15</sup> In this context, the word "spirit" is represented by some of its traits such as the sensory feeling and perception whose level of strength wanes or weakens by the spirit's partial departure from the body during sleep. {Allah takes away the souls at the time of their death and of those who do not die during their sleep.} [Surat az-Zumar: 42] Furthermore, the soul is also used to indicate how it orients the human being, either to good or evil. Allah Almighty says: {But the former justified to himself the killing of his brother.} [Surat al-Mā'idah: 30] Allah Almighty also says: {He said, "Nay; rather your souls have enticed you to commit something.} [Surat Yūsuf: 18]

In the Noble Qur'an, when the word "soul" is used to refer to the human being, it comes side by side with the "horizons". If used to indicate the "spirit", it comes side by side with the mention of the "body".<sup>16</sup> The departure of the soul indicates the end of life while the absence of reason (insanity) represents the absence of one of the soul's traits.<sup>17</sup>

Spirit (Rūh): it has several meanings in the Qur'an and Sunnah. To name a few: the spirit is the essence of the body that gives it life<sup>18</sup>. It is also the identical twin of the soul or what gives life to the soul<sup>19</sup>. It is, thus, the part that maintains the life and motion of the soul, driven to

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<sup>12</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of faith, chapter: faith requires that one loves for his brother what he loves for himself. It is also narrated by Muslim; book of faith, chapter: one of the characteristics of faith is to love for one's brother what one loves for himself.

<sup>13</sup> "Mufradāt Alfāzh al-Qur'ān" by Al-Asfahāni: 818.

<sup>14</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Nafs: 6/233

<sup>15</sup> Narrated by Muslim; book of funerals, chapter: gazing of the dead person following his soul.

<sup>16</sup> "Al-Ta'sīl al-Islāmi li al-Dirāsāt an-Nafsiyyah" by Muhammad Tawfīq: 65.

<sup>17</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Nafs: 6/234

<sup>18</sup> "Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān" by Al-Qurtubi: 10/324.

<sup>19</sup> "Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr": 3/56; "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Rūh: 2/462.

secure what is good and ward off what is harmful.<sup>20</sup> Some scholars noted a subtle difference between the soul and the spirit and maintained that each retains its independent essence. However, the majority of scholars believe them to be synonymous terms whose exact meaning is relevant to the context.<sup>21</sup> Notably, one of the most sound opinions in this regard is: "The word "soul" is commonly used when the spirit is inhabiting the body; but when mentioned individually, it mostly means the spirit."<sup>22</sup>

The essence and true nature of the spirit is exclusively known to Allah Almighty as He says: {They ask you [O Prophet] about the soul. Say, "The soul is only known to my Lord.} [Surat al-Isrā': 85]<sup>23</sup> Many have attempted to offer a definition of the spirit that identifies it as well as its location. For example, one definition goes: "It is a luminous, heavenly, light, and moving body that penetrates the core of the limbs." Another maintained that it refers to the moderation of human nature;<sup>24</sup> "It is an integral part of the heart floating inside it"; "It is an airy body that floats in the mind." One posited: "It is a power in the mind and the trigger of human sensors and motion." Lastly, "It is made of fiery parts, known as the instinctive heat." There are many other definitions.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, the essence of the spirit will remain obscure forever and unknown regardless of the human endeavor to identify it, because it is a matter of the unseen even though its effects are recognizable.<sup>26</sup> There is nothing similar to the spirit in the visible world, which is why the best course of action is to hold off attempts to perceive its essence beyond the description provided by the infallible divine texts. The ambiguous wording of the divine narrative on the spirit is intended in order to decisively expose man's inability to know the essence of his soul in spite of his full awareness of its existence.<sup>27</sup> In this way, his need to the Omniscient Who knows everything about the unseen and the visible worlds increases. Allah provided the human being with everything he needs to devote himself to Allah with sheer humility.

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<sup>20</sup> "Mufradāt Alfāzh al-Qur'ān" by Al-Asfahāni: Rūh: 369.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi" by Salība: 1/625, 2/482; and "Al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa an-Nihal" by ibn Hazm: 5/47.

<sup>22</sup> "Sharh At-Tahāwiyyah" by Ibn Abu al-'Izz: 444.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Qurtubi noted that this is the opinion adopted by the majority of the scholars of Tafsīr, "Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān": 10/324.

<sup>24</sup> Those definitions are listed by Ibn al-Qayyim in his book "Ar-Rūh": 2/579. He attributed the first definition to Ar-Rāzi and considered it the only sound definition.

<sup>25</sup> "Al-Falsafah al-Qur'āniyyah" by Al-'Aqqād: 123.

<sup>26</sup> "Manhaj at-Tarbiyyah al-Islāmiyyah" by Muhammad Qutb: 1/42.

<sup>27</sup> "Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān" by Al-Qurtubi: 10/324.

Reason ('Aql): Lexically speaking, it means restraint and hindrance, and it is named thus because it hinders man from falling into serious trouble.<sup>28</sup> It is also used to refer to maintaining an admirable composure with every word, choice, and movement. In addition, reason refers to the collective premises through which one makes suitable decisions. It also represents the faculty ready to accept the information necessary to distinguish good from bad and the perfect from the imperfect.<sup>29</sup>

Reason, according to the majority of philosophers, is an essence that works as a counterpart to matter, which remains after the death of the body.<sup>30</sup> This particular opinion is an explicit error refuted by Ibn Taymiyyah who stated: "Reason, according to Muslims and the majority of rational people, is a trait of the rational person. This is indicated in the Qur'an as Allah Almighty says: {So that you may understand.} [Surat al-Hadīd: 17]"<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, the divine texts, when introducing the human, associated certain privileged powers to some people over others. One of those powers is the possession of insight and deep reflection.<sup>32</sup> When one uses his insight to discover something about a person, it means that he noticed some signs of good character in him.<sup>33</sup> There is a reference to such a power in the Hadīth of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) where he said: "Allah has privileged some of His servants with the power to discern the character of people."<sup>34</sup> This is termed "Physiognomy". It seeks to make assessments by means of outer appearance, facial features, or mannerisms. It is referred to in the following verse: {But you will surely recognize them by the manner of their speech.} [Surat Muhammad: 30] Physiognomy is a gifted power. It cannot be taught or acquired. Even the conclusions made as a result of physiognomy are no more than predominant guesswork. They are not reliable enough to constitute definitive knowledge about the unseen.

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<sup>28</sup> "Maqāyīs al-Lughah" by Ibn Fāris: 4/9.

<sup>29</sup> "Mī'yār al-'Ilm" by Al-Ghazālī: 162; "Mufradāt Alfāzh al-Qur'ān" by Al-Asfahāni: 577.

<sup>30</sup> "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi" by Salība: 2/58.

<sup>31</sup> "Majmū' Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 9/286.

<sup>32</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Faras: 6/160; Wasm: 12/637.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. "Tāj al-'Arūs" by Az-Zubaydī: 16/328.

<sup>34</sup> Narrated by At-Tabarāni in "Al-Awsat": 3/207. In his book "Majma' az-Zawā'id: 10/268", Al-Haythami graded its chain of narration (Isnād) as good. Al-Albāni graded it as Hasan (good) in his book "As-Silsilah as-Sahīhah": no. 1693. The above Hadīth is a better replacement for the popular, though weak, Hadīth that reads: "Beware of the believer's intuition, for indeed he sees with Allah's light." It is narrated by At-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri; book on the interpretation of the Qur'an, chapter: Verses from Surat al-Hijr. Check "As-Silsilah ad-Da'īfah": no. 1821.



Still, some of the predictions made by righteous people prove to be true, which reflects how Allah honors them.

Still, reason is a point of research and exploration by empirical scientists and philosophers. They have not proffered any definitive conclusion about its essence. Neuroscientific researches have made long strides about the mental capacities and the various cognitive centers such as the memory, thoughts, and innovation. Philosophers have highlighted some of the gifted powers such as the intuition <sup>35</sup>. They defined it as a quick mental transition from premises to conclusions. <sup>36</sup>

Philosophers, interested in the human soul and its powers, have suggested that there is such thing as an elevation of the human soul so much that it turns to a polished mirror, filled with the overpowering divine light <sup>37</sup> that unravels hidden knowledges. Furthermore, they addressed the concepts of imagination and delusion. Imagination is particularly a visual power enabling the human being to visualize absent objects as if they are present. It could also be a material representation of an external object perceived earlier by the senses. It, however, persists in the background of one's mind even though it is absent. Even more, it could be a fictitious image fathomed by one's mind. Some philosophers consider imagination a means to communicate with the unseen. Ibn Kammūnah stated: "When one is awake, the power of imagination enables communication with the unseen." <sup>38</sup> Imagination, as conceived by some Sufis and philosophers, is the essence of existence so much that people are actually asleep dreaming of this world; they will only be awake when they die. <sup>39</sup>

At any rate, imagination is factually one of the traits of the human being. It varies in strength depending on the context and the outcome. If employed in the visible world, imagination may ignite innovation and creativity or delusion and insanity just as much. If employed in the unseen world, it may conjure up an approximate image of some of the facts about the unseen provided that one knows that the facts themselves are beyond this approximation.

In short, the divine texts show that various skills and powers of reason are no more than a bounty from Allah that He bestowed on the human being. By reason, one becomes legally competent and ready to

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<sup>35</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Hads: 6/48.

<sup>36</sup> "Al-Ta'rifāt" by Al-Jurjāni: 83.

<sup>37</sup> "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi" by Salība: 1/452.

<sup>38</sup> "Al-Jadīd fī al-Hikmah" by Ibn Kammūnah: 126-446; "Mabhath 'an al-Quwa an-Nafsiyyah" by Ibn Sina: 155.

<sup>39</sup> "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi" by Salība: 1/261-546.

be the recipient of commands and prohibitions. Reason is then used to manage and discern one's daily life activities. Allah commanded people to employ their reason in reflecting about the creation of the heavens and earth, not to mention themselves, all for the purpose of fulfilling servitude to Allah out of obedience and free will. He also warned them against ignoring reason or engaging with anything that may potentially hinder their good use of it. The true essence of reason, however, is not addressed by any infallible scriptural text, simply because the knowledge it reveals is meant for no purpose but to aid the human to fulfill servitude to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Heart (Qalb): it is sometimes used to refer to the mind.<sup>40</sup> Anatomists define it as a pine-shaped organ, located on the left side of the chest, receiving blood from the veins, and pumping it into the arteries. Philosophers call it the spirit, the soul, or the divine touch left on the physical heart. For them, the function of the heart is to realize the mental truths by virtue of the intuition and inspiration rather than by deduction and induction.<sup>41</sup>

Ibn al-'Arabi noted: "The heart is part of the body. Allah created and designated it to house knowledge and speech among other hidden features. It fluctuates between good and bad thoughts."<sup>42</sup>

The heart is frequently mentioned in the divine texts, i.e. the Qur'an and Sunnah. Its meanings in the Qur'an revolve around the spirit, knowledge, reason, and bravery. Allah Almighty says: {And the hearts reached the throats.} [Surat al-Ahzāb: 10] "Heart" here refers to the spirit. Allah Almighty says: {Indeed, in that is a reminder for anyone who has a [mindful] heart.} [Surat Qāf: 37] "Heart" here means knowledge and understanding<sup>43</sup> or reason<sup>44</sup>. In the Hadīth of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), it is depicted as a lump that underpins the uprightness of the whole body. "Beware, in the body there is a lump, if it is upright, the rest of the body follows, and if it is corrupt, the rest of the body follows. This (lump) is the heart."<sup>45</sup> Ibn Hajar said: "The heart is particularly highlighted because it rules over the whole body. If upright, the subjects will follow suit; but if corrupt, the same goes for the subjects. The Hadīth stresses the great role of the

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<sup>40</sup> "Al-Qāmūs al-Muhīt": Qalb: 1/123.

<sup>41</sup> "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafī" by Salība: 2/198; "Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn" by Al-Ghazālī: 3/4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Hajar quoted this statement in "Fat-h al-Bāri": 11/257.

<sup>43</sup> "Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān" by Al-Asfahāni: Qalb: 681.

<sup>44</sup> "Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān" by Al-Qurtubi: 1/189; "Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr": 4/229.

<sup>45</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhārī; book of faith, chapter: merit of the one who clears his liability with regard to his religion.

heart and urges its uprightness..."Heart" here stands for the power of understanding that Allah instilled inside it." <sup>46</sup>

Al-Fu'ād: It refers to the heart or the innermost part of the heart <sup>47</sup>. Allah Almighty says: {We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth].} [Surat al-An'ām: 110] The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to frequently say while making an oath: "By the One Who turns the hearts..." <sup>48</sup> The heart is called Fu'ād if the meaning of fervency is intended. However, when both Qalb and Fu'ād are listed together, as in the following Hadīth: "There came the people of Yemen who are soft in Qalb, tender in Fu'ād" <sup>49</sup>, in this context, they are mentioned together to indicate emphasis. Another interpretation suggests that the reason for mentioning them together is to show that Qalb is more special in usage than Fu'ād. <sup>50</sup> Ibn Kathīr said: "Fu'ād is used to refer to their hearts, minds, and hearing. Hence, Fu'ād refers to the heart that learns and understands, and to the mind that thinks and reflects." <sup>51,52</sup>

Some scholars addressed the difference between 'Aql and Fu'ād, and whether 'Aql is located in the heart or the brain. However, this issue is debatable and inconclusive. In my opinion, I believe that the portion of knowledge essential to our lives and servitude to Allah has been detailed in the divine texts. Praise be to Allah Almighty Who equipped us with hearts and minds capable of developing awareness, understanding, and reflection. We are responsible for using them in implementing the way ordained by Allah Almighty. Debating where the mind is located either in the brain or the heart, in the biological sense, is useless as far as its impact on increasing our faith or rectifying our souls and achieving any sort of development or civilization in reality are concerned.

To sum up, the above five elements illustrate the essence of the human soul. They house different and overlapping indications, some of which are absolute unseen, others belong to the visible world, and the remaining are a blend of both. They represent various features of the

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<sup>46</sup> "Fat-h al-Bāri" by Ibn Hajar: 1/171.

<sup>47</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Fa'd 3/329.

<sup>48</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of vows and oaths, chapter: the form of oath made by the Prophet.

<sup>49</sup> "Mufradāt Alfāzh al-Qur'ān" by Al-Asfahāni: Fa'd: 646.

<sup>50</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of military expeditions, chapter: the arrival of the Ash'aris and Yemenis. Narrated by Muslim; book of faith, chapter: the believers' variation in terms of the heart.

<sup>51</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Qalb: 1/687.

<sup>52</sup> "Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azhīm" by Ibn Kathīr: 2/146.

human soul by which it gains cognition and discerns good from evil. It does not matter whether or not the indications of reason, heart, and heart of hearts are synonymous. Determining the location, whether in the heart, chest, or brain, is also irrelevant because the overarching purpose of learning about the unseen is for believers to fulfill the duties of their servitude to Allah Almighty. For this reason, the leading figures of Islam have not exerted much effort in clearing the differences between them or offering an inclusive definition for each term because they are absolutely aware of the perfect revelation of Allah and its comprehensive coverage of everything they need. Added to this is their certainty that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) delivered his message clearly and fully and that He was persistently keen on benefiting and guiding people. On account of those [five] elements, Shariah ordained its commands and prohibitions. It is certain that all the relevant information revealed in the divine texts are sufficient for people to worship their Lord Almighty in the manner pleasing and acceptable to Him. The command given by the Qur'an and Sunnah to reflect on one's soul addresses the general indication of the soul, which is synonymous with reflecting on the horizons, as it is the only way to derive lessons and benefits. This fact is proven by the verbal and practical Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). It is worth noting that reflecting on the externally visible aspects of our souls is bound to bring about successful endeavors in the various spheres of life provided that it follows a sound methodology. For instance, reflecting on one's body and its internal and external systems has given rise to many sciences with sound empirical methodologies that have benefited mankind abundantly. Examples of those sciences include anatomy, physiology, embryology, and medical science among many others. Investigating and exploring the hidden areas of the soul have also produced valuable knowledges that offered approaches to disciplining and purifying the self. Because such areas are mostly associated with the unseen, one of the duties of the revelation was to elucidate it elaborately or succinctly at times. Any study whose base is consistent with the divine texts will be closer to the truth.

### **Chapter three: The truth about the hidden stimuli in the human soul**

As the human soul is composed of a body and a spirit, both of which are created, the human behavior will be the outcome of both components. The empirical scientific methodology has discovered some of the invisible stimuli affecting the soul such as the behavioral motives

and the power of imagination. However, it has not gone beyond offering hypotheses to explain many of the related phenomena. The reliability of these hypotheses is relatively dependent on the extent to which they applied the sound scientific methodology and the applicability of testing their truth against what is available in the visible world. Still, their conclusions lack the unseen aspects whose knowledge is solely secured by the revelation. In the following lines, we shall provide a brief survey of the hidden stimuli affecting the human soul, as clarified by the divine texts. We will also highlight the philosophy offered by the unassisted reason to explain this human-related aspect of the unseen.

The unseen powers affecting man as identified by the divine revelation:

Man is composed of a blend of the unseen and the visible worlds. Hence, he is influenced by both on an equal footing. It is possible to observe and identify the apparent perceptible effects by reason and senses through employing empirical methods. The true essence of the unseen stimuli, on the other hand, is neither recognizable by man nor is he capable of offering a complete account of their effects even though they affect him and leave perceptible traces. This is because they lie beyond one's capacity and his knowledge-related talents. Allah Almighty provided His believing servants with what they need to know about the hidden unseen creatures who influence them so that they are fully aware of themselves, discern those stimuli, and address them in compliance with the Shariah commandments.

The most notable of those unseen stimuli are:

The absolute power of Allah Almighty. Allah is the creator of man out of nonexistence; and to Him shall man return. The happiness and misery of the human are entirely reliant on Allah's will, absolute power, and omnipotence. His actions are not up for questioning and nothing can stand in front of His will. He is capable of creating, eliminating, and changing anything. By His absolute power, Allah Almighty empowered humans to do what they do, as He is their Creator and the Creator of their actions as well. Allah Almighty says: {And it is Allah Who created you and all what you do.} [Surat as-Sāffāt: 96] Allah Almighty has complete domination, sovereignty, Lordship, and full disposal of all universes. Nothing can challenge Him on earth nor in the heavens. {Whenever He wills something to be, He only says to it, "Be", and it is.} [Yasīn: 82] For this reason, Allah Almighty guided His servants to directly resort and ask Him for help: {You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.} [Surat al-Fātihah: 5]

There are two realms that Allah allowed to have an influence over man which are the angels and the jinn, because there is a strong bond between them and the human life in all its aspects. All the divine messages have reported the existence of the angels and jinn. Human beings in their entirety were introduced to believe in them but erratic people of some nations denied them. Even though the scriptures of the previous nations were distorted, their followers still believe in spirits, separate from human beings. They believe in the existence of the jinn, the reports about them, their influence on the world, and how they report to them pieces of the unseen.<sup>53</sup> However, those followers do not have as much knowledge about the traits and actions of the jinn as Allah informed the Muslims in the seal of all religions. Therefore, the true effects of the angels and jinn are known only to those who believe in what Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) has told. Allah Almighty guaranteed the preservation of such knowledge to support the believers and establish the undeniable proof against the rest of the world.

The realm of the pious angels is a true existing realm though hidden. Its existence is indicated by the truthful reports narrated successively and profusely from Allah Almighty and His honest Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). The believers in the unseen learned from revelation that angels have a connection with human beings. Some of them are charged with watching and recording their deeds: {When the two angel scribes, constantly accompanying him, one on the right, and the other on the left. Not a single word he utters but there is with him a vigilant watcher, ready [to record it].} [Surat Qāf: 17-18] Another group of them are charged with protecting the human in different stages of his life except in the instances Allah destined for him to witness. Allah Almighty says: {For each person there are successive angels in front of him and behind him, guarding him by the command of Allah.} [Surat ar-Ra'd: 11] Other angels are charged with taking the human life: {Until when death comes upon one of you, Our angels take his soul, and they never fall short in their duty.} [Surat al-An'ām: 61]

Likewise, the realm of the jinn and devils is real. Though unseen, it has been introduced to the believers through divine texts. The jinn, like humans, exist and are required to believe in Allah. They fall into groups: Muslims, disobedient, and disbelievers. They share the company of the human in his residence and during eating and drinking. They see the humans but the latter cannot see them unless the jinn's sight is barred

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<sup>53</sup> "Majmū' Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 11/229, 19/32.

by remembering Allah Almighty. One of their prominent figures is the cursed Satan, the archenemy of the children of Adam. He lies in wait to ambush the humans into deviation and misguidance. However, the human has been acquainted enough with the schemes of Satan and his soldiers to ward off their evil by Allah's permission.

The realms of the angels and jinn make up a significant unseen force affecting the human by the permission of Allah Almighty. As conveyed by the divine texts, Allah Almighty appointed a companion for every human being from both the angels and the jinn. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "There is none of you but has a constant companion from the angels and one from the jinn.' They asked: 'Even you, O Messenger of Allah?' He replied: 'Yes, even me; however, Allah assisted me in converting him to Islam.'" <sup>54</sup>

Both the angels and the jinn are unseen realms who impose a certain influence on the human, though by Allah's permission and consistent with His enforceable laws. The intensity of this influence varies according to the difference between these two realms. The divine texts do highlight some forms of this influence. To name a few:

1. Helping the human by the permission of Allah Almighty:

It is possible that a human being may do something which another human cannot do without having a clue as to how such action came about unless revealed by the Knower of the unseen, Allah Almighty. Allah may have assisted such person because He is the Omnipotent Who aids His servants without any intermediaries. {Whenever He wills something to be, He only says to it, "Be", and it is.} [Surat Yasīn: 82]

Allah has also informed that He has soldiers whom He dispatches to help whomever He wills from His believing servants. Allah Almighty says: {Thereupon Allah sent down His tranquility upon him, supported him with soldiers that you did not see.} [Surat at-Tawbah: 40] Some of His soldiers are the angels, as Allah Almighty says: {He responded to you, "I will reinforce you with a thousand angels, following one another in succession."} [Surat al-Anfāl: 9] There are countless sound narrations reporting the help rendered by the angels for the prophets and the believers with Allah's permission. The angels are the ones charged with conveying the commands of Allah Almighty and information about the unseen to the prophets. They support and strengthen the believing servants of Allah.

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<sup>54</sup> Narrated by Muslim; book of the characteristics of the Day of Judgment, Paradise, and Hellfire, chapter: the enticement of the devil.

Furthermore, Allah Almighty revealed how the jinn is a group of His soldiers whom He subjects to help whomever He wills. For example, Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon) (peace be upon him) enjoyed this privilege: {Solomon's armies of jinn, men and birds were assembled before him, marching in organized ranks.} [Surat an-Naml: 19] Just as the disbelieving jinn help their human counterparts, it is probable that the believing jinn provide help for their human counterparts.

Notably, the help provided by either the angels or the jinn is either support from Allah Almighty or a test gradually leading to destruction, depending on the sort of deeds one is engaged in. Angels typically support good and honest deeds, whereas the devils stand behind lying and falsehood. This help may be the result of one's supplication to Allah Almighty or someone else or it may come without asking for it. Such help may be restricted to what is apparent and tangible or it may include hidden aspects. <sup>55</sup>

Good deeds and acts of obedience are mostly aided by angels, but it does not discount the fact that the jinn, believers or disbelievers, may offer the same kind of help as a test to people. On the other hand, acts of falsehood are enticed by a group of the jinn who adorn the path of deviation before humans. <sup>56</sup> And for this intentional or unintentional evil scheme to be successful, the recipient must harbor attracting inclinations. The devil-sponsored aid comes to the refuge of individuals who typically veered off the instructions of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Such individuals occupy varying degrees: disbelievers, disobedient, or ignorant. The devils' evil schemes are tailored to the level of each category. <sup>57</sup> Allah Almighty says: {Shall I inform you upon who the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful liar, who whisper hearsay in the ears, but most of them are liars.} [Surat ash-Shu'arā': 221-223] The devils are attracted to their ilk such as the polytheists and the dissolute. They boost their overindulgence in deviation. Notable recipients of their support include the soothsayers and sorcerers. Soothsayers are

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<sup>55</sup> Further elaboration on this topic is beyond the scope of this brief study. It has been discussed in details elsewhere by Shaykh al-Islam in a number of his books: "Iqtidā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm": 2/222, 316; "As-Safadiyyah": 1058,1062; "Ar-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqiyyīn": 286; and "Al-Furqān bayna Awliyā' Ar-Rahmān wa Awliyā' ash-Shaytān": 222.

<sup>56</sup> Many people under the influence of the jinn do not realize that the source of their knowledge and power is the jinn themselves. They believe they have developed those powers through special training. This misguided thought is the outcome of their failure to discern the various types of help provided by the jinn: they do so just to deviate or overindulge the humans; or in response to a request made by the humans in return for displaying acts of polytheism and disobedience; or to answer a direct request from the jinn.

<sup>57</sup> "Majmū' Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 11/288-295; 13/79.



informed by the devils while the sorcerers accept the help of the devils to cause others to die, suffer sickness, or deceive others by flying in the air.

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## 2. Embodying a physical shape when one is either awake or asleep:

By means of Revelation, we are informed that the jinn and devils are capable of embodying physical shapes that humans can see. As evidenced by the divine texts, the angels were used to embodying human shapes to appear before the prophets. The angel assumed a perfect human form to appear before Maryam (Mary) (peace be upon her). It has also been established that the Companions have seen Jibrīl (Gabriel) (peace be upon him) several times in the form of a man. Notably, the angels' appearance is a reflection of Allah's support for the believers.<sup>59</sup>

As for the devil, it has appeared in a physical form endless times before people. The argument that an angel appeared to a human in a physical form in a given situation is not accepted unless supported by a report from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), even if the situation is apparently calling to something good. Angels do not appear in a bodily form before anyone unless permitted by Allah Almighty. The jinn, contrarily, are creatures from the unseen who are held accountable for their deeds just like humans. Some of the jinn endeavor to deceive people into deviation by helping them in what appears to be good in order to increase them in misguidance.

The devil may also assume the physical shape of plants or rocks and inhabit them, just like he inhabits humans, to bring man's attention to the benefits of such plant or rock, with the purpose of alluring him to indulge in unwarranted self-piety. One should know, however, that this is the devil talking, and reciting the Verse of Al-Kursi would put this devil away. Other aspects of the devil-inspired delusions may manifest when someone is sitting at home but sees himself outside or vice versa.

The devil may also appear in the form of a dead man, thereby leading people to believe that the man rose after his death, settle his debts, give back trusts to their rightful recipients, or do anything related to that dead person just to mesmerize people. He may drag his schemes on and tell people he is sent by Allah's command or he is Al-Khidr or Al-Mahdi whose appearance is foretold by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). To back up his scheme, he would display

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<sup>58</sup> "An-Nubuwwāt" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 2/820.

<sup>59</sup> "Majmū' Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 11/276.

some miracles such as teleporting an individual to Makkah and bringing him back.

Furthermore, the devil may appear before the human in the form of a throne, above which there would be light that speaks to the human and says: I am your lord. If the one tested in this situation is a learned man, he would definitely spot this devil's scheme, thus seeking refuge in Allah to ward off his evil. If he is not a learned man, he will be gravely tempted by the devil's scheme.<sup>60</sup>

If appearing in a physical form happens during one's sleep, it is called a vision. This vision may be true enough to disclose an event of the unseen before it takes place in reality. The true vision of the believer does manifest in reality, as told by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): "The believer's vision is one part out of forty-six parts of prophethood."<sup>61</sup> Another narration reads: "is one part out of seventy parts."<sup>62</sup> It means that this vision foretells the truth in a way similar to the information conveyed by prophets.<sup>63</sup>

True visions of other than prophets serve as an inspiration as far as being a gift, a power, and a kind of revelation. It is certainly a tremendous favor that Allah confers upon His pious believers. However, it is a possibility that a disbeliever or a dissolute person may see a true vision as well. Ibn Hajar noted: "Even though true visions are mostly associated with the righteous, they may be experienced by others."<sup>64</sup> For a dissolute person, it serves as a warning, a standing proof against him, or a means of gradually leading him to overindulge in his immoral behavior. Hence, it is important to distinguish between the miracles conferred upon the righteous and the false sense of security Allah inspires the deviants, impostors, and allies of the devils.<sup>65</sup> The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Dreams are of three types: a good dream is glad tidings from Allah, a

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<sup>60</sup> This and many other examples are listed in "As-Safadiyyah": 1059 and "Majmū' Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 11/288-300, 13/77-84.

<sup>61</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of interpreting dreams, chapter: the true vision is equal to one part out of forty-six parts. It is also narrated by Muslim; book of visions.

<sup>62</sup> Narrated by Muslim; book of visions.

<sup>63</sup> Ibn Hajar quoted this statement of Ibn Battāl: Fat-h al-Bāri: 12/373.

<sup>64</sup> "Fat-h al-Bāri": 12/381.

<sup>65</sup> Philosophers denied all types of visions except natural dreaming. They explained the cause of its occurrence as the agitation of human mixed feelings. A closer definition is provided by modern psychologists who consider dreams as nothing but memory residues and mixed feelings.

saddening dream is from the devil, and one that is a product of one's inner thoughts." <sup>66</sup>

It is important to learn about such unseen powers and their forms of influence because that would be of great help to man against falling in grave misfortunes. In this manner, one cannot be deceived by glamorous lights or descending spiritualities. Instead, he tests such unusual incidents against the sound reports of the unseen in the Qur'an and Sunnah in order to distinguish the truth that Allah supports him with and approves of from the falsehood adorned by the devils from among the humans and jinn. <sup>67</sup>

3. Inspiration and devilish insinuation: Lexically, inspiration is to receive something. <sup>68</sup> It is to cast something in one's mind, particularly from Allah Almighty or the highest assembly of angels. <sup>69</sup>

Sufis define it as the knowledge thrown into the heart which is founded on no proof or thorough investigation. They call it "illumination", "unveiling", and "direct experience". And they use the term "insight" to identify the location where the inspiration takes place. <sup>70</sup>

Whispering, however, is from the devil with the sole purpose of enticing and luring man. Many people may fail to realize the difference between inspiration and devilish insinuation, especially if the outcome includes unveiling parts of the unseen. Ibn Taymiyyah noted: "Foretelling the unseen may be driven by natural instinctive causes, or by devilish and non-devilish insinuations, or by angel's inspiration." <sup>71</sup>

Islam does acknowledge inspiration as an unseen power that constitutes a source of knowledge, influence, and authority for some people. For instance, the prophets' inspiration and true visions are in themselves an infallible Revelation. For pious people, they too experience true inspiration. In fact, it happened to many of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him), for instance, predicted that his pregnant wife would give birth to a daughter, which turned out to be as

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<sup>66</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of the interpretation of dreams, chapter: seeing oneself fettered in a dream. The Hadīth is attributed to Ibn Sīrīn. It is also narrated by Muslim; book of visions.

<sup>67</sup> "Al-Muwāfaqāt" by Ash-Shātibi: 367.

<sup>68</sup> "Lisān al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhūr: Lahama: 12/555.

<sup>69</sup> Mufradāt Alfāzh al-Qur'ān: 748 and "At-Ta'rīfāt" by Al-Jurjāni: 34.

<sup>70</sup> "Mu'jam Mustalahāt as-Sūfiyyah": 104; "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi": by Jamīl Salība: 1/93.

<sup>71</sup> "As-Safadiyyah": 187-189.

he expected.<sup>72</sup> At that time, there were no X-rays or advanced medical equipment; just a divine inspiration or a true vision.

As for what common people sometimes experience, it is likely to be a devilish insinuation whose purpose is testing one's faith and religious commitment or just as a trial. This goes back to the devil's influence on man as reported by the sound Hadīth that reads: "The devil circulates in the son of Adam like blood."<sup>73</sup> He seizes times of heedlessness but withdraws if one were to remember Allah. Though the divine texts have not elaborated on how the devil executes his malicious schemes, but believers are acquainted with more important issue, namely how to protect themselves so they would not fall under the influence of his unseen powers. {Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the Sovereign of mankind, the God of mankind, from the harm of the lurking whisperer, who whispers into the hearts of mankind, from among jinn and mankind."} [Surat an-Nās: 1-6]

In short, inspiration and true visions are unseen powers whose influence is relatively dependent on their source. Allah confers it either as a test or a privilege. If granted, the early righteous people used to consider it as a test. It was something that they would not seek, but if occurred, they would direct it to a good cause while seeking refuge in Allah from falling in its allurements. The successive generations, however, deem it not only as a privilege but also a goal achieved through diligent training. On account of their actions, they have been suffering from mounting confusion that made them an easy target for the devils. Shaykh al-Islam remarked: "Anyone who heeds the word of an unseen power, light, or person without considering it in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah is actually following false assumptions, far distant from the truth."<sup>74</sup>

Because those who believe in the unseen are well aware of the truth behind the realms of the angels and jinn and their influence on man, they are capable of unmasking the reality of anything they encounter or witness. In contrast, those who surrender to their pure reason and delusions to understand this aspect, which is a blend between the visible and the unseen worlds, are bound to fall victim to the numerous

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<sup>72</sup> Some scholars explained the statement of Abu Bakr as an inspiration while others considered it a true vision. "Sharh az-Zurqāni 'ala al-Muwatta': 4/44.

<sup>73</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhāri; book of I'tikāf, chapter: Is it permissible for the observant of I'tikāf to defend himself? no. 2039. Narrated by Muslim; book of greetings, chapter: It is recommended for the one who is seen alone with a woman, who is his wife or Mahram, to say: "this is so-and-so," to ward off suspicion, no. 2174.

<sup>74</sup> "Al-Furqān Bayna al-Haqq wa al-Bātil" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 96.

philosophical theories that interpret the powers affecting man. Let us explore some of them:

The philosophical interpretation of the unseen powers influencing the human:

Philosophers as well as the so-called parapsychologists have attempted to uncover the essence of psychic powers, relying on nothing but their reason, doubts, spiritual philosophies, and mystic intuition. Their conclusions were, thus, a mixture of philosophical conceptions akin to idolatry beliefs though currently circulated under the guise of scientific discoveries. By sole reliance on reason and guesswork, they attempt to understand the human soul, the various types of human behavior, and the unusual phenomena in the human behavior. This line of thinking is driven by their denial of the existence of unseen creatures and their real influence on the human soul.

Because the modern trend is pushing for the acknowledgment of the unseen powers, many psychologists and philosophers have advocated for taking interest in the spiritual aspects of the human soul, even though their sources of information confuse the truth with falsehood and genuine knowledge with myths.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, many of the modern theories display a great extent of similarity with the ancient philosophies, simply because their attempts to explain the essence of the hidden stimuli affecting humans are put forth without taking into account the information given by the Knower of the visible and unseen worlds.

In the following section, we shall provide a brief account of the most notable unseen powers (i.e. Metaphysics) espoused by the ancient philosophies and reintroduced as modern scientific theories:

#### 1. Powers of the Soul:

This refers to the hidden powers assumed to exist in the soul, based on which they interpreted the unusual phenomena in science or areas of influence, such as the power of prediction, telepathy, remote viewing, or the so-called spiritual insight, as powers that enable man to see things or events that are unseen in terms of time or place, control material objects by moving them at a distance, causing sickness or healing someone, etc.

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<sup>75</sup> A prominent figure of this call was Abraham Maslow (1908-1970). The center for esoteric studies (Esalen) has adopted his studies and brought him to develop the training techniques of Transpersonal Psychology whose main premise espouses the possibility of human spirituality to rise to the level of a deity. For further information, consider: "The Implications of New Age Thought for the Quest for Truth: A Historical Perspective" by Horn, p.145.

The powers of the soul - according to them - help their possessor to successfully acquire such skills and climb up the ranks to become a prophet, a sage, a soothsayer, or a sorcerer.

Some believed such powers are generated from components in the human makeup or in his food intake. Powers are thereby divided into: vegan powers, animal powers, and metal powers according to the similarity between the power and what it is attributed to. Others have classified those powers into theoretical and practical powers depending on the goal of the power. A third group categorized the powers as physical and psychological depending on their nature.<sup>76</sup>

It is well-known that Allah Almighty blessed man with hearing, sight, and reason; empowered him with perception and- discernment, all of which can be called "powers". Man, thus, possesses the power of hearing and sight in addition to other external physical powers. Moreover, he has the power of perception to discern, the power of imagination to form conceptions, the power of determination to help him be patient, forbearing, and chaste, and the power of anger and lust, all of which fall under the psychological powers. However, none of these powers is intended here, even though they are included not to confuse people.

By choosing a path different from that prescribed by the Revelation, the modern seekers of the unseen truth failed to produce any original hypothesis and ended up with an ancient philosophical one. They disguised it under a modern term called "potential powers", and claimed that everyone possesses those powers though in varying degrees that could be exceeded by working on developing them in all people to promote mankind in general<sup>77</sup> and reach a new age that witnesses the presence of the perfect human. Those philosophical beliefs manifest under various guises such as the potential powers of the soul, spiritual powers, supernatural powers, hidden powers, and vital energy.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> "Al-Jadīd fi al-Hikmah" by Ibn Kammūnah: 419-444.

<sup>77</sup> The German philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was the first contemporary western philosopher to advocate the idea of such powers. He was interested in the metaphysical effects. In service and development of this idea, the Human Potential Movement was established in 1961. It devised many techniques to circulate its ideas among the public and the elite alike. Their methodology advocates dialog between science, religion, and sorcery. "The Implications of New Age Thought for the Quest for Truth: A Historical Perspective" by Horn, p.135. "The Upstart Springs: Esalen and the Human Potential Movement" by Walter T. Anderson, p.20-65.

<sup>78</sup> "Khāriyyat al-Insān" by Salāh al-Jābiri: 13; "Khawāriq al lā Shu‘ūr" by ‘Ali al-Wardi: 143; and "At-Tāqah al-Khafiyyah wa al-Hāssah al-Sādisah" by Shafīq Radwān: 11-15.

Deniers of the unseen and the divine revelations conveyed by the prophets have put forth conclusions that such soul powers are the most important hidden stimuli influencing humans, and the basis of all supernatural events brought about by prophets, sorcerers, or soothsayers.<sup>79</sup> According to their view, the only difference lies in the diverse intentions between the will of good and the will of evil. This is an obviously false conclusion based on invalid premises, such as denying the existence of the angels and jinn. Ancient philosophers posited that the devils are no more than the evil powers of the soul while the angels represent its good powers.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, modern psychologists were not far behind, as they argued: "Demons, in our opinion, represent reprehensible evil desires arising from restrained and suppressed motivations."<sup>81</sup>

## 2. The Unconscious Mind:

The unconscious mind is a modern hypothesis based on the idea of the unconscious proposed by Freud (1856-1939) and developed by Jung (1875-1961) who integrated it with the idea of the collective unconscious.

For Freud, the unconscious is nothing but a reserve of all suppressed desires and past experiences. Jung extended the idea and considered it the source of supreme realities, genius, and prophethood.<sup>82</sup> It was extended even further by the Theosophists<sup>83</sup> to represent an inclusive, vague, and mixed blend, as if it is "the spirit", if not greater. They express it as "the divine part that inhabited the human body";<sup>84</sup> Glorified and Exalted is He above all (evil) that they attribute to Him.

For its followers, the unconscious mind represents an superior soul power that influences the remaining soul powers. This is similar to a great extent to what the Illuminating Philosophers and Sufis believe

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<sup>79</sup> "Al-Jadīd fī al-Hikmah" by Ibn Kammūnah: 120-125.

<sup>80</sup> "Majmū' Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 13/239, "Al-Jawāb as-Sahīh": 6/24, and "An-Nubuwwāt" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 2/837.

<sup>81</sup> "Iblīs fī at-Tahlīl an-Nafsi" by Freud, translated by Georges Tarabichi: 6.

<sup>82</sup> "Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafī" by Jamīl Salība: 2/265; The skeptic's Dictionary by Robert Carroll: p.388; "Encyclopedia Britannica", 2004, (unconscious).

<sup>83</sup> Theosophy is an atheistic doctrine. Greeks used the word "sophy" in reference to a doctrine whose followers believe in pantheism as the absolute truth; "Tahqīq mā li al-Hind min Maqūlah" by Al-Bīrūni: 24. Following the establishment of the New Thought Movement, there has been a growing interest in the study, translation, and applications of the theosophical doctrine since the 19th century. This movement advocated a novel thought that acknowledges the unseen, which man receives from his own self through spiritual elevation experiences; "The skeptic's Dictionary" by Robert Carroll: p 376.

<sup>84</sup> "Khawāriq al-Lā Shu'ūr" by 'Alī al-Wardi: 142.

regarding the source of inspiration and insight, regardless of the terms. Avicenna, for example, proposed "the holy power" by which one gains knowledge superior to that gained by prophets without having to learn.<sup>85</sup>

The concept of the unconscious mind has become identical to a great extent with the philosophical doctrine of the active intellect. This occurred after the developments made by Jung suggesting the possibility of communication between the individual unconscious and the collective unconscious. He termed it the "superior intellect", "superior spirit", or "soul unit" that exists independently apart from the intellect of individuals.<sup>86</sup>

The unconscious mind is currently considered one of the most effective hidden stimuli on the human. It enables people to enhance their potential powers, both the intellectual and influential, through accessing its world of alternating consciousness<sup>87</sup> that creates an esoteric communication with the active intellect, the source of inspiration and the reserve of past and future information.<sup>88</sup>

Advocates of the unconscious mind believe it to be a metaphysical and spiritual power that enables man to control his fate in terms of happiness and sadness, success and failure, sickness and health, etc. In addition, it offers access to supernatural powers that extend the limits of perception by the senses, so one hears and sees what is beyond the normal range of hearing and sight, transcending both time and place. Moreover, the power of the unconscious mind gives one the ability to affect objects remotely, like moving things by his sight and twisting steel by his finger.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> "An-Najāt" by Ibn Sina: 166 and "Majmū‘ Fatāwa Ibn Taymiyyah": 11/229.

<sup>86</sup> Most psychologists rejected the hypothesis of Jung and considered it unscientific because Jung was influenced by the Eastern philosophies, sorcery, idolatry, and astrology; "Madkhal ilā Nazhariyyāt ash-Shakhsiyyah" by Barbara De Angelis, translated by Fahd Dulaym: 84, and "Nazhariyyāt ash-Shakhsiyyah" by Jābir ‘Abdul-Hamīd Jābir: 90.

<sup>87</sup> "Khāriqiyyat al-Insān" by Salāh al-Jābiri: 212-215; "Asrār al-Ālihah wa ad-Diyānāt" translated by Hassān Is-hāq: 585; and "The skeptic’s Dictionary" by Robert Carroll p.186.

<sup>88</sup> Some followers of this ideology call the universal information center "Zero Point Field". This imparts a scientific and physical sense to such guesses and doubts, which are, in fact, nothing but a philosophy whose advocates attempt to achieve knowledge of the unseen by their unassisted reason.

<sup>89</sup> "The Power of your subconscious mind" by Joseph Murphy: 20. At-Tikrīti noted: "The unconscious mind is what helps you remember a person’s or a country’s name that you forgot. It is what wakes you up at an usual time, and it is what provides you with a solution to your insolvable problem that you completely forgot..."; "Āfāq bilā Hudūd": 207. Tawfīq al-Wā’i says: "I can literally do everything by virtue of my unconscious mind"; "Al-Imān was Iyqāzh al-Quwa al-Khafiyyah": 37.



Unfortunately, the gravity of this situation intensifies by disguising such unfounded thoughts under scientific and legal qualities to the extent that many Muslims began to believe that the unconscious mind is a modern discovery of a relative unseen and another sign of the soul that the Qur'an highlighted and invited us to reflect on. The so-called unconscious mind must be investigated properly in terms of its name and implications in order to distinguish what is proved scientifically from what is a philosophy derived from idolatry creeds or unfounded delusions conveyed by those who are ignorant of the unseen creatures that influence man. "Muslims do not share the same understanding of the word "Aql" (mind) with the Greeks. For the former, it has a lexical implication of restraint and may refer to the natural instinct that Allah embedded in the human to understand. Greeks, on the other hand, consider it an independent essence. Such understanding is inconsistent with the language of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and the Qur'an." Modern-day atheists and materialists believe in the Greek version of the unconscious mind, as they deny the existence of the angels, jinn, and devils. Hence, they collect everything whose source is unidentifiable for them under one cause, which they call the unconscious mind, without even considering any other interpretation.

### 3. The Etheric Body:

According to the followers of this dogma, the etheric body is one of seven bodies that make up every living being. It is the most prominent body and the origin of the seven bodies. In man, it represents the essence of his life, health, spirituality, and happiness.

In terms of shape, the etheric body is the twin of the physical body, though the former is illuminating, bright, and invisible. This enables it to penetrate through physical objects and communicate with the other worlds. On the etheric body there lies energy centers that boost its strength and influence the individual. Those energy centers are called Chakras<sup>90</sup>, which are points for deriving and receiving the so-called universal spiritual energy, considered to be the secret of human life and the basis of its happiness.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Chakra is a Sanskrit word that means wheel. Chakras are vague spiritual neurological centers. It is claimed that the universal vital energy called "Chi" or "Qi" is fused with them, only to come out spiraling like a wheel; "The Skeptic's Dictionary" by Robert Carroll: p. 47.

<sup>91</sup> "Know your soul" by 'Ali Rādi: 53; "Zhawāhir al-Khurūg min al-Jasad" by Ra'ūf 'Ubayd: 71; "Theosophical studies" by Jihād ash-Shaykh; and "The Skeptic's Dictionary" by Robert Carroll: p.20,33.

In fact, arguing for the existence of an etheric body is the same as claiming the existence of the unconscious mind and the soul powers. Those who consider any of these a hidden stimuli with any sort of influence are the ones heedless of the guidance provided by the divine Revelation and who seek to unravel the unseen through ways different from those brought by the messengers. The origin of those claims is nested in the idolatry Eastern religions and the esoteric beliefs with all its modern training and therapeutic applications that advocate the development of the powers of the etheric body to promote mankind. In this way, man will be capable of doing things in the future that were previously considered supernatural. For example, one will possess a healing touch, the power of predicting the unseen, or the power of remotely controlling material objects, all of which without having to be called a soothsayer, an astrologer, or a sorcerer. He can secure such abilities from within himself rather than from an external source.

Notably, the philosophy of the etheric body has gained a foothold in the modern age, especially after being introduced as a scientific discovery through the applications adopted by Esalen Institute <sup>92</sup> and promoted by the New Age Movement <sup>93</sup> in its various training courses and its recovery and diagnostic programs, which are accessible to the public after being a vague belief confined to seance rooms moderated by members of the New Spiritualism Movement. <sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Based in California, USA, Esalen Institute of California, was founded in 1961. It is a center for esoteric studies whose mission is disseminating spirituality as a replacement for religion. It has attracted plenty of specialists in various fields for the common goal of elevating the human to a divine spiritual stage. See: "The Upstart Springs: Esalen and the Human Potential Movement" by Walter T. Anderson, p. 54.

<sup>93</sup> The New Age Movement is a religious movement founded by the Esalen Institute in the seventies. It adopted a number of training and therapeutic applications that guarantee, as they claim, the human self-sufficiency by which one becomes needless of the external Power (i.e. Allah) or implementing His superior commands (i.e. religion). See: "The New Age: The History of a Movement" by Nevill Drury, Thames & Hudson, p.35; "The Implications of New Age Thought for the Quest for Truth: A Historical Perspective" by Horn, p.165.

<sup>94</sup> The New Spiritualism Movement spun off the Institute of Spiritual Research founded in 1882 in England to conduct research on metaphysics. Soon after its establishment, the majority of research in this center and its likes began relying on myths, sorcery, and communication with the demons and devils through what is called "seance". Many organizations around the world adopted this call. See: "The New Spiritualism" by Muhammad Muhammad Husayn: 20 and "'The world of Jinn and devils" by Al-Ashqar: 92. Many of this call enthusiasts, like Ra'ūf 'Ubayd and 'Ali Rādi, reject the term "seance" and propose instead "the science of studying the etheric body" or "the science of studying the paramaterial world". See: "Mīfsal al-Insān Rūh lā Jasad" by Ra'ūf 'Ubayd: 1/160 and "Unnoticeable world" by 'Ali Radi: 11.

Enthusiasts of this philosophy attempted to bridge the gap between their beliefs and science by claiming that the etheric body is perceivable in the form of a corona, called "Aura" by the Hindus. They even claimed such aura has been scientifically proven and visually captured by a special device called Kirlian.<sup>95</sup> Through this device, the light flickering and colors of the aura will provide plenty of information about the physical, mental, and spiritual health of its host.

#### 4. The Power of Planets and Stars:

For those far from the guidance of the divine revelation, the planets and stars constitute an influential force on the universe, the human, and life. This belief has advocates since antiquity who considered them the source of every influence on the souls and bodies. Some of them even thought that the sole influence on this world is the motion of the stars, their rotation, their rise, their setting, and their lining up with other stars. Some people believe the good and bad fortune that people experience are somehow linked to the seven orbiting planets, based on which they dress in a certain way and offer animal sacrifices.<sup>96</sup> They, however, differed over the extent of their influence. A group proposed that they affect both the bodies and souls, while others limited their influence to the bodies, which is the opinion held by the majority of the early astrologers who divided the zodiac signs into masculine and feminine. Ibn al-Qayyim stated: "An example of their ridiculous irrationality is dividing the zodiac signs into two moods: hot and cold. The former is masculine and applicable to the sun, while the latter is feminine and applicable to the moon."<sup>97</sup>

One of the Greeks' innovations is claiming that the stars have minds and souls governing their motion. Their late followers innovated the theory of Emanationism that consists of ten intellects running the universe.<sup>98</sup> Their supposedly Muslim students, like Avicenna, interpreted the Preserved Tablet as the star power from where knowledge of the unseen arises.<sup>99</sup> Strangely enough, believers in the power of the planets

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<sup>95</sup> The device "Kirlian" is named after its Russian inventor. The scientific name of this device is the "electric discharge camera". This camera captures the electric discharge, which is momentarily affected by the body metabolism, thus visualizing in the form of an aura surrounding the body. See: "The bewildered man between science and myth" by 'Abdul-Muhsin as-Sālih: 111-133; "The Skeptic's Dictionary" by Robert Carroll: p.189.

<sup>96</sup> "Al-Milal wa an-Nihal" by Ash-Shahrastāni: 2/358.

<sup>97</sup> "Muftāh Dār as-Sa'ādah" by Ibn al-Qayyim: 2/227-231.

<sup>98</sup> "The position of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah on the opinions of the philosophers" by Sālih al-Ghāmidi: 369.

<sup>99</sup> "An-Nubuwwāt" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 2/702.

claim that there are people who descend upon them, which they call the spirituality of the planets. As a matter of fact, that is nothing but devils that possess them to lead them further astray, after they had turned to polytheism<sup>100</sup>, and to tempt them into attributing influence to what is void of any power.<sup>101</sup>

In our present time, astrology is as alive as it has always been, though assuming different names and techniques while retaining its same old basics.<sup>102</sup> One of its prominent modern names is "the universal energy".<sup>103</sup> Its Muslim enthusiasts have followed the footsteps of the early Rāfidis and the Brethren of Purity by promoting astrology as a reliable science compatible with the essential axioms of reason and divine texts. It was promoted in the form of training, remedial, recovery, and diagnostic programs<sup>104</sup> that enable man to deal with the spiritual powers affecting the universe. Consequently, man derives the universal energy and gains supernatural powers that guarantee him health, spirituality, and happiness.

Actually, there are admittedly perceivable and relative influences, which the enthusiasts or practitioners of the above false philosophies consider as a confirmation of their false beliefs and perceptions about the essence of the hidden stimuli influencing humans. For this reason,

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<sup>100</sup> "Ar-Risālah as-Safadiyyah" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 1058; "Ar-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqiyīn": 286; and "Al-Furqān bayna Awliyā' Ar-Rahmān wa Awliyā' ash-Shaytān": 222.

<sup>101</sup> "Iqtidā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm": 234.

<sup>102</sup> "The status of astronomy and astrology in our scientific legacy" by 'Abd al-Amīr al-Mu'min: 342.

<sup>103</sup> "Energy" is a popular word in empirical sciences. It refers to the physical energy along with its diverse transformations. It may also be used to refer to the spiritual energy that represents diligence in observing acts of worship. However, the intended meaning of the word "energy" in our context is an unseen power called "the power of life" or "the vital power". In Chinese beliefs, it is called "Chi" and it has training applications; in Japanese beliefs, it is called "Qi" and it has healing applications; for Hindus and the practitioners of deep breathing, it is called "Prana"; for the Pharaohs, it was called "Ka"; and in the ancient idolatry beliefs of the Romans, it was called "Electra". Some of its Muslim enthusiasts call it "the blessing" that inspires power and causes facilitation in life affairs. See: "Tshi, at-Tāqah, Quwwat al-Hayāh" by Nāsir al-'Ubayd; "The science of the nine powers" by Michio Kushi, prepared by Yūsuf al-Badr; "Breathing - a new style of the life" by Judith Kravitz, translated by Nūrah ash-Shuhail: 76; "The art of making a good life" by Salāh ar-Rāshid: 5-63, it is printed as a supplement to the Fawāsil Magazine, issue 104, dated 1/9/2003.

<sup>104</sup> Examples include "Reiki", "Tai Chi", "Chi Kung", "transformational breathing", "transcendental meditation", and "Yoga" besides others. All of them represent various types of recovery and healing exercises that rely on the belief in the universal energy. See: "Al-Wujūh al-Arba'ah li at-Tāqah" by Rafāh Wajmān as-Sayyid:15-59; "Breathing - a new style of the life" by Judith Kravitz; translated and prepared by Nūrah ash-Shuhail: 13-89.

we must emphasize that timely association between events, even though they are opposites, is not an evidence of a reality. It is common to learn, think, or suspect that something is likely or partially the cause. However, being delusional about it without having any substantiating proof displays defective intellect.<sup>105</sup> Even if we assume merit for the above claims proposed by the believers in false creeds, the lawful causes Allah permitted are sufficient and should come at the expense of any presumable merit. Ibn Taymiyyah stated: "Anything thought to induce an effect in this world but declared unlawful in Shariah, such as the confusing stars-related conclusions and ill-harbored thoughts, like envy, unlawful supplication, unlawful faith healing, and natural disorderedness, is likely to bring about more harm than benefit. The rate of disappointment in such [unfounded] beliefs predominately exceeds the rate of success multiple times. They are harmful in themselves and rarely fulfill a target, and if they do, the harm involved outweighs the benefit. On the other hand, there are tremendous benefits derived from committing to lawful or recommended means, be they natural like trading or agricultural, or religious such as reliance on and confidence in Allah, supplicating Him in the Shariah-approved manner at times and places preferred by Allah and His Messenger and using the wording of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), in addition to giving charity and showing kindness. All such acts bring significantly more benefit than harm; and even if harm is incurred due to doing something lawful or abandoning something unlawful, such harm is nothing when compared with the benefits achieved."<sup>106</sup>

If there is reliable and beneficial knowledge to be derived from investigating the various conditions of the stars or believing in their energy and spiritual power, we would still be banned from using it because the Shariah has already prohibited it, let alone the fact that it is absolutely useless. Any belief that stars are actual doers that cause happiness or misery and run the world by their motion is stark misguidance. The only purpose we know for the stars is to offer geographical guidance amidst the darkness on land and in the sea. By means of the sun and the moon, we are able to determine the number of years and account of time. Moreover, they indicate the wisdom and power of Allah Almighty.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> "Iqtidā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 2/234.

<sup>106</sup> "Iqtidā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm" by Ibn Taymiyyah: 2/211.

<sup>107</sup> "Al-Qawl fī 'Ilm an-Nujūm" by Al-Baghdādi: 179.

Reflecting on the alleged philosophical powers, capabilities, range of influence on its enthusiasts (whether real or pretended) will reveal the bare reality, namely they are nothing more than philosophical attempts to interpret the events taking place in the universe, inside the human being, and in life. On the other hand, those who realize the truth behind the unseen influences by means of the divine revelation can easily conclude that the above allegations are nonsensical and far away from the truth.

Knowing the influence of Allah's power as well as the influence He allowed at the hands of the angels and jinn is sufficient. True, we should not dismiss the possibility of the existence of other unseen realms or powers because our ignorance of them is not a proof of their nonexistence. However, to attribute influence to its rightful causes, as informed by Allah Almighty, is certainly better than attributing it to unproven entities or entities that would not typically cause such influence.

## **Conclusion**

At the end of this investigative and descriptive study of the unseen stimuli on the human being, allow me to sum up the main conclusions:

1. Learning about the essence of the human being and what influences him is available in the divine texts that are keen on providing man with sufficient information about the most important universal facts around him.

2. Any explanation associated with the human being, even if related to external and visible aspects must take into account the unseen aspect in man, which is why it should be derived from the divine revelation to reach the truth of the matter.

3. Philosophical perceptions and hypotheses about the human, universe, and life expose sheer ignorance about the divine revelation and its guidance. Many of the hidden human-related phenomena whose explanations were unavailable for non-Muslim empirical scientists have become like puzzles that exhausted them when attempting to solve their riddle. Their finest conclusions posited something as primitive as the existence of certain elements inside the human that cause such phenomena. They called it "the unconscious mind" and "the etheric body".

4. The ultimate hidden stimuli on the human being is the absolute power of Allah and the forms of influence that He allowed the angels and jinn to inflict. It is possible rationally and legally to consider those forms of influence the correct explanation for whatever man experiences.

5. Disbelievers in the unseen have fallen into grave confusion and espoused various forms of false dogmas, superstitions, evil innovations, or polytheism. Promoting hidden stimuli on the human soul, like the unconscious mind, the etheric body, or the birthday star, is factually a manifestation of disbelief in the true unseen, either due to ignorance, denial, or polytheism.

6. Believers in the true unseen have alone secured enough knowledge about the unseen world to guide them on their path in life. They are certain that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah, Who has no partner. He created this universe by His power, will, and wisdom. He, alone, is capable of eliminating it whenever He wills. Those believers are well aware that the sun, the moon, the stars, and the planets are no more than creatures subjected to its Almighty Creator Who says: {The sun, the moon, and the stars – all subservient to His command.} [Surat al-A'rāf: 54] They have not associated the movement and location of the stars with aspects of their lives, because their Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) warned them saying: "I fear that my Ummah would deny predestination and believe in the stars after my death." By following such warning, they preserved their hearts against turning towards anyone but Allah and they submitted to Him. They sought Him sincerely and found contentment in what He bestowed upon them, hence, He guided them to what is best in this life and the Hereafter.

Finally, the researcher recommends the following:

- Working on establishing an institutional entity where specialists from diverse fields of science collaborate to examine interpretations of the unseen aspects of the universe, life, and man. Their efforts must be founded on the axioms of the divine texts and sound empirical conclusions to discern what is genuine from the philosophical allegations, superstitions, and deviations.

- Promoting the knowledge and facts conveyed by the divine texts, especially in modern venues of publishing to acquaint people with comforting facts that set their worship on the right track. Ignorance of such facts leaves ample room for the spread of superstitions and falsehood that eventually lead to various types of polytheism and religious innovations. For this particular reason, soothsaying was rampant in ancient Arabia due to the nonexistence of prophethood.

- Tracking and exposing the esoteric line of thought that masks itself under the guise of scientific theories and discoveries. It helped the spread of polytheistic dogmas, soothsaying, and astrology under the slogans of development, advancement, and creativity. We must do so to

protect people from the dangers that such beliefs impose on their religion and life. Therefore, we should divert their attention to the beneficial and sound scientific applications and training to improve themselves and secure sustainable development.

I ask Allah to guide everyone to what He loves and what pleases Him. I ask Him to accept this study whose purpose is to take part in serving His religion and inviting people to it. Indeed, He is All-Hearing, Ever-Responsive.



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