

## Towards a Reinterpretation of Consciousness: A Study in Humanistic Psychological Theory in the Perspective of Oriental Mystic Thought

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Humanistic psychological theory tacitly assumes that an experiential datum does not require the objective criteria of verifiability and falsifiability. However, humanistic psychology fails to explain how subjectively-arrived-at meaning provides a valid source of knowledge. In view of its failure, therefore, a conceptual reinterpretation is presented. This reformulation entails a theory of knowledge that exists in some oriental orders of thought. Such a connection seems indispensable for the reconstruction of humanistic psychological theory outside the sphere of objective thought models. This intervention inevitably leads to a transformation of an entire body of facts as regards the role of focal and subsidiary activity of human consciousness; and thus tends to set aside the concept of determinate consciousness. Consequently, such intervention opens up an altogether different line of inquiry regarding the truth of what is inwardly knowable. It is believed by the oriental mystics that there is another property of human mind which arises out of a kind of psychic transmutation—such propensities are, of course, mere aberrations of mind to objectivists whose habits of thought are quite incongruent with the subjectively oriented perspective of reality. To understand the nature of indeterminate consciousness, humanistic psychology must pull itself out of the epistemological confusion which is inherent in the thought models of Western psychology. It must reconstruct its theory on a different footing available in some oriental orders of thought.

The rise of the humanistic approach in modern Western psychology seems to mark a turning point in the history of psychology's scientific developments since the advent of psychophysics. Humanism's emphasis on subjectivity has been directly or indirectly strengthened by other schools of thought such as existentialism, post-Freudian clinical psychology, and even modern physics. Existentialism has provided the philosophical footing for humanistic psychology to seriously question the existing claim of scientific neutrality. Modern physics, moving towards a mathematical conception of reality, has pulverized the fulcrum holding together the assumptions of objective psychology and its inferential machinery. Post-Freudian clinical experience has given us insight into the fact that an individual as a being-in-totality instinctively tends to capture his or her inner resources in order to infuse meaning into experiences, since meaninglessness is existentially intolerable. But the support which humanistic psychological theory derives from these auxiliary disciplines does not appear to be sufficient for its reconstruction. In fact, humanistic psychology requires an adequate epistemological base in order to vindicate its tacit

assumption that the experientially-arrived-at inner datum tends to supersede the scientific requirement concerning objective verifiability. In order to reconstruct humanistic psychological theory, which cuts across the main schools of objective psychology, a re-examination of concepts existing in oriental orders of thought seems indispensable, for these concepts have an affinity with the very flavour of humanistic psychological theory.

The main drift of western psychological thought since the middle of the nineteenth century has been toward the development of theoretical systems employing concepts comparable to those of the physical sciences. Thus, psychoanalysis and structural psychology brought consciousness to the order of determinate events—a necessity for sustaining their conceptual veracity under rules of scientific explanation. Behaviouristic psychology obliterated consciousness on the grounds that it was circumfused with overtones of subjectivity. In its ontogenesis, therefore, consciousness—if at all retained as a useful concept—was explained through organic factors, or was treated as an outgrowth and by-product of one's relationship to external particulars. In other words, Western psychology seems to have exhausted the meaning of consciousness through sensory and cognitive processes which have been treated as its basic datum. Actually, this deterministic approach to psychic realities has driven Western thought to an impasse. The artificial languages contained in the contemporary systems are an inevitable consequence of deterministic thinking whereby the meaning of the knowable has been depleted. These artificial languages, borrowed mainly from physical sciences, have developed systematically throughout a century and half, and the habits of thought and expression they have developed tend to resist our understanding of ideas that inform us about the nature of indeterminate consciousness. Karl Mannheim has observed that "Such meaning-giving interpretations with qualitatively rich contents (as for instance sin, despair, loneliness, Christian love) were replaced by formalized entities such as the feeling of anxiety, the perception of inner conflict, the experiencing of isolation and the 'libido'" (1936, p. 17). Mannheim believes that the aim of such replacements was to exclude subjectivity from psychology. Whatever the merits of this venture, the fact remains, as Burt (1954) has remarked, that "the mind thus studied is still an object of introspection, not of co-operative analysis; the space it occupies is a widely fluctuating unit, not determinable by any of the techniques of measurement which we apply to objects of other sciences" (p. 322).

The direction in which humanistic psychology has proceeded through the last two decades leads to a drastic curtailment of objectively-oriented conceptions, and even to dismantling formalized entities and binary classifications of psychic events. In fact, humanistic psychology cuts through the subject-object polarity within which all epistemological speculation of the latter is oriented. This shift in attitude is not of a trivial order, and no less trivial are the consequences for the basic assumptions supporting the other contemporary

systems of Western psychology. We shall, therefore, try to make a closer examination of humanistic psychology's potential to reconstruct psychological thought outside the sphere of objective thought models.

### **Humanistic Psychology and the Knowable**

Humanistic psychological theory tacitly assumes that the poverty of inferential knowledge is exposed in our encounter with experientially-arrived-at inner datum. This datum carries ipso facto a meaning whose truth does not require the objective criteria of falsifiability and verifiability. But this tacit assumption plunges itself into a vicious circle if we fail to explain the nature and process of the encounter which extracts the experientially knowable from the logical requirements of objective criteria. Such criteria, in fact, appear superfluous when this process of encounter is explained. Danto (1968, pp. 44-45) has observed that the difference between knowing what we are doing and knowing what is happening to us is one of the most "primitive" pieces of knowledge that we have. The description of these two modes of knowing must therefore involve two lexical units having semantical concatenations pertaining to two different orders of events. Danto (1968) further explains that the process of vindicating knowledge claims through first person report inevitably involves a transformation in perception and, consequently, a transformation in our whole epistemological basis of reality itself. The indispensability of first person report arises out of the fact that the description of overt manifestations of behavior and their objectively-arrived-at meanings remain void so long as the experience of our inner condition, which is an inextricable part of the overt behavior, is not brought to fore. Actually, the first person report of what is happening within us is derived from a class of *experianda* as a piece of information contained in some specific lexical units whose truth or falsity cannot be ascertained by artificially rendering them identical with lexical units belonging to a separate class of *experianda*. Giorgi (1970) seems to have come to grips with the problem very acutely. He states,

it is most important to realize that from a human scientific perspective the 'actual' or the real cannot be reduced to physical presence. However we ultimately come to understand the presence of contexts of relationships, it is clear that they are experientially given and not in a physical sense . . . the point is that the real consists precisely of a dialectic between these two (experiential and behavioral) and not just one half. Moreover, that which is visible is not understood in precisely the same way as the one who is doing the seeing, and vice versa. In other words, phenomena are constituted by both halves of the dialectic, and it is only because of empiricistic and positivistic biases that we are surprised to discover that the real consists of more than just the sensory or physical. (p. 197)

Thus, we cannot reach the meaning of the knowable by obliterating the difference between the two classes of *experianda*. Up to this point, humanistic psychology seems to have succeeded within its assumptions. However, it fails

to explain how a transformation in perception is brought about in our encounter with the inwardly knowable. The concept of consciousness in Western psychology, however objectively oriented, leaves us altogether helpless at this point. We shall turn to it shortly.

With its assumption regarding the truth of inner knowledge, humanistic psychology has lifted the ban on the use of language proscribed by objective psychology. The reintroduction of natural language in psychology has effects similar to those that have been observed in modern physics by Hiesenberg: "One of the most important features of the development and the analysis of modern physics is the experience that the concepts of the natural language, vaguely defined as they are, seem to be more stable in the expansion of knowledge than the precise terms of scientific language derived as an idealization from only limited group of phenomena. This is in fact not surprising since the concepts of natural language are formed by the immediate connection with reality: they represent reality" (1958, p. 200).

Western psychological thought has invariably attempted to establish an ontological relationship between the experiencing individual and the external occurrences, subject to the condition that assumptions pertaining to valid knowledge must of necessity be derived from this relationship. Thus, the datum of experience per se is the datum of the world experienced. Consciousness stands in the order of determinate events. This approach to consciousness plus the use of obsolete mechanomorphic models eliminating consciousness altogether, has driven Western psychological thought into an epistemological confusion.

As such, objective psychology has failed to come to grips with the fact that the most intensive aspects of our inner experience can never be known without admitting the truth of the subjective. For example, the awareness of the immediate datum of experience which arises out of a state of despondency happens to be experientially quite distinct from that which arises out of a chain of experiences that makes one feel inspirited. In other words, one is directly aware of one's despondency only through a particular state of awareness and not otherwise. An absurd and artificial quantification of the inner datum virtually destroys the meaning inherent in it and, thus, leads nowhere. *De-psychologizing* the datum through logical operations deprives it of its semantic coefficient whereby its real meaning (namely the psychological) is amputated. The poverty of such inferential knowledge thus becomes exposed in our encounter with the experientially-arrived-at meaning.

### **The Meaning of Awareness in Objective Psychology**

Objective psychology restricts the meaning of awareness to cognitive processes and ascribes pre-eminence to consciousness in the process of experienc-

ing and understanding. But consciousness, as the oriental mystics believe, is only a transient point within the unbounded process of awareness. And since it is amenable to a particular type of observation in its tangible aspects, Western psychological thought takes only the quantitatively specifiable aspects of consciousness as the basic datum to proceed into the meaning of psychological reality through logical inquiry. It cannot proceed otherwise under its governing epistemological assumptions. As an inevitable consequence of this approach to psychological reality, we must search for the meaning of experiences only within the quantitatively specifiable dimensions of the datum, because the approved version of scientific explanation restricts us from going beyond.

Polyani (1974), however, has touched a very significant point regarding the nature of human awareness—a point which, in its developed aspects, gets closer to the meaning of psychological reality in some oriental orders of thought. Awareness, he believes, is of two kinds, focal and subsidiary. These are mutually exclusive. As Polyani illustrates:

When we use a hammer to drive in a nail, we attend to both nail and hammer, *but in a different way. We watch* the effect of our strokes on the nail and try to wield the hammer so as to hit the nail most effectively. When we bring down the hammer we do not feel that its handle has struck our palm but that its head has struck the nail. Yet in a sense we are certainly alert to the feelings in our palm and the fingers that held the hammer . . . I have the *subsidiary awareness* of the feelings in the palm of my hand which is merged with my *focal awareness* of my driving in the nail." (p. 55)

Let us try to make Polyani's idea a starting point to explain why the process of encounter with the experientially-arrived-at inner datum is not entrapped in a capricious void of the unknowable or the unintelligible; rather, this process leads into a kind of meaning which our subsidiary awareness transmits over to our focal awareness through an unquantifiable act of psychic transmutation. An explanation of this point will clearly expose the poverty of Western psychology as regards the range of comprehension available to human awareness in the expanding universe of psychic realities.

Our mental existence, as the mystics believe, is not confined to the bounded universe of the psyche. Human experience seems to extend over a transcendental dimension of awareness much beyond its specifiable cognitive processes. The attempt to understand experience through objective criteria of verifiability and falsifiability is destined to remain infructuous: these criteria are themselves falsified immediately when consciousness yields to the existential meaning emanating from a source which is oblivious to it. And the attempt to find meaning outside this source leads us into the labyrinth of agonizing existential dichotomies: life-death, pleasure-pain, pathos-confession.

Hartmann (1925) assigns a place to this source beyond the "transobjective

sector" of his ontological universe. The transobjective sector includes the metacognitive aspect of psychic reality which is outside the reach of intellect and objective understanding. The description of Hartmann's position given by Papanoutsos, a modern Greek thinker, may not be out of place here.

The Transintelligible signifies the unfathomable depths of being which can never be objectified because they are inaccessible to experience and knowledge . . . . The subject is objectified only in part. Its surface is open to knowledge, but its depths are covered by darkness, and when—as in the course of being aesthetically or religiously moved, making ethical evaluations and, generally speaking, going through the business of life—something emerges from these dark depths of the personality and attains expression, we become awed by the reinforced certainty that the depths of the soul are wrapped in mystery on the side of the unexplored and the unexplorable. (1968, pp. 39, 42)

The existential meanings emanating from the unexplored psyche supersede the ordered nature of events taking place within the determinate activity of consciousness; thus they cannot be understood logically.

Western psychology, with individual exceptions such as Jung, seems to have missed this point altogether, and in its quest for the knowable that could be manipulated through gigantic machines of logical inference and rendered into formal proofs for becoming parts of valid knowledge, it has landed itself in a serious epistemological confusion. But we cannot absolve ourselves of the responsibility to understand the indeterminate nature of inner datum by dismissing it on the grounds that it cannot be known through objective methods. An explanation of the nature of indeterminate consciousness, therefore, which is attended by transcendental awareness, will provide us a better understanding of our inner realities.

According to Polyani (1974), the role of subsidiary awareness in the process of learning by animals and humans renders focal awareness into a sort of synthetic process. Focal awareness, while it is directed toward more purposeful activity, gets disengaged from the less purposeful activities which constitute the structure of higher activity. This disengagement is brought about through subsidiary awareness which, as Polyani believes, also becomes a part of the pursuit. This disengaged focal awareness, in other words, becomes available for higher learning. As the psychic counterpart of learning it can be readily understood in its observable aspects by a person whose thinking is entrenched in habits of thoughts developed by Western psychology. But the same person finds it difficult to apprehend notions which have no manifest counterparts within the quantifiable processes of conscious activity.

We shall now take into consideration a mode of psychic activity in which the role of subsidiary awareness is completely altered vis-a-vis the focal activity of consciousness, through which our inner self gives a unitary meaning to our experiences. Polyani (1974) believes that "every act of personal assimilation by which we make a thing form an extension of ourselves through

our subsidiary awareness of it, is a commitment of ourselves; a manner of disposing ourselves" (p. 61). Taking Polyani's view a bit further, when focal awareness is directed to our inner happenings, the ambient subsidiary awareness eventually melts away in another dimension of our psychic universe. Perhaps the nearest equivalent in the English language that expresses this state of the psyche would be "unawareness" which, of course does not mean psychic passivity. Relying, then, on Persian and Arabic sources we shall make an attempt to explain it.

### The Meaning of Awareness in Mystic Thought

The term *unawareness* refers to the nature and meaning of the experience of self in pure duration. Mystic thought treats this experience as most intimate and profound. The self, so to speak, has two sides which are described by Iqbal (1934) as the *efficient* side and the *appreciative* side. According to Iqbal, the self, on its efficient side, is in contact with the world of space and the external order of things that are perceptible within the passing states of consciousness. It is therefore the subject of associationistic psychology. On this side, the self lives through a series of specific numerable states which carry the stamp of spatial features and put a veil around the appreciative self. However, in moments of profound meditation we reach the inner center—the appreciative self—where every part permeates the whole. As Iqbal (1934) has put it, "It appears that the time of the appreciative self is a single 'now' which the efficient self pulverizes into a series of 'nows' like pearl beads in a thread" (p. 46).

This is the experience of pure duration. Through this experience the efficient self is thrown in abeyance and the passing states of consciousness are dissolved, giving rise to unawareness in the sense mystics have understood it. Just as a single momentary mental act can hold together an incalculable frequency of wave motion, as for example in the case of the red color, and transform succession into duration, so does the appreciative self synthesize all the 'heres' and 'nows' into the coherent wholeness of personality. The subsidiary awareness abounding the efficient self is completely disengaged from the passing states of consciousness and enables the focal awareness to capture the meaning of our being in a unitary experience of undivided reality. Subsidiary awareness does not merge into focal awareness as Polyani described it in his example of driving in the nail.

In the experience of pure duration the 'Eigenwelt,' the 'Umwelt,' and the 'Mitwelt' merge at a common source of meaning. Turning sharply to this point, Iqbal (1934) states that "the destiny of a thing then is not an unrelenting fate working from without like a task master; it is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities which lie within the depths of its nature, and serially

actualize themselves without any feeling of external compulsion" (p. 47). Our psyche is equipped with the prolificacy to create meaning, and our existential need to create integral meaning instinctively directs our focal awareness to inward happenings—the only center unifying the cosmos, the inner most of our being. The immense diversity we experience in our encounter with cosmic realities becomes unified with the innermost of our being, namely the *Qalb*. (We will further explain this point while discussing the meaning of *Qalb*.) The fatal error of Western psychological thought lies in the mistaken notion that the meaning of realizable possibilities is exhausted by the intellective functions of mind through its focal activity. Thus, under the false notion of a divided reality, the Western intellect fights its instinct to create integral meaning, thereby rendering experiences to fragments giving rise to an inner chaos which is utterly void of meaning. Western psychology has in this way plunged itself into a state of semantic dissonance which is a type of pathology symptomatic of the existential crisis of our age.

Rumi (1976) and other mystics believe that on the efficient side of the self, consciousness moves toward the successive approximation of truth as regards the external order of things in the world of space. They call it *Ain-Al-Yaqeen* which implies the presence of cognitive functions. But the knowledge over which we gain mastery through the unitary experience is entirely of a different nature, and it is called by them *Haqqul-Yaqeen*.

The kernel of this experience lies in capturing the meaning of serially extended reality in moments of conviviality where the experience of the self and the serially extended reality becomes diffused. This knowledge enables our focal awareness to "extend its vision." *Haqqul-Yaqeen* augments the fecundity of focal awareness, confined to *Ain-Al-Yaqeen*, to reach into the depths of the serially extended reality. In a way, this notion seems to have been captured by Polyani in his concept of 'heuristic field,' in which the gradient of discovery measured by the nearness to discovery prompts mind towards it. "The assumption of a Heuristic Field explains now how it is possible that we acquire knowledge and believe that we can hold it, though we can do this only on evidence which cannot justify these acts by any acceptable strict rules. It suggests that we may do so because an *innate affinity for making contact with reality* moves our thought—under the guidance of useful clues and plausible rules—to increase ever further our hold on reality" (1974, p. 403). The secret of this affinity and of the intellectual passion of Polyani seems to lie in the common destiny unveiled by *Haqqul-Yaqeen*. The augmentation of the fecundity of our focal awareness tends to bring the mind into a state of psychic transmutation with some definite and observable consequences.

The knowledge arrived at through the serially ordered consciousness or the *Ain-Al-Yaqeen* of objective psychology is, however, an extension of the



realizable over a quantifiable dimension. But this mode of apprehension has a deeper affinity with our being than what is understood by objective psychology. The meaning of this affinity is made intelligible by religious mysticism. The Qalb, which is a propensity of awareness reaching out into unawareness, transcends the mode of apprehension of the objectively knowable truth through *Ilham* or *Ilqa* or *Kashf*. These three expressions connote something beyond intuition—rather, intuition is included in them. The knowledge through *Kashf* and *Ilham* transcends all logical operations and categorical functions of consciousness. Hence, the process of attaining such knowledge totally flouts analytic reasoning. Reality yields its secrets (*Rumooz*) to Qalb because of its affinity with our being. Perhaps the most comprehensive meaning of Qalb would include the highest state of awareness where the “aesthetic” and “intellectual” components of reality tend to fall on the same continuum and reveal the secrets of our affinity with the cosmos. The innermost of our being stands in an inseparable relationship with the cosmos. We shall see in a later part of this discussion that portions of the objective reality arrived at through *Ilqa* or *Kashf*, in their distinctly tangible aspects, might appear as “freaks” of the human mind to persons steeped in the habits of thought characteristic of a rational outlook, or more precisely, the scientific *Weltanschauung*.

In its more developed stage the state of psychic transmutation mentioned earlier reaches out into *Maarifat* where Qalb stands in an inseparable relation with its own destiny. *Maarifat* leads to the apprehension of the hidden powers of self and, as Rumi (1976) believes, it is the highest stage of spiritual development where the Qalb reveals the secrets of our being, attaining the power through which our “beingness” is apprehended “uninterruptedly” in its realizable possibilities. It is a truism in mystic orders of thought that our inner personality, namely the Qalb, reaches directly into the gradient of cosmic secrets and reveals its own realizable possibilities. Within this gradient of cosmic secrets Qalb stands as the human counterpart of existence, which alone carries the transcendental meaning of existence by deepening its affinity with the cosmos. The universe around us unfolds its meaning through its encounter with the universe within us. And from within the process of this encounter emerges the meaning of human civilization. According to Rumi (1976) the end of a civilization draws near when it loses its hold on its transcendental direction and consequently, its spiritual and material components fall apart, thereby undermining the very meaning of existence in individual and collective life. The chaos of a civilization, which marks its decline, unfailingly reflects itself through the individual consciousness; the inner resources of self are undermined, and the core of the individual’s beingness is thus eroded. Hence arises the existential crisis of a civilization.

### The Meaning of Psychic Transmutation

Unawareness is the source of immense spiritual powers. The meanings that are carried over to focal awareness in an unquantifiable act of psychic transmutation reveal their tangible aspects through an outright displacement of serially ordered consciousness. Hence, the focal activity of the psyche enters into such processes that look like freaks of human mind. In fact, these processes are neither freaks nor mysteries: they are the coefficients of meaning placed at the disposal of our focal awareness. They are only 'fragments of the universe' embodied in our being, awaiting the subsidiary to be recreated.

So long as the subsidiary awareness remains tied to the discrete and discrepant appearances of our existence passing through the transient states of consciousness, the integral meaning of our being remains hidden to our focal awareness. The integral meaning, however, is apprehended only through the unitary experience within the depths of being.

To understand the nature of psychic transmutation, the meaning of the fact of experience as a cognitive element must be distinguished from its meaning as a function of the cogitative activity of the psyche. According to Brehm and Cohen (1962) "cognitive elements or cognitions are 'knowledges' or items of information and they may pertain to one's self and the environment" (p. 3). And, as Neisser (1966) has described it, "Cognition refers to all the processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used" (p. 4). Cognitive elements are therefore inevitably contingent on sensory input. Consequently, facts of experience or cognitions must have direct or indirect corroboration with external particulars.

A fact of experience resulting from the cogitative action of the psyche is not contingent upon sensory input. It is therefore not an item of information from outside. What the mystics have been telling us about the direct awareness of such facts of experience closely resembles, in a way, the "sentient awareness" of Eddington (1958) which "has no grammatical object except itself. My consciousness is my awareness, and parts of my consciousness—feelings, emotions, etc.—are parts of my awareness; and it is mere oddity of language which leads us to reiterate the awareness in such phrases as 'awareness of feeling'" (p. 199).

Sentient awareness in its mystic connotation is described as *Khabar*. The gradient of *Khabar* is inherent in the *Qalb*, and its highest point reaches into *Maarifat*. The lower points on the gradient include *Kashf*, *Ilham*, and *Ilqa*. The cogitative activity of the psyche disengages the subsidiary awareness from the successive order of events whereby the focal awareness apprehends the deeper meaning of reality which, otherwise, exists only in the form of cognitive elements in the passing states of consciousness. Thus, a transformation in perception and, consequently, a transformation in the whole body of facts is

brought about through the transformation of serial time into pure duration. The items of knowledge available on the gradient of Khabar are described as *Waridaat-E-Qalbi* by the mystics.

The displacement of serially ordered consciousness leading into the experience-in-pure duration enables the focal awareness to apprehend aspects of the external reality which are exclusively contingent on sensory input. Hence, as in *Kashf*, things may be seen or heard without the aid of sense organs. This is currently known as "extra-sensory" perception in modern Western psychology.

Since cognitive elements—and hence perception—can never come into existence without sensory input, and since the existence of an extra-sensory channel for perceiving reality is an impossibility under the governing epistemological assumptions of Western psychology, only an alternative system of explanation can possibly accommodate the indubious evidence of the phenomena that are termed extra-sensory.

The experience of pure duration yields a kind of *integral perception* of serially ordered reality. It enables the focal awareness to visualize a particular configuration of events which otherwise 'exists' only as future possibility. The state of psychic transmutation in the advanced stage of mystic transcendence tends to become more persistent. The problem of communicating such experiences in words becomes most difficult because the shift in the gradient of Khabar reaching into more intensive aspects of *Waridaat-E-Qalbi* is actually a shift from the articulate toward the inarticulate.

However, the inarticulate carries a state of *semantic effluence* where the focal awareness captures meaning by captivating the words, and communication, therefore, involves a minimum of diction. Eddington (1958) has drawn attention to an element of knowledge which, in a remote sense, has semblance with the meaning of semantic effluence. He writes:

Suppose I suddenly say "ouch." That would convey to you exactly what was meant to be conveyed by the former statement "I feel pain." It has the great advantage that it does not hint at any psychological theory of what has happened; it does not drag in knowledge not wholly derived from direct awareness, as any attempt on precise description would do. Normally it is an involuntary remark; but it is pity not to use deliberately an expression which conveys exactly what we mean to convey and no more. A typical element of knowledge acquired by direct awareness is that which we convey to another person by the exclamation "ouch." (p. 200)

In fact, the tacit component of the ineffable experience, namely its meaning, is rendered into the experience of the recipient through the infusion taking place in the *Qalb*, and whatever transpires between the individual and the conveyer through such inarticulate communication is termed *Husool*.

The mystic tradition places a heavy emphasis on the concept of *Muqammat*—or stages of spiritual development—where the operative aspect of Khabar

progressively reveals the state of psychic transmutation in its fullness. The path to Maarifat lies through a state of conviviality with one's self. It is a type of experience that is very much akin to the "peak experience" of Maslow: "tremendous intensification of any of the experiences in which there is a loss of self or transcendence of it, e.g., problem centering, intense concentration, forgetfulness, and intense enjoyment of music and art" (1970, p. 165). In other words, it is a kind of deep empathy with the self. Oceanic feelings and ecstasy arise through this very process of focal and subsidiary dissolution. Some external stimuli, such as music possessing a spiritual content, tend to support and facilitate this experience.

This state of conviviality eventually gives a more coherent meaning to existence—where death ceases to be the terminal event of life and is represented rather as a turning point of existence involving a transfiguration of awareness. The altered meaning of death leads to the emancipation of self from the captivating anxieties of life which, as the mystics say, tend to impede the growth of self and damage its inner resources.

Perhaps the most pragmatically oriented and constructive aspect the mystic tradition developed through centuries lies in its creative altruism. This is very close to the "unselfish love" of Maslow in its most salient aspects, which include care, responsibility, respect, acceptance, and a deeper understanding of the individual. The mystics report (Nizami, 1980) an experience of *Altruistic Effulgence* which provides a stable base in therapy, particularly where the need for a helping relationship arises. One of the greatest mystics of the Chisti order believed and recommended that a person in need of help should be *accompanied* into the deepest recesses of the self without being left alone there. He or she must not feel the slightest embarrassment in the company of the helper.

An immeasurable power—*Nafs-E-Geera*—which is attained through the state of conviviality with one's self (*Einführung*), is actually the most vital aspect of the process of the mystic therapeutic encounter. It captures the being of the other person in order to lift up the veil from the realizable possibilities of the self that are shrouded under the vagaries of the *Nafs-E-Ammara*, or the dehumanized self. *Nafs-E-Ammara* prompts the impulses to override the ego, which eventually culminates in meaninglessness.

*Nafs-E-Geera* is one of the most powerful concepts in the mystic literature. It creates affinity with the being of another person in the highest degree of empathy and touches the innermost recesses of his or her *Qalb*. As in the non-directive therapy of Rogers, the individual receives support through warmth, affection, encouragement, and acceptance. The *Nafs-E-Geera* of the helper reaches into the difficulties of the individual through an affinity which brings about healthy changes in the entire perspective of the person. *Qalb* is supposed to be the vanguard of awareness. It prevents the self from "getting

lost" in the discrete appearances surrounding life. The highest point where the state of psychic transmutation touches destiny is the revelation which defines prophecy, according to Iqbal, "as a type of consciousness in which unitary experience tends to overflow its boundaries and seek opportunities of rendering or refashioning collective life" (1934, p. 119).

The impoverishment of human awareness has manifested its "inescapable" consequences in the existential crisis of our civilization. One of the most fatal consequences is the destruction of the gravitational center of meaning within our being, resulting in estrangement from self and in the dissolution of inner identity and power. We are, thus, thrown into a state of futile confrontation with life in its individual and collective aspects, and while losing hold on our experiences we are being overtaken by an inwardly extending void of meaninglessness.

With its holistic emphasis and more encompassing view of human nature, humanistic psychology might hopefully cope with problems arising out of the existential crisis of our time. However, the reconstruction of a theory outside the framework of objective thought requires forthright acceptance of a theory of knowledge which can sustain and strengthen the subjective core of experientially-arrived-at datum. In this aspect humanistic psychology falls short.

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