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Insights into the Deepest Recesses of Human Mind: A Comparative Analysis of Ghazalian *Aq'l* and Freudian *Ego*

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Abstract

The core objective of this study is to provide a venue to the integration of the spiritual insights of Ghazalian thought with the deep knowledge resulted from Freudian psychoanalysis. A descriptive and analytical approach has been adopted to analyze Ghazalian concept of *aq'l* and Freudian *ego*. Zepetnek's (1998) theory of comparative literature has provided guidelines for a thorough analysis of both the models. This analytical approach may guide us to an alternative critical agenda for having a better grasp of the human psyche. The findings of the study reveal that both *aq'l* and *ego* are the conscious parts of the psyche which use logical thinking and mediate between the deep levels of the psyche and the external reality. Freudian *ego* develops out of modification of the *id*, playing the role of a mediator between the *id* and external reality. Likewise, Ghazali gives a leading position to the intellect or *aq'l* which comprises reason, the capacity to discriminate vice and virtue. Besides, the current study proceeds from the postulation that despite the fact that Freudian psychoanalytic theory has brought forward insightful psychological considerations, equally appropriate readings will probably result from analyzing Ghazalian theory of soul. At the same time, it is also hoped that the insights brought forth by this study may open new vistas for the study of human nature.

Keywords: mind, soul, psyche, *aq'l*, *ego*, *id*

Introduction

The manifestation of life in myriad modes leads intellectuals to discover the philosophical interpretation of life along with the exploration of multiple facets of human nature. Hume considered the knowledge of human nature as the foundation of all sciences because these depend on the acquaintance with man's powers and faculties.¹ Man, holding a universe on a micro-level, has been the subject of curious scientific and philosophical investigations from the most ancient to the most modern times. Since time immemorial, the subject of human nature has been studied through various viewpoints - philosophical,

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¹David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (The Floating Press.1740), 15.

psychological, religious, anthropological and developmental - each with its own lens and focus of attention. However, much uncertainty still exists about the effectiveness of these explorations. Although there have been a huge explosion of the studies of self and human mind, yet a narrower outlook towards man exists, since each of them seeks to explain human behaviour through its specific expertise, forming a “veritable tower of Babel.”² Besides, there is a renewed interest in the critical analysis of the Western worldview which inclines to analyse human mind in a highly-compartmentalized manner, considering him fundamentally as a material being. In trying to gain a deeper understanding of human nature, Western psychological theories have tended to focus on one aspect of the self (e.g., psychoanalysis focuses on the conscious/unconscious mind, cognitive psychology focuses on thoughts, and behavioral psychology focuses on human behaviour), emphasizing more on the biological and psychical dimensions of the individual, sometimes ignoring the metaphysical side of human nature.³ Consequently, the spiritual entity in man is either less recognized or simply dismissed completely. For this reason, several attempts have been made by social scientists, who recognize the need to understand personality and human psychology from a more holistic perspective, to conclude that the spiritual component of man is too vital to overlook with regard to human psychological and personality studies.⁴

In brief, this entire development has enhanced our knowledge about what religion articulates about human psyche, its origin and development. However, despite the assertion that religious ideology regarding human psyche lacks empirical substantiation, there still exists lesser interest in this area of study. Though this seems to be a valid concern on the part of researchers, yet there is no denying that some of the most prominent theories in psychology (i.e., personality and clinical psychology) are far from being scientifically based.⁵ Moreover, a huge treasure of religious teachings and wisdom that have exerted a tremendous impact on the thoughts, behaviours and attitudes of myriad generations of people, need to be considered as worthy of attention while studying human psyche. Hence, psychological frameworks, provided by influential religious scholars, should be given due attention to as a valid field of investigation.

Thus, the present study intends to provide a venue to the integration of the spiritual insights of Ghazalian thought with the deep knowledge resulted from Freudian psychoanalysis since both the theorists have enriched the world with their innovative and pioneering ideas. Although, these Islamic and Western models offer somewhat similar

²Michael Franz Basch, “The Concept of Self: An Operational Definition,” In Benjamin Lee, and Gil G. Noam, (Eds.), *Developmental Approaches to the Self* (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), 7-58.

³Mohammad Yasin, *The Islamic Conception of Human Nature with Special Reference to the Development of an Islamic Psychology* (University of Cape Town. 1986), vii.

⁴Hisham Abu-Raiya, “Toward a systematic Qur’anic Theory of Personality,” *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 15(3) (2012): 217–233.

⁵Ibid.

attitude towards the inner workings of human mind, yet the major concern of the present study is to make a comparative analysis of Ghazalian concept of *aq'l* and Freudian *ego*.

2. Theoretical Framework

Though, as mentioned earlier, the fundamental focus of the study is on the Ghazalian notion of *aq'l* and Freudian *ego*, yet a brief discussion needs to be made regarding the trifurcate model of human mind both the theorists formulate. The basis of theoretical framework for the present study is the theories propounded by Ghazali and Freud, whose ideas regarding the intricacies of human mind are greatly inter-related. If, in the West, Sigmund Freud has enriched the world with his psychoanalytic theories, in the Eastern world, there have been various approaches that provide great help in understanding an individual's personality. Among them, Ghazalian theory of soul expounds, in very clear terms, a distinct concept of individual growth and development. Since Ghazali's theory of soul is founded on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an,⁶ it runs parallel to his conception of God. A significant feature of Ghazalian thought is its concept of the illumination of the divine light within soul. Ghazali sees human nature in its "relation to unity with God, from whom it receives its inner light".⁷ Accordingly, in Ghazali, the detailed study of human behaviour requires a profound analysis of human soul. Ghazali, as a true knower of human psychology, embarked on the task of examining the real psychological nature of man and discovered the existence of two peculiar tendencies in human nature, one that incites a person towards evil and produces such qualities like "impurity, deceit, deception, treachery, etc."⁸ The second tendency is divine and produces good qualities such as "wisdom, knowledge, certain faith...pardon, contentment, self-satisfaction, asceticism, piety, etc."⁹ On account of the existence of these two tendencies, three potentialities govern human soul, namely; *nafs e ammara*, *nafs e lawwama* and *nafs e mutmainna*. Time and again Ghazali elaborated the true nature of these human potentialities by stating that if the lower self or *nafs e ammara* gets stronger, it makes the divine elements of human soul subject to evil, which affects his behaviour and action. On the contrary, if the divine elements of *nafs al-lawwama* get strong hold by becoming highly conscious of God, the evil elements yield to goodness. In this way, evil elements are substituted with goodness, and it finally culminates in the tranquil state of mind or *nafs e mutmainna*.¹⁰

In the similar vein, the psychoanalytic discovery of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, in the realm of unconscious, heralded the beginning of modern psychology

⁶N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopedia of Sufis: Central Asia and Middle East* (New Delhi: Sarup and Sons. 2002), 67.

⁷Harold Coward, *Jung and Eastern Thought* (New York: State University of New York, 1985), 90.

⁸Abu Hamid Ghazali, *Revival of Religious Learning; Ihya-ulum-uddin, Book 3*. Trans., Fazal-ul-Karim (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1993), 12.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Abu Hamid, Ghazali, *Kimiya-e Saadat-The Alchemy of Happiness* (The Other Press. 2000), 12.

as one of the intellectual milestones of the 20th century.¹¹ Freudian dynamic view on human mind, encompassing its three structures - the *id*, *ego* and *superego* - opened new vistas of understanding and insights into modern psychology. In the first phase, it was through his most influential work *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud presented his vehement arguments about the existence of the unconscious, hidden below the conscious.¹² In the second phase of psychoanalysis, Freud improvised his topographical model and introduced his structural model using terms like *id*, *ego* and *superego*. For the first time, he gave voice to this model in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920. The entities of *id*, *ego* and *superego* were not separate regions that divide human mind, rather they had been employed by Freud as theoretical constructs, describing various functions of human mind. In 1923, Freud provided a more detailed explanation on the working of human mind in his essay *The Ego and the Id*. Freudian explanation of *id* refers to that dark and inaccessible part of human mind which comprises raw forces and represents elemental drives.¹³ It is the “biological and instinctual” part of human personality.¹⁴ In order to satisfy the basic instincts under pleasure principle, *id* transforms the biological needs into psychological tensions. At the time of birth, these inner forces have not been influenced by the external world, so they remain unsocialized.¹⁵ The hidden forces present in *id* are driven by the pleasure principle, which tend to strive for the immediate gratification of its instincts “to survive and reproduce.”¹⁶ *Id* represents forces which result in behaviour, generally considered destructive by the majority of a civilized population.¹⁷ Although *ego* has multiple meanings depending on both theoretical and cultural contexts, but this study will use Freudian’s descriptions only. He views *ego* as a protective, intermediary shield between the *id* and the external world. This is the structure of personality that deals with the real world and has been literally termed as the “I.”¹⁸ The demands of *id*, which merely aim at pleasure gratification, get balanced through *ego*’s attempts of providing appropriate satisfaction. Since *ego* operates on reality principle and can tolerate pressures built up by

¹¹Jeffrey Schwartz, Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (New York, NY: Harper Collins .2002), 46.

¹²Jim McMartin, *Personality Psychology: A Student-Centered Approach* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1995), 298.

¹³Robert Harper, *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Harvard University Press. 1959), 26.

¹⁴Jim McMartin, *Personality Psychology: A Student-Centered Approach* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications.1995), 298.

¹⁵Howard S. Friedman, Miriam W. Schustack, *Personality, Classic Theories and Modern Research* (USA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 339.

¹⁶Ozzie Mayers, “The Power of the Pin: Sewing as an Act of Rootedness,” *American Literature. College English* 50, no.6 (1988): 671.

¹⁷Jack Boozer, “Comments on “Religion, the Id, and the Superego,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 28, no. 3 (July 1960): 323-328.

¹⁸Howard S. Friedman, Miriam W. Schustack, *Personality, Classic Theories and Modern Research* (Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 339.

the *id*, it makes our instinctive drives delay gratification till they can be properly fulfilled.¹⁹ Furthermore, the structure which compels an individual to observe societal rules and helps him shape his personality is termed as *superego*. It is somewhat similar to the conscience which provides a set of guidelines, inculcating a sense of right and wrong, which develops with the internalization of parental figures. Moreover, certain parts of *superego* are unconscious because human beings are not always aware of the internalized moral forces that constrain their actions.²⁰ Freud divides the *superego* into two parts; the *ego ideal* and *conscience*. The *ego ideal* rewards good behaviour while *conscience* punishes the bad one.

3. Literature Review

Theories of mind have long been a question of great interest in a wide range of literary fields. The issues regarding the intricacies of human mind have been raised and discussed by the intellectuals of all times. The frequent attempts intended to explore human psyche and mind and reveal that it has been an essential concern in almost all ages. Moreover, to construct a better and more comprehensive view of human mind is “not to pit the various theories against one another but rather to synthesize them.”²¹ Contemporary trends in interdisciplinary theorizing between science and the humanities reveal that the knowledge of human mind can be enhanced, if seemingly discordant viewpoints are brought into dialogue. Thus, the current study is an attempt to explore the variances in the theories propounded by Ghazali and Freud, the two mighty minds of the world.

Ghazali’s immense intellectual stature is well recognized in literature, yet very little is known about the contributions of Ghazali, one of the several Arab-Islamic precursors of medieval Europe’s Latin Scholastics, who wrote extensively on human psychology.²² Similarly, he is among the first whose works fascinate the attention of European scholars.²³ Moreover, Ghazali has also been “acclaimed as the greatest ...certainly one of the greatest”²⁴ and “by general consent, the most important thinker of medieval Islam.”²⁵ Ghazali believes in the existence of two fundamental tendencies in human soul²⁶; the evil

¹⁹Jim McMartin, *Personality Psychology: A Student-Centered Approach* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications.1995), 295.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How our Brains Become who we are* (New York: Penguin Books. 2002), 321.

²²S. M. Ghazanfar, “The Economic Thought of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali and St. Thomas Aquinas: Some Comparative Parallels and Links,” *History of Political Economy* (2000): 861.

²³Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazali, the Mystic: A Study of the Life and Personality of Abū Hāmid Muhammad Al-Tūsī Al-Ghazālī* (London: Luzac and Company, 1944), 145.

²⁴W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of Al Ghazali* (London: One world Publications, 1953), vii.

²⁵F. R. Bagley, “Introduction,” *Nasihāt al Muluk, by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali* (New York and London: Oxford University Press. 1964), 47.

²⁶Hisham Abu-Raiya, “Toward a Systematic Qur’ānic Theory of Personality,” *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 15 (3), (2012): 217–233.

tendency (animalistic), producing vices and the tendency which motivates an individual towards good (angelic). On account of these two peculiar tendencies,²⁷ there appear three types of nafs, namely; *nafs e ammara* (the evil-instigating soul), *nafs e lawwama* (the reproaching soul), *nafs e mutmainna* (the contented soul). Moreover, Ghazali has also highlighted the role of *aq'l* in human psyche which plays the dynamic role of reason.

Turning now towards Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, it has been found that his discovery in the realm of unconscious and the development of the scientific inquiry of psychoanalysis, heralded the beginning of modern psychology as one of the intellectual milestones of the 20th century. In the history of human civilization, Freudian theories regarding human mind have a huge impact in the realm of scientific, intellectual and cultural thought, despite the fact that many agree²⁸ and some disagree.²⁹ Although the genuineness of Freudian metapsychology remains debatable, yet Freudian theory encompasses a huge corpus of concepts which continued to exercise a deep impact on the 20th century.³⁰ He has been considered as one of the greatest explorers of the human mind that ever lived.³¹

Freudian dynamic view on human mind, encompassing its three structures - the *id*, *ego* and *superego* - opened new vistas of understanding and insights into modern psychology. However, despite this reputation of psychoanalysis, there remains a paucity of evidence on its scientific nature. More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about psychoanalytic approach. This approach denotes a combination of scientific and non-scientific because Freud hardly ever gave “operational definition of his theoretical constructs of *id*, *ego* and *superego*” so the final verdict might be given in favor of his approach being unscientific.³²

The present study is based on the assumption that the spiritual insights of religion may offer distinctive potential to the field of psychological studies. Currently, this can be seen in such contemporary movements such as transpersonal psychology, which aims at directly incorporating a spiritual component to psychological counseling. An evidence, in support of this argument, can be found in a discussion on the subject when Freud mentions that psychoanalysis in its “skeptical denial of transcendence, has turned its back on the possibility of transcendence,” while transpersonal psychology has an “enthusiasm for

²⁷Amber Haque, “Psychology from Islamic Perspective: Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars and Challenges to Contemporary Muslim Psychologists,” *Journal of Religion and Health*. 43, no.4 (2004): 357–377.

²⁸Gerald M. Edelman, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind* (Basic Books, 1992), 86.

²⁹John McCrone, *Freud's Neurology* (Lancet Neurology, 2004), 3

³⁰Richard Askay, and Jenson Farquhar, *Apprehending the Inaccessible: Freudian Psychoanalysis and Existential Phenomenology* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 29.

³¹Peter Gay, *Freud: a Life for Our Time* (California: University of California, 1989), 791.

³²Michael W. Eysenck, *Perspectives on Psychology* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2013), 112-113.

transcendence.”³³ Increasingly, in the west, there is a trend of incorporating the insights, beliefs and spiritual doctrines of non-western traditions, especially Buddhism and eastern philosophy, to the practice of modern psychology. Though the spiritual dimension finds least attention by the followers of modern psychology, yet the American Psychological Association recognizes religious psychology as a separate field in modern psychology.³⁴ Foundational to this, is the drastic change in the whole scenario that the last two decades witnessed. Initially, Christian models were focused exclusively, but later on, a widespread interest has been felt in research studies highlighting Muslim,³⁵ Jewish³⁶ and Hindu models.³⁷ As a result, it might safely be asserted that the new field of the psychology of religion has emerged as a legitimate area of research.³⁸

4. Research Methodology

For the current study Zepetnek’s (1998) model of comparative literature proposes an essential structure to make a comparative analysis of the theoretical models of Ghazali and Freud on the concept of human mind. This model fundamentally covers two main aspects of comparative literature. Initially, it outlines the nature of comparative literature, and secondly, it gives ten different principles to be followed in comparative study of literature.³⁹ This study applies the seventh principle of Zepetnek’s model. According to this principle, “Comparative Literature is theoretical, methodological as well as ideological and political approach of inclusion.”⁴⁰ Besides, the successful application of Zepetnek’s method of thematic inclusion needs to be based on its being (1) goal-oriented, organized to achieve particular goals (2) reciprocal, given or shown by each of two sides or individuals to the other, (3) based on equal status of both participants, (4) comparative and not influential, no side can influence the other, and (5) both sides maintain their individuality.

³³Michael Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology in Psychoanalytic Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 16.

³⁴Mustapha Achoui, “Human Nature from a Comparative Psychological Perspective,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 15(4) (1998): 71-96.

³⁵Nima Ghorbani, P. J. Watson, “Religious Orientation Types in Iranian Muslims: Differences in Alexithymia, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Consciousness and Psychological Adjustment,” *Review of Religious Research*, 47(3) (2006): 303–310.

³⁶David H. Rosmarin Kenneth Pargament, Elizabeth Krumrei, and Kevin Flannelly, “Religious Coping among Jews: Development and Initial Validation of the JCOPE,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 65 (7) (2009): 670–683.

³⁷Nalini Tarakeshwar, Kenneth I. Pargament, Annette Mahoney, “Measures of Hindu Pathways: Development and Preliminary Evidence of Reliability and Validity,” *Culture Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 9, no.4, (2003): 316–332.

³⁸Ralph W. Hood Jr., Peter C.Hill, and Bernard Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (5th ed) (New York: Guilford Press, 2009), 22.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 14.

These are some of the principles which are kept in mind while juxtaposing Ghazalian *aq'l* and Freudian *ego*.

5. Psychological Disposition of *Aq'l* and *Ego* - Ghazalian and Freudian Perspectives

Human nature is considered an enormously complex phenomenon in human beings, which has been approached through numerous ways. There exists a huge array of Western theories, attempting to explore the intricacies of human mind, but none of them seems to present the whole truth, on account of their attitude of overlooking the spiritual dimension. Thus, the diverse outlook of human experience makes it imperative to search for a model, which contributes to better and all-inclusive understanding of human nature.

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, it is important to bear in mind that if in the West, Freudian theories render great help in understanding an individual's personality, in the Eastern world, Ghazali has enriched the world with his distinct concept of the growth and development of human mind. Furthermore, a detailed and extensive study of the psychological disposition of human beings sheds light on the similarities in the theories propounded by Ghazali and Freud. Of paramount significance is the fact that the selected theorists vary in origin, chronological orders, cultural and temporal settings, and are separated by a nine-centuries gap, they still address similar psychological issues and provide insight regarding, "the most probing inquiry into the dynamics of psychic life."⁴¹ The universality of the selected theorists strengthens our belief in the similar working of human mind.

Of vital significance is the fact that a close examination of the Freudian and the Ghazalian theory, reveals prominent similarities in "structural and topographic,"⁴² dimensions of both the models. Human psyche comprises various structures, each possessing a distinctive and highly-defined functions. Freud considers the three components of personality (i.e., *id*, *ego*, *superego*) constantly functioning in a different direction, which results in psychological conflict and anxiety and a craving for peace of mind.⁴³ The exact dynamics of *id* and *superego* characterizes *nafs e ammara* and *nafs e lawwama*, the evil and celestial components of human mind respectively, while Freudian constructs of *ego* is similar to the Ghazalian concept of *aq'l*. Human mind is prone to irrational, primitive behaviour, under the influence of *nafs e ammara* or *id*, despite the existence of a neutralizing force, i.e., *aq'l* or *ego*. So, these conflicting forces, operating on varying levels, cause psychological conflict and anxiety in their desire for mental peace.

⁴¹Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot, Designs and Intentions in Narrative* (Clarendon Press Oxford. 1984), 90.

⁴²Hisham Abu-Raiya, "Toward a Systematic Qur'ānic Theory of Personality," *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 15(3), (2012): 217–233.

⁴³Sigmund Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," In *Sigmund Freud's Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, J. Strachey et al (eds.) (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 91-178.

Besides, both the models are dynamic which suggests that “there are forces in conflict within the individual and thought, emotion and behaviour are the resultants of these conflicting forces”.⁴⁴

Moreover, Ghazali and Freud have shown somewhat similar attitude to various aspects of *aq'l* or *ego*. Ghazali (1993) offers a leading place to the intellect or *aq'l* which comprises reason, the capacity to discriminate “right and wrong, good and evil, the real and the illusory, all of which enable man to get nearer to God.”⁴⁵ He provides several meanings of this term. However, the philosophical definition shared with his predecessors refers to *aq'l* as the “intellect with which the true nature of things of this material world is known and its seat is in soul.”⁴⁶ The second connotation is the power to comprehend the mysteries of various learnings. The unique characteristic that distinguish a man from animal is *aq'l*, which has the potential either to elevate him to the status of angels or debase him to the level of animals. Moreover, as Ghazali highlights, man has been endowed with all faculties for the realization of *fitrah* which can only be achieved by proper application of *aq'l*.⁴⁷ Besides, this reasoning faculty of *aq'l*, can only be applied through knowledge.

Additionally, Ghazalian notion of *aq'l* can be seen in four dimensions of meanings.⁴⁸ The first it can be seen as the intellect which sets a human being aside in the animal kingdom. The second is the intellect which develops gradually as the rays of dawn, making him more mature. Third, the intellect which makes him knowledgeable, with experience and reflection. Fourth, the intellect which makes him understand the reality of things, beings and events, and hence he becomes mellowed with wisdom, controlling his appetites and desires in much effective way.⁴⁹

In Freudian model, the structure of personality that deals with the real world has been termed as *ego* or literally the “I.”⁵⁰ It works on reality principle. Freud considers *ego* as the conscious part of human psyche which develops out of modification of the *id* and is the “mediator between the *id* and external reality.”⁵¹ The demands of *id*, which merely aim at pleasure gratification, get balanced through *ego*'s attempts of providing appropriate

⁴⁴Irvin D. Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy* (New York: Basic Books. 1980), 6.

⁴⁵Frithjof Schuon, *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence- A New Translation with Selected Letters (The Writings of Frithjof Schuon)* (World Wisdom, 2006), 23.

⁴⁶Abu Hamid Ghazali, *Revival of Religious Learning; Ihya-ulum-udin Book 3.* (Lahore: Fazal-ul-Karim. Trans., Muhammad Ashraf, 1993), 5.

⁴⁷Nooraini Othman, “A Preface to the Islamic Personality Psychology,” *International Journals of Psychological Studies*, 8 (1), (2016): 23.

⁴⁸Muhammad Uthman el-Muhammady, “Tauhidic Intellectuality,” Paper presented at the Education Seminar organized by International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), (2003), 58.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Howard S. Friedman, Miriam W. Schustack, *Personality, Classic Theories and Modern Research* (USA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999), 339.

⁵¹Robert Harper, *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Harvard University Press. 1959), 26.

satisfaction. Since the *ego* performs the most difficult task, it needs to be “strong, flexible and resourceful” so that it might reconcile the conflicts arising in between the instinctive demands of the *id* and ethical restrictions of the *superego*.⁵²

Moreover, as Ghazali highlights, man has been endowed with all faculties for the realization of fitrah which can only be achieved by proper application of *aq'l*. Besides, this reasoning faculty of *aq'l*, can only be applied through knowledge. Throughout the whole span of human life, *aq'l* or *ego* struggle to negotiate between two diametrically interposing forces of *nafs e ammara / id* or *nafs e lawwama /superego*. Thus, the profound impact of *aq'l* or *ego* on man’s psychic life can never be denied as it always seeks to provide a balance for the pleasure-seeking demands of *nafs e Ammara* or *id* and guilt -stricken conscience of *nafs e lawwama* or *superego*. In this way, human beings experience *aq'l* or *ego*’s use of logical thinking, which mediates between the deep levels of conscious mind and the external reality. It also provides a socially acceptable outlet to the unrestrained pleasure of *nafs e ammara / id* and the restraint-seeking attempts of *nafs e lawwama / superego* by delaying the gratification of instinctive drives until they can be properly fulfilled. Likewise, as has been mentioned earlier, the role of *aq'l* or *ego* in human psyche is to mediate between the destructive forces of *nafs e Ammara* or *id* and the rebuking forces of *nafs e lawwama* or *superego* specially in case of individual’s deviation from social norms. So, if the powers of *nafs e ammara* or *id* get stronger and forces of *nafs e lawwama* or *superego* fail to discipline it, despite *aq'l* or *ego*’s attempt to maintain a balance, not only the individual but the whole society suffers. In this way, *aq'l* or *ego* plays vital role of a neutralizing force that stops extreme measures in dealing with the tussle between *nafs e ammara* or *id* and *nafs e lawwama* or *superego*.

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that both *aq'l* and *ego* are the conscious parts of the psyche. These use logical thinking, and mediate between the deep levels of the psyche and the external reality. Freudian *ego* develops out of modification of the *id*, playing the role of mediator between the *id* and external reality. Moreover, it also provides a socially acceptable outlet for the immediate demands of *id* which aim at pleasure gratification. Likewise, Ghazali offers a leading place to the intellect or *aq'l* which comprises reason, the capacity to discriminate vice and virtue. The unique characteristic that distinguishes a man from animal is *aq'l*, which has the potential either to elevate him to the status of angels or debase him to the level of animals. Moreover, the current study also corroborates our belief that though, Ghazalian theory of soul and Freudian psychoanalysis have developed in utterly different eras and in different social, cultural, and religious frameworks as models of the individual human psyche, but they both offer diverse possibilities for the growth and development of human mind.

⁵²Don H. Hockenbury and Sandra E. Hockenbury, *Discovering Psychology* (Fifth Edition); (Worth Publishers, 2011), 24.

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