

ABU HAYYAN AL-TAWHIDI'S PHILOSOPHY OF "NAFS"

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"Inna al-Insan qad Athqala Alayhi al-Insan (Verily, man is a problem for man)

Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, al-Hawamil wa-l-Shawamil, no.68, p.180

In the history of Islamic philosophy, the concept of *nafs* was mostly considered an ontological-epistemological concept. It refers to a being which opposes to human nature and is a dangerous enemy for him. Therefore it was claimed that human nature was consisted of two separate beings struggling win each other and that *nafs* was the unique source of blamable inclinations along with Satan. Hence the relationship between God and humankind, God and religion was conceived both as a relationship of responsibilities to God and religion, and to its "*nafs*". Thus many responsibilities and enemies including its "*nafs*" surrounded humankind. At this point, according to philosophers, humankind cannot understand itself and establish a reasonable relationship with religion based on human nature.

Contrary to what has been held by the traditional argument, al-Tawhidi argues that human nature does not have such duality. Moreover he considers human nature as a whole. For him, there is no duality between nature as a whole "*al-tabi'a*" and its "*nafs*". For him, understanding the religion requires upon understanding human nature. Therefore, we can go to religion starting from human nature itself.

The main object of the present study is to show and clarify al-Tawhidi's place in the Renaissance of Islam by exploring al-Tawhidi's philosophy of "*nafs*".

Recently, many researchers have given attention t al-Tawhidi's life, works and ideas in general. Moreover there are some researchers focused on his ideas related to the problem of human nature. But none of them deal with al-Tawhidi's views from the view point of philosophy of "*nafs*" as much as

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al-Tawhidi takes care of this problem in his works, in "*Kitab-l-Imta' wa-l-Mua'nasa*". According to us, the problem of "nafs" is the central point of his thought. Here, we will concentrate on al-Tawhidi's thought of human nature as a core meaning of humankind.

As to enumerating his books, he has about twenty books. But we will mostly deal with his book "*Kitab al-Muqabasat*" (The Book of Mutual Enlightenment), while focusing on the question of soul or, as the title states, "*nafs*" in a more specific meaning.¹

Although, between 870-1023 is named by Kraemer and Netton as the age of "*Farabism*", in which al-Tawhidi lived, al-Tawhidi is, in many ways, outside this broad categorization. His ideas on soul can be given as one of the indicators of his originality.²

Moreover, any account of the past is necessarily colored by the preconceptions, the aspirations, and above all, the knowledge or ignorance of the scholar who produces it. The terms and the concepts that historians use to order and explain the objects of their inquiry are neither fixed nor value-free, but are evolving and often highly subjective elements in the process of revealing the past that gradually leads us to a better understanding of it. Labels such as "Dark Ages" or "Renaissance", which are affixed to whole periods of European history, while they are convenient for the purposes of historiographical exposition, but may tell us only part of the truth about those segments of the past that they purport to characterize.³ On the other hand if we talk about the period of Islamic intellectual history in question, labels such as "The Renaissance of Islam" and "The Age of *Farabism*" are not only convenient for the purposes of historiographical exposition, but also for the spirit of the history of Islamic intellectualism throughout the centuries. To affix labels to only a certain period of Islamic history of philosophy, may tell the whole of the truth about those segments of the Islamic philosophical understanding in the history.

In addition, the more we inquire into what was born in that period, the more we become aware of vital continuities with the past and also present. So, neither will we consider the concept of humanism as a movement which began at a certain period and then ended, nor will we deal with the history of humanism exemplified by both those continuities and a sense of renewal. But, while taking a closer look at Tawhidi's philosophy of "*nafs*", we will take into account the humanism in western history, which germinated in the period of Hellenism and Graeco-Roman antiquity⁴, and owed its origin to the Latin *humanitas*, used by Cicero and others in classical times to betoken the kind of cultural values that one would derive from what was called a liberal education.⁵

As is well known, the primary features of the western humanistic movement were a) adoption of the ancient philosophic classics as an educational and cultural ideal in the formation of mind and character; b) a conception of the common kinship and unity of mankind; c) love of mankind. 6 Beside all, we should add to this list "desire to return to pure Christianity, that is, as indicated by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, to "the philosophy of Christ" 7 as a main feature of this movement.

The age, in which Tawhidi lived, almost all the features of western humanism could apparently be found at this time. In Tawhidi's time, the so-called "Islamic Humanistic Age", the philosophic humanists in the Renaissance of Islam believed that the sciences of the ancients, "*ulum-l-awa'il*", in contrast to the Arab sciences, "*ulum-l-Arab*", were the common possession of mankind. Al-Kindi in the ninth century had called the sciences of the ancients "the human sciences" "*al-'ulum-l-insaniyya*". 8 In addition to this, especially Tawhidi went further and believed that the understanding of Islam and its practice in his time were in contrast to what should exist that was in accordance with understanding of religion in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly related to the problem of "*nafs*". This means that the desire to return to 'pure Islam' was just like Erasmus' desire to return to 'pure Christianity. Al-Tawhidi tries to reach his aim with his 'philosophy of human nature', not the 'philosophy of Muhammad'.

The Islamic religious sciences and the 'foreign sciences' or 'the sciences of the ancients', especially the Greeks, as stated rightly by George Makdisi, were the organized body of knowledge in the Classical century of Islam. Over the years, the following terms were used for humanistic studies: "*al-adab*", "*al-adabiyat*", "*anw -l-adab*", "*durub-l-adab*", "*funun-l-adab*", "*ilm-l-lisan*". Note that these terms call to mind the classical, artistic and the philological in the Arab language of the ancient Arabians. It will be noticed also that the plural predominates in the terminology designating the studies of "*adab*", humanistic studies that may be called the studia "*adabiya*". 9

The main bearers of this literary humanistic culture were the scribes, secretaries, and civil servants, litterateurs and courtiers who plied state chancelleries and courts. 10

The ideal figures of this period were naturally philosophers, administrators, scribes, and secretaries as well as they were litterateurs and also, such like Tawhidi, courtiers.

In the beginning of this study, it was clearly pointed out that we agree with the labeling of this Islamic humanistic period as the "Renaissance of Islam". In this period, especially in the time of *Khalifa al-Ma'mun*, there was an intensive movement of translation from Greek into Arabic. It left an

impression upon Muslim scholars and also their way of thinking. The activities of translation focused on many different fields of sciences such as logic, nature, medicine, chemistry, engineering, politics, morality, sociology, and especially the science of "nafs", or in another word, psychology. In the developing of sciences and literature (*adabiyat*), the freedom of speech statement had a special importance at that time. Naturally, philosophy and philosophical perspective were not restricted by any political concerns, tradition, or religion. Moreover, the intellect (*al-'aql*) was free from all doctrinal and political limitations or restrictions and also given its freedom.

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Al-Tawhidi lived in this period and cultural milieu. As we will evaluate in the upcoming pages in detail, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi believed that all the humanistic sciences and cultures at that time had in fact owed their foundations to the problem of the "nafs", that is, the necessity of a philosophical understanding of soul.

Before exploring this problem in detail, I will describe al-Tawhidi's life briefly.

AL-TAWHIDI'S LIFE

Al-Tawhidi's exact name was 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-'Abbas Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi'. According to the sources, he was born between the dates 310/922 and 320/932 as a child of a conservative family. It is not clear where he was born. The sources give Nishapur, Shiraz, Wasit, and Baghdad as his birth place.¹² Briefly saying, al-Tawhidi was born approximately in 312/924 in Baghdad. He probably died in 414/1023 in Shiraz.¹³

Concerning al-Tawhidi and his personality, bibliographical dictionaries give the following information:

Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi was a theologian-Sufi who wrote many books related especially to linguistics, mysticism, and the science of Hadith.¹⁴ Al-Tawhidi studied linguistics and grammar courses from al-Sirafi and al-Rummani, the law of Shafiyya from Abu Hamid al-Marvarudhi and Abu Bakr al-Sarakhsi. In addition, he was constantly attending Sufi circles and visiting the foremost Sufi-leaders at that time. Al-Tawhidi had some close relationships with the viziers of the Buyids.¹⁵ As a close friend of the Buyids viziers, he was a professional scribe.¹⁶ But because of having an overly critical-mind and his own way of talking, he failed to establish a long-term friendship with the academic and administrative milieu.¹⁷ For this reason al-Tawhidi was considered by Ibn 'Aqil one of three certain heretics, the other two being listed as Abu-l-'Ala-l-Ma'arri and Ibn Rawandi (D.C. 250/864), in Islamic history by some classic bibliographers.¹⁸ In later years, he began to participate in Abu Sulayman Muhammad b. Tahir al-Sijistani's philosophy circles. Al-Sijistani was teacher of al-Tawhidi. Abu Sulayman

was a philosopher who made al-Tawhidi the philosopher and a learned person. 19

Concerning the other philosophers in Baghdad, al-Tawhidi had always been in contact with them, namely with the well-known community of philosophy, Ikhwan-l-Safa (The Brethren of Purity). It's clear that the four persons mentioned by al-Tawhidi are the authors (or among the authors) of Epistles. This suggest that al-Tawhidi was connected not only with Zayn b. Rifa'a, but also with the Kadi al-Zandjani. Although al-Zandjani told him a story that is found word for word in the text of the Ikhwan. 20 But he didn't learn philosophy from Ikhwan. Al-Tawhidi took courses in philosophy from Abu Sulayman's circles listening to him in silence. 21

A FEW WORDS ABOUT HIS PERSONALITY

Al-Tawhidi was a lonely and tormented individual.. It's typical of him to have uttered the feelings of the profoundly existentialist exclamation: " Verily, man is a problem for man." 22

As a mirror of his age, al-Tawhidi reflects the entire spectrum from piety and asceticism to sacrilege and cynicism. He embodies the era's insecurity and its vanity, its self-doubt and its arrogance. A scribe by profession, he also transcribed the pageant of human experience-from the philosopher expounding a text to the neighborhood bandit terrorizing a judge. Al-Tawhidi embraced "*adab*" (right behavior) in the broad humanistic sense. He assimilated the literary culture of the Arabs and the fruit of foreign cultures. He was both an imitator and a worthy successor of al-Jahiz. 23

Al-Tawhidi was among the great writers, scholars and poets who achieved fame as epistolographers in Eastern Islam.24 It should be pointed out that al-Tawhidi's contact with the learned, the pious, and the powerful made Abu Hayyan cynical and spiteful. His humanism was not a joyful celebration of man's grandeur but a sober acceptance of man's ambiguity. For that reason Tawhidi was an outsider, a marginal man, who shifted back and forth from the centers of authority to the periphery of society, temperamentally akin to the restless. Whereas he had scant patience for the famous and fortunate, he evinced deep sympathy for the lowly, lonely, and outcast. 25 From the point of view of his philosophical interests, it is possible to call him "a true philosopher-mystic".

Al-Tawhidi was the closest pupil of Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani, who was opposed to theology, "*Kalam*" and, also criticized the theologians in his works. We can infer from this that al-Tawhidi was not a Mu'tazilite.26 Furthermore, his understanding of the tawhid concept has a philosophical

character, not Mu'tazili character. He was interested in Sufism as well as in philosophy. But it is said that he didn't live like a Sufi, nor practice any of the requirements in Sufism.

Al-Tawhidi's book on the history of Sufis is has not been found, but his "*al-Isharat al-Ilahiyya*" gives an idea of the type of Sufi piety that attracted him. In a profound section on 'the stranger' (*al-gharib*), he gives vent to his own 'existential alienation', to the point of uttering the saying: "Verily, the stranger within his alienation."²⁷

THE INTELLECTUAL and CULTURAL ATMOSPHERE IN THE TIME OF AL-TAWHIDI

As indicated before, Farabi was considered a philosopher who developed an intellectual system of thought in the middle age of Islamic history, again, in view of I. Richard Netton, this period from Farabi's birth-year of 870 to 1023 of al-Tawhidi's death year, is the 'Age of *Farabism*.'

The philosophers after Farabi were more or less influenced by him and his philosophical teachings. Farabi had no great follower-disciples. However Abu Zakariyya Yahya Ibn 'Adi, did become known as a translator of Aristotelian works and a pupil of Zakariyya's (Abu Zakariyya's), called Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani came to be spoken of. The learned men gathered around him in Baghdad, in the second half of the tenth century. The conversational discussion which these learned men continued, and the philosophical instructions which were imparted by their master, have been to some extent preserved and we can clearly see the outcome of the school.²⁸ Finally, these learned men made up what almost constituted a 'school of Farabi'. The four paramount philosophers who were influenced by Farabi are Yahya ibn 'Adiyy (893/974), Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani (d. 987), Abu Sulayman al-'Amir (d.992) and, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (d. 1023).²⁹

The most famous schools, or, in other words, circles of philosophy and adabiyat in the Xth. Century, were Yahya ibn 'Adiyy's Circle, al-Sijistani's Circle, the community of Ikhwan-l-Safa and Abu Abd-allah-l-Basri's Circle. Al-Tawhidi attended the first of the two circles more often than the second circle, and participated in their philosophical and cultural conversations.

As Kraemer has pointed out, al-Sijistani's circle, about which we are informed by al-Tawhidi, resembles in many of its features the Platonic Academy of Florence, whose leader was Marsilio Ficino.³⁰ So it may be clearly put forward that the circle of Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani was rooted in the main views of Farabi, and, for this reason, inquiries made in this school were concerned mostly with logic alone. Concerning the transferring of both

logical and philosophical sciences, this school influenced even Ibn Sina (d. 428/1038) and Ibn Rushd. Al-Sijistani brought his contemporaries altogether. Even though he went away from some bases of Farabi's teachings, al-Sijistani actually followed Farabi's way. 31

Like Farabi, Abu Sulayman (d. after 391/1001) was another student of Matta b. Yunus. Al-Sijistani was a logician. His other fields of knowledge were humanistic studies, particularly grammar and poetry. Afflicted with leprosy, he was confined to his home where he received only those interested in studying with him. His best link with the outside world was the humanist Abu Hayyan, close friend and frequent visitor who brought him news of the court and held long conversations with him. It was for al-Sijistani that al-Tawhidi wrote his "*al-Imta' wa-l-Mua'nasa*" (Pleasure and Entertainment). Many of al-Sijistani's ideas have been recorded by al-Tawhidi in the "*al-Imta'*", as well as in his "*Kitab-l-Muqabasat*" (The Book of Mutual Enlightenment). In "*al-Muqabasat*", for instance, al-Sijistani, questioned by al-Tawhidi, gives his thoughts on the relationship between logic and grammar, and, in the process of elaborating his thoughts, touches upon rhetoric and eloquence. Throughout these two works many of the questions discussed are of interest to humanistic studies and to the philosophy of language. 32

As stated before, al-Tawhidi was al-Sijistani's "*protégé*", associate, and constant companion, who stalked his every step and retained whatever there was to about him. He recorded many sessions that took place in al-Sijistani's "*majlis*" and gave vivid portrayal of his teacher's attitudes, and opinions. 33 But when al-Tawhidi expresses his own ideas, he often differed from those of his teacher. For instance, in his "*Risala fi-l-'Ulum*" (Treatise on the Sciences), al-Tawhidi refutes the view of someone who maintained that reason should not interfere with the religious law, that philosophy has no connection with religion, and that wisdom doesn't influence religious statutes. The refuted antithesis herein is precisely the view that al-Tawhidi ascribes elsewhere to al-Sijistani. Also, while criticizing "*Kalam*", and indicating some of its endemic pitfalls, al-Tawhidi nevertheless acknowledged that it is capable of hitting the truth, a proposition that al-Sijistani would have found difficult to accept. Furthermore, whereas Abu Sulayman was a devotee of astrology, al-Tawhidi expresses opposition to this in his "*Risala fi-l-'Ulum*". "Much effort", he says, "achieves little; error is more harmful than ignorance of it". Moreover Abu Hayyan was a devotee of Sufism whereas al-Sijistani was not a Sufi and was not sympathetic to Sufism. In al-Sijistani's service, he was a faithful amanuensis and biographer. 34

As we understand from those remarks, al-Tawhidi was an independent scholar despite being the pupil of al-Sijistani and narrating his

opinions. For, had he not believed in and accepted al-Sijistani's opinions, he would not have given any place to them in his works. While we are dealing with al-Tawhidi's philosophy of "*nafs*", al-Tawhidi, using the narrated opinions which belonged to other scholars, tried to build his own system of thought relating specifically to the philosophy of *nafs*, providing in general, a philosophy of humanity.

Taking a look at al-Tawhidi's own philosophy, dealing with the concepts used by him to build a humanistic understanding of *nafs*, dealing firstly with the concepts relating directly or indirectly to the *nafs* will pave the road to understand his philosophy of human existence.

SOME MAIN CONCEPTS RELATING TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF *NAFS* IN AL-TAWHIDI

Regarding Ptolemy's theology and the philosophy of nature, al-Tawhidi with his friends in the majlis asked some questions of al-Sijistani. Al-Sijistani replied giving interesting meanings to some terms and concepts in response to al-Tawhidi's questions. Al-Tawhidi recorded al-Sijistani's answers, and adapted them in his works.

Nature (al-Tabi'a) : The nature is the place for existence and corruption. So existence and corruption (*al-Kawn wa-l-Fasad*) are the essence of a "non-everlasting".³⁵ According to this meaning, the nature is the source of the both temporal existing and corrupting. As far as they are in temporary circulation, to seek being genuinely everlasting in this nature is a struggle in vain. Because of this, the nature represents the human body at a minimal level. It must inevitably be accepted that a human individual should not forget that his/her body is the place of existence and corruption like the nature of the outer world. The human body, as a small sample or micromodel of the nature, is a pseudo-everlasting existence.

Soul (Nafs): According to al-Tawhidi's writing, "*nafs*" is the source of thought (*al-fikra*) and opinion (*al-wahm*). The two are the gates of discriminative ability in humankind. At the same time they are the gates which open to "*ilm*" (science). The thought and opinion put the components of intellect and powers of comprehension in a state of motion.³⁶ Al-Tawhidi goes on to describe the complicated meanings of the "*nafs*". Especially as the meanings of other concepts related to human nature as a whole interact with the meaning of *nafs*, the "*nafs*" becomes more complicated.

The *nafs*, to al-Tawhidi, is an intellect, "*al-'aql*" seeking to be enlightened. The process of thinking turns into the *al-nafs*. For this reason, "*al-'ilm*" becomes the detailed explanation of "*al-'aql*". Then the practices,

"*al-amal*" become the acquired explanation of "*al-'ilm*". 37 As stated by these remarks, the intellect is within the "*nafs*"; the "*nafs*" is within the nature, and the "*nafs*" constantly seeks a drink in the nature just as the intellect, "*al-'aql*" constantly seeks its components which are always awaiting motion..

al-Tawhidi says: " *The "nafs" (self) acts within the spirits, "al-arwah" 36 who are clean, free from dirt, and are of a the pure substance, whereas the nature acts within the material bodies (al-ajsam).*38 At this point, al-Tawhidi says remarkable things about the "*nafs*" and its features: "Both the mental and epistemic activities such as thinking, intuiting and "*al-'ilm-l-yaqin*" (strong belief, certitude), "*al-Haqq*" (authentic right) and "*al-sawab*" (attainment) are the most vivid means which lead us to a better understanding of the "*nafs*". These are the proofs of the "*nafs*". Thus the intellect is able to reach happiness and deserve the eternity, "*al-khulud*" by the means of these activities and their fruits.38 Inferring this point, we can conclude that the nature rules the character of the human body, and as to the "*nafs*", it governs the motives of the nature. Finally, the intellect rules the components of the "*nafs*". In this case, the "*nafs*" is considered as the most important meaning of human nature. According to these remarks, al-Tawhidi considers the "*nafs*" as an ontological being rather than an ethical being.

Intellect (al-'Aql) : The intellect, according to al-Tawhidi, is the peak of nobility and distinction. Thanks to the intellect, the happiness may be looked for, asking the First Cause, "*al-'Illa-l-'Ula*"; i.e. God for help. 39 As explained before, the intellect becomes the "*nafs*" after thinking. And it rules the members of the "*nafs*".40

The Relationship Between Human Nature and These Concepts

Al-Tawhidi says: " When I say my "*nafs*" told me, I realized that human nature(Tabia' al-Insan) and the "*nafs*" were the two neighbors not separated from each other. They both are mutually meeting, speaking, coming together and engaging in dialogue." He adds: "I asked Abu Zakariyya al-Saymari about this thought. He replied: "Human nature is not but humankind with its "*nafs*". In accordance with humankind's capability of having some from the "*nafs*" there may be a form (*sura*) which may be received from the "*nafs*". So the "*nafs*" is a "*nafs*" according to its dress for the body and arrangement within it. Alternatively, the intellect always investigates and questions whether these tidings from the "*nafs*" has are true or not.41

Al-Tawhidi drew a close relationship between human nature and the arts. In this point, regarding human nature, he believes that human a being is

the "microcosm" (*al-'Alam-l-Sagir*). Alternatively, the universe as a whole is the "macrocosm". According to al-Tawhidi the nature (probably nature as a whole) is in love with the "nafs" and submits to its instructions as it orders. For this reason, the nature is able to be perfect if the "nafs" attains perfection. The nature can write whatever the "nafs" dictates and act in accordance with the demands of the "nafs". Art is the ultimate fruit of this cooperation, and human nature is always in need of art. By this means of skilful art created by "*an-Nafs-l-Natiqa*" (the reasoning nafs), human nature achieves the perfection.⁴²

At this point, we must ask, "what is the "nafs"? Is it a possession or property? Or, a part of human being? Is it possible to call entire human being the "nafs" ? Al-Tawhidi's answer to these questions is: " No, the individual does not possess a "nafs": the "nafs" possesses the individual. Being a human being, or in other words, an individual cannot be imagined without the "nafs". Only with a "nafs" can we realize ourselves as human beings."⁴³

Paying attention to al-Tawhidi's remarks, it can be clearly argued that al-Tawhidi elaborated an idealism in his time. While he talks about "the nature" "*al-tabi'a*", he deliberately doesn't clarify which nature it is. In our opinion, the concept of *nature*, when it is employed for macrocosm, conceptually represents the Almighty God as the First Principle who rules the nature. Alternatively, if "nature" is used for *the small universe*, conceptually representing the "nafs" of human being as the essence of humankind's existence. Ultimately the nafs of the human being and the "nafs" of The Universe, that being the First Reason and Creator, connect with each other via the intellect.

At this point, we must ask, "What kind of being is the "nafs" ? Is it a sensitive being, or rational being?" al-Tawhidi firstly divides everything in the universe into two parts: a) The first is sensual beings (*al-hissi*): b) The second one is rational beings (*al-'aqli*). As to being of the "nafs", according to al-Tawhidi, it must clearly be claimed that the "nafs" also has same characters as a member of the universe. For this reason, not only is the "nafs" a sensual being but also is a rational being. That it has an entity in this word, and it mediates, comprehends, penetrates into the thing whether actually or mentally, arranges the propositions and guides to many different sources of knowledge is the strongest proof regarding its rational being. ⁴⁴

When taken a closer look at al-Tawhidi's argument, we can clarify the fact that the "nafs" is consist of human nature as a whole, and of an ontological entity rather than ethical one. He does not regard the "nafs" a total of non-desirable manners and unmoral things. On the contrary it is an independent and separated being as a humankind. But, to attain happiness, it is necessary to make it free from filthy and blamable inclination. Because,

the “*nafs*” may be subjected to both two bad and good tiding at one time. For al-Tawhidi, happiness depends on causing the “*nafs*” to turn away from evil inclinations.⁴⁵ This is why humankind has some bestial forces that neither change nor turn into another form. Al-Tawhidi already believes that the forces need to be changed, or turned into another thing, because of this they are the sensual being of the “*nafs*”.⁴⁵

Humanity and Humankind

When we have dealt with humankind as individuals, according to al-Tawhidi, we regard the individual as the “*nafs*”. Alternatively, dealing with *humanity* (*al-insaniyya*), it means that humanity is a conception . It guides to a horizon that is a common property of all human being. Nevertheless each of us, that is, each individual has its horizon it tries to rise up with its natural disposition. But the individual’s capacity of proceeding is restricted by its own nature (*bi tabi’atihi*). For this reason, each person must know well his/her nature and his/her capability.⁴⁶ Basically this fact clearly states that each “*nafs*” or individual has a different nature and capability. Different natures and capabilities enrich the meaning of “*al-insaniyya*”. In this way, the “*nafs*” and *human nature* mutually interact with each other. In conclusion, al-Tawhidi adapts al-Sijistani’s and Yahya ibn Adiyy’s opinions that he narrated and recorded in his works. We mean, those opinions are reflected in al-Tawhidi’s inclinations and opinions too.

In the age of Renaissance of Islam which includes al-Tawhidi, the main four concepts were given very different meanings from those meanings presently given in the modern Islamic world since the time of al-Ghazzali. According to al-Tawhidi’s thought, nature (*al-tabi’a*), “*al-nafs*”, intellect (*al-’aql*) and humankind have all parallele meanings. The nature as outer of world can not be considered a prison for humankind. For, here is the source of creation as well as the “*nafs*” is the source of thinking and acting via intellect. The body of humankind is not a prison for the “*nafs*”; on the contrary, it is the sensitive side of being the “*nafs*”. Similarly the intellect is always in connection and interaction with the “*nafs*” as well as the Ultimate Being is in connection with the outer world.

We conclude that giving an interesting meaning to the concept of “*al-nafs*”, al-Tawhidi focus on the problem of human nature and tries to draw a anthropo-centric understanding of Islam. He believes that the *different “nafs”* come together within the same and common *humanity*. Understanding the religion strictly obliges understanding human nature, not vice versa. For him, we should begin to understand humankind with starting off humankind itself, not with Theo-centric or, in other words, religion-centric thought. Because we can not understand human “*nafs*” with starting from religion. On the contrary, we can understand it starting from itself so that we properly are able to understand both religion and the “*nafs*”.

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Kraemer, *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
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See, George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and The Christian West*, [London:Edinburg University Press 1990], pp. 248-252; Kraemer, *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
Makdisi, *ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
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See, Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Sheikh, *Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi*, [Cairo:al-Dar al-'Arabiyya li al-Kitab, 1983], Vol. I / 21.
See: Hafiz Jalal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuti., *ibid.*, Vol. II / 190; Yaqut al-Hamawi, *ibid.*, Vol. I / 124-127.
Yaqut al-Hamawi, *ibid.*, Vol. V / 385, 386-396.
Taj al-Din Abu Nasr 'Abd al-Wahhab b. 'Ali 'Abd al-Kafi al-Subki (727-771), *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*, ed. 'A. Muhammad al-Hafw-M.M. al-Tanahi, [w. d&p], Vol. V / 287.
Brockelmann, *GAL*, Vol. I / 283; *GALS*, Vol. I / 435-36; S.M. Stern, "Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi", *The Encyclopedia of Islam* [Leiden: E.J. Brill 1986], Vol. I / 126-127.
Hasan al-Sandubi has been enumerating those viziers with whom al-Tawhidi drew a friendship. See, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, *al-Muqabasat*, ed. Hasan al-Sandubi [Cairo 1929], Al-Sandubi's introduction, p. 12.
Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Othman al-Dhahabi (d. 748), *Mizan al-'Itidal fi Naqd al-Rijal*, ed. A.M. Gajawi, [Dar Ihya Kutub al-'Arabiyya, w.p.,], Vol. IV / 518-19; Abu Zakariyya Muhy al-Din b. Sheref al-Nawawi (d. 676), [Dar Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, wt.], Vol. II / 223; al-Subki, *ibid.*, Vol. V / 288.
See, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. III / 1071.
'Abd al-'Amir al-'A'ani, *Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi fi Kitab al-Muqabasat*, [Beirut:Dar al-Andalus, 1980], pp. 266-267.

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Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 222.

Makdisi, *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 161.

Kraemer, *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 222.

Mahmut Kaya, "Ebu Hayyan et-Tevhidi", [Istanbul:TDVIA, 1994], Vol. X / 155: Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi. *al-Muqabasad*, edit. Hasan al-Sandubi's Int., p. 5.

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T.J. De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, trans. E.R. [London: 1903], pp. 120-1, 12ff.

See, Jan Richard Netton, *Al-Farabi and His School*, p. 1: *al-Muqabasad*, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, ed. M. Tawfiq Husayn. [Tabran: 1359], pp. 31-32.

Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 8.

'Abd al-'Amir al-'A'am. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

Makdisi, *Ibid.*, p. 251.

Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986], p. 31.

Kraemer, *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

'Abd al-'Amir al-'A'am. pp. 256-267.

Kraemer, *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

Al-Tawhidi, *al-Muqabasad*, pp. 244-249.

"Al-nafs means: the soul; the spirit; the vital principle; syn. Ruh. But between these two words is a difference. "Kharajat nafsa-hu": His soul or spirit, went forth. "Fi nafs fulan"an yaf "ala kadha wa kadha": It is in the mind of such a one to do so and so. Some of the lexicologists assert the nafs and the Ruh to be one and the same, except that the former is fem., and the latter (generally or often) masc.; others say, that the latter is that whereby is life; and the former, that whereby is intellect, or reason; so that when one sleeps, God takes away his nafs; but not his Ruh, which is not taken save at death, and the nafs is thus called because of its connection with the nefes (or breath). Or every man has nafsan (two souls) nafs -l-aql (two soul of intellect, or reason), also called al-nafs al-natiqa or nafs -l-tamyiz (the soul of discrimination) which quits him when he sleeps, so that he doesn't understand thereby. God taking it away; and nafs -l- Ruh (the soul of the breath), whereby one lives.

Briefly speaking, one should not say that nafs is the same as Ruh absolutely, without restriction nor Ruh the same as nafs. For more details see: E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, The Islamic Texts Society. [London: Cambridge, England 1984], Vol. III/ 2827.

al-Tawhidi, *al-Muqabasad*, pp. 244-249.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 249-255.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 110.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, p.157.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86, 88.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 114.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 138.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, p. 241.

al-Tawhidi, *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.