

**Yasien Mohamed**

Yasien Mohamed is Professor of Arabic Studies in the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa.  
E-mail: ymohamed@uwc.ac.za

## The metaphor of the dog in Arabic Literature

### The metaphor of the dog in Arabic Literature

This essay deals with the metaphor of the dog in Arabic philosophical literature. The metaphor is viewed in relation to the imagery of the rider and the horse, which vividly demonstrates the dynamic relation of the three faculties of the soul. Our focus is on the irascible faculty, the emotion of anger. The dog metaphor brings out the positive dimension of emotion. Classical Arabic literature views the soul as a substance distinct from the body, and has many illustrations showing the superiority of the soul over the body. What makes the soul special is its rational faculty, its capacity to reason. In the rider-horse imagery, the rider is the metaphor for reason, the horse the metaphor for passion, and the dog the metaphor for anger. A balanced soul coordinates these faculties in right proportion. The imagery of horse-riding, used in Arabic and Greek philosophical literature, provides the most powerful image to explain how the three faculties of the soul interact with one another. The article examines the imagery from a literary and philosophical perspective. Scientific knowledge of the horse and dog will enhance our insight and appreciation of the richness of the metaphor. The method of analysis is based on four primary classical texts: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Miskawayh's eleven century Arabic translation, *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq (Refinement of Character)*, Galen's *Ethics* in Arabic translation, and al-Raghib al-Isfahani's *al-Dhari'ah ila Makarim al-Shari'ah* ("The Means to the Noble Qualities of the Law"). **Key words:** Arabic Literature, metaphor, anger, desire, reason, conflict.

### Introduction

This article deals with the metaphor of the dog in Arabic philosophical literature, and it is viewed in the light of a wider imagery of the rider and the horse, which vividly demonstrates the dynamic relation between the three faculties of the soul; namely, the rational, irascible and concupiscent faculties. Our focus will be on the irascible faculty, which represents the emotion of anger. The metaphor of the dog is used with a positive connotation to refer to this emotion.

Classical Arabic and Greek psychology share the same view of the soul as a substance distinct from the body, and their literature is pregnant with illustrations showing the superiority of the soul over the body. What makes the soul special is its rational faculty, its capacity to reason. This is one of three faculties, the other two being, the concupiscent and the irascible faculties. These three faculties represent the tripartite division of the soul; namely, the faculties of reason (rational), desire (concupiscent) and anger (irascible). The rider is a metaphor for reason, the horse a metaphor for

passion, and the dog a metaphor for anger. A balanced soul can coordinate these three faculties in their right proportion. The imagery of horse-riding is used in both Arabic and Greek philosophical literature, and provides the most powerful image to explain how the three faculties of the soul interact with one another. We will examine the imagery, but not from a natural scientific point of view, although the zoological facts will help us appreciate the richness of the metaphor.

The Arabic philosophical sources we will examine are both in the original Arabic and in Arabic translation. On the subject of human emotion we will examine the following texts: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Arabic translation, Miskawayh's (d. 1030) *Refinement of Character (Tahdhib al-Akhlaq)*, Galen's *Ethics* in Arabic translation, and al-Raghib al-Isfahani's (d. 1060) ethical treatise, *al-Dhari'ah ila Makarim al-Shari'ah* ("The Means to the Noble Qualities of the Law").

Al-Isfahani had a profound impact on al-Ghazzali (d. 1111), who in turn influenced the famous North African Ibn Khaldun (d. 1358). Ibn Khaldun is regarded as the father of sociology and wrote *The Muqaddimah (An Introduction to History)*. There is no direct reference to the metaphor of the dog in Ibn Khaldun, but the classical Arabic philosophical tradition influenced him in other aspects of thought. There are, for example, clear parallels between the classical philosophical literature on labour and the crafts and the Arabic African literature of Ibn Khaldun. The African author has based his chapter on the classification of the crafts on the works of Isfahani and Ghazzali (Mohamed 2006b: 35–51).

### **The emotion of anger (the irascible faculty)**

The Hellenistic thinkers see the goal of philosophy as a transformation of the inner world of belief and desire through the use of rational argument. Within the inner world they focus above all on the emotions of anger, fear, grief, love, pity, gratitude, and their many relatives and sub-species. In Aristotle's ethical thought we see that emotions are not blind animal forces, but intelligent and discriminating parts of the personality, closely related to beliefs of a certain sort, and therefore to cognitive modification (Nussbaum 1994: 78). Hellenistic philosophers, especially Aristotle, have always said something about emotions and passions whenever they have discussed human mental life. These emotions are valued and sought because of their intrinsic feelings, and the effects they have on our lives. Nowadays, emotions seem to occupy a small role in modern philosophy, and so there is a need to revive their importance and turn to the classical philosophical contribution for inspiration. A study of emotions is also important for understanding contemporary politics and global violence. For the sake of brevity we will examine their relevance to psychotherapy only.

Emotions are important in the life of the human mind. We seek pleasure in emotions, and we even enjoy negative emotions such as fear, anger and sorrow, at least in

literary fiction. The emotions, and to a lesser extent, desires, often referred to as passions, are far from marginal aspects of ancient theories of mind. They are there in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Aristotle seems to suggest that emotions, even appetites, are not wholly bad, and that their presence and effects are not necessarily to be minimized. Modern philosophy has been largely silent on this topic. Anger is best described as a hostile feeling that is intentional in a certain way, and produced by interacting with other states of minds, such as goals and beliefs. It is an emotion that is to be identified by its place in a state of mental activities such as emotion forming or belief forming. Thus certain beliefs or thoughts may cause certain emotions. The emotion that is based on anger may be called "reflective anger". It should be distinguished from reactive anger such as a startle or flight response. The cause of this response is largely sensory, such as the bark of a dog when it sees a stranger. But true emotions are rational and desirable. A defective form of anger is to take one's anger out on the wrong person, such as when one comes home frustrated from work; one reacts angrily towards the wrong person. But indignant anger is properly directed towards persons, and in particular to the persons that are the cause of the anger. One cannot be angry at a child that stumbled on to one by accident. One can be angry at someone who did something wrong to someone else, this is oblique indignation. Anger by nature is structural, and depends on relations to the producing belief about the morality of another person's action. Emotions may therefore be defined as a feeling that has been caused by certain beliefs, that is directed towards a primarily conceptual and not perceptual target, and that typically produces some physiological, behavioural or cognitive effects. Emotions are essential for moral theory. They are motivational and get us to do something; they do go wrong, but they also have a positive role to play. Anger, or better still, righteous indignation, is essential for seeking justice. In his account of emotions in art and rhetoric, Aristotle focussed on the training of the proper forms of terror, pity and anger. Terror reinforces self-preservation, pity produces compassion, and anger produces a passion for justice.

Anger is a powerful emotion, and if left unchecked, can do considerable harm to the angry man himself, as well as to the objects of his wrath. Ancient Greek and Islamic philosophy give us a much fuller and nuanced account of anger and its place in good human life. At its most basic level it resembles animal behaviour. Kick a dog enough times and it will bite; steal a cat's food and it will scratch. Anger is a response to an assault on one's dignity and sense of self-worth. Anger is a positive emotion; it is a salutary expression of the same natural love of one's own kind that motivates human beings to assert their rights against those who would deny them. It is also rooted in mankind's love for justice, and it is this moral love that could ultimately bring one close to God. But when anger is allowed to consume the soul, and drives a person beyond the bounds of justice, to indiscriminate violence, it can certainly be a force for evil.

For Aristotle, the anger of the impulsive individual is less disgraceful than simple moral weakness. This is because anger is less controlled by appetite and more by reason. Anger listens to reason but mishears it, like the servant who runs out before hearing his instructions, or the dog who barks before he knows who is at the door. Thus, excitable people are less blameworthy than those who are morally weak. Thus, Aristotle makes allowances for the excesses that arise out of emotions. Anger is a momentary emotional reaction; when it subsides, or is directed by reason, it can do good. The dog is an appropriate metaphor for anger. Just as anger listens to reason, so does a dog listen to its master. Reason that is wrong can cause anger to go into a rage, and hence into a state of vengeance. Desire, on the other hand, is not easily open to reason, and impulsively indulges in the object that it perceives (by the senses) to be pleasant (Aristotle 1985: 1949a).

Human pleasures emerge from the concupiscent faculty, and the thwarting of these pleasures could lead to anger. Hence, there is a definite connection between these two faculties of the concupiscent and the irascible, and the latter is always at the service of the former. However, the two poles of human nature which are apparently working against each other, are desire and reason. This conflict is illustrated by the rider-horse metaphor. Desire and reason are in conflict, but they need each other to attain the spiritual goal. Desire offers life its impetus and gives us a reason for living; it impels us forward. To reject it, is to reject life itself. Aristotle and Miskawayh present desire as potentially positive, provided it is disciplined and not suppressed. Aristotle also holds that appetite is responsive to reason, and recognizes much continuity between humans and other animals, with respect to the capacity for acting from a (modifiable) view of the good. Where specifically human appetite is concerned, the case for intentionality and cognitive response is clearer still. Aristotle's account of the virtue of moderation, which is concerned with the proper management of the bodily appetites, which humans share with animals, shows that he believes suppression is not the only way to make appetite behave well (Nussbaum 1994: 81).

Miskawayh supports this view:

The one which is by nature noble and moral is the rational soul; the one lacking morality and at the same time incapable of acquiring it is the beastly soul; and the one lacking morality but capable of acquiring it and of yielding to it, is the irascible soul. The last soul in particular has been bestowed upon us by God (mighty and exalted is He!) in order that we may make use of it in rectifying the beastly soul, which is incapable of acquiring morality (Miskawayh 1966: 52; Zurayk 1968: 47).

Thus, the divine purpose of anger is to keep desire in check. Zurayk (1968: 15) uses the English "irascible" for the Arabic *al-ghadabiyah* (see also Miskawayh 1966: 15). Isfahani, however, uses the more apt Arabic term, *hamiyyah*, which may be defined as "care for what is sacred and inviolable" (Lane 1984: 652). This is a purposeful anger corre-

sponding to the Greek *thumos* (Aristotle 1976: 370). The words *hamiyyah* and *thumos* convey the positive meaning of “righteous indignation”.

### **The dog metaphor and the rider-horse imagery**

As mentioned, the role of the dog is explained in the framework of the rider-horse imagery. It serves as a guide for the horse, provided it is properly trained by the rider who has wisdom. The dog prevents the horse from going astray. The dog in ancient Greek and Arab culture was viewed in a positive light. It must have been an effective metaphor as the dog was used as an aid in hunting, which was then a popular Greek sport. Already, in Ancient Egypt, dogs were used in the hunting of animals (Basson 2006: 96). The dog metaphor in this essay is explained in the context of hunting.

The rider-horse imagery originated with Galen (Claudius Galenus 130–200), a physician and philosopher of Pergamum, an ancient city of northwest Asia Minor (modern Pergama, Turkey). His ethical treatise *De Moribus* was translated into Arabic by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 911) in 228/842. The original Greek was written in Rome, between 185 and 192 CE. (Walzer 1963: 142–144; Mohamed 2006a: 30). This work, along with the Ibn Ishaq’s Arabic translation of Aristotle’s ethics, has had an impact on Islamic philosophers, especially Miskawayh and Isfahani. We will illustrate this impact on them with reference to Galen’s imagery of the rider and the horse.

In the rider-horse imagery, the horse is the metaphor for passion, the rider is the metaphor for the intellect, and the dog is the metaphor for anger. Passion, reason and anger represent the concupiscent, rational and the irascible faculties. The balance of these three faculties leads to the four cardinal virtues of temperance, wisdom, courage and justice. These virtues make up the foundation of moral character. The imbalance of these faculties, whereby reason is subordinate to the lower faculties, constitutes a wicked character. In hunting, the rider has to be wise in order to achieve his goal, and he can only attain his goal if he trains his dog and horse well. Similarly, the wise person will be able to employ his reason his anger and desire well. We compare three passages from Galen, Miskawayh and Isfahani:

#### **Galen**

The irascible soul is to the rational soul what the dog is to the huntsman or the horse to the rider. Though they help him to do what he wants, they sometimes move at the wrong time and to the wrong extent. Sometimes they even harm him. The dog may even injure him. The horse may run

#### **Miskawayh**

The ancients likened man and his condition with respect to these three souls to a person mounted on a vigorous beast and leading a dog or a hunting panther. Now, if he is the one who tames his horse and dog – if he commands them and they obey him in the course in which he takes and in his

#### **Isfahani**

Furthermore, the parable of the intellect is like the parable of the rider hunting for prey: his passion is like his horse and his anger is like his dog. If the rider is skilful, his horse is tamed, his dog is trained, and he is able to fulfil his needs through hunting; but if he is stupid, and his horse is defiant or

away with him, and together they [may] fall into a deep hollow and perish there. His activity is to determine the right time and the right measure for their movements, and virtue consists, for them, in allowing themselves to be guided by his will, and for him, in his skill in hunting and riding. How easy it is to guide them and how useful they are depends on the length of their training by him. Neither every dog nor every horse is easy to train. There are obstinate ones whose training requires much time and a long period of practice, and the huntsman and the horseman are also themselves inexperienced at times. (Badawi 1981: 192; Rosenthal 1992: 87–88; Walzer 1963: 142–163)

hunting and other activities – there is no doubt that the common life of the three of them will be happy and fine. The man will get what he wants comfortably; he will let his horse, as well as his dog, run wherever he likes and as he likes, and when he dismounts and takes some rest, he will allow them to rest with him and he will take good care of them and satisfy their need for food, drink, safety from enemies, and in other ways. But should the beast have the upper hand, the three would be in a bad condition. The man would become weak with respect to the beast, which would not obey its rider but would itself be master. (Miskawayh 1966: 52, 5–15; Zurayk 1968: 47)

obstinate, and his dog is voracious, then his horse cannot proceed beneath him, nor will his dog obediently comply with him. Thus he deserves to perish, despite the fact that he is not aware of what is really required. (Isfahani 103, 1987: 6–9).

The above three Arabic passages demonstrate the influence of early Greek thought on Islamic philosophy, both in style and thought. Galen's imagery is adopted as a literary device to explain the workings of the three faculties of the soul. As mentioned, Galen's *Peri Ethon* survived in an Arabic summary, which, according to Fakhry, is probably based on the work of Abu ʿUthman al-Dimashqi, who in turn based it on a translation by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (Fakhry 1975: 46). Galen's passage above is therefore an English translation of the Arabic original. Galen's passage appears in the context of a discussion about thinking (identified with the rational soul); anger (identified with the irascible soul); and desire (identified with the concupiscent soul). The irascible soul is compared with the dog, the concupiscent soul with the horse, and the rational soul is likened to the hunter or rider. The rider ought to find the suitable moment for the dog and the horse to act, and the two animals ought to obey the rider. But they can only obey the rider if they are well trained, and if the rider himself is trained and skilled. The more stubborn the animals, the more skill will be required on the part of the rider; furthermore, the rider will also have to ensure more training and practice on the part of the animals.

We note in the passage that Miskawayh does not mention the training but the taming of the animals. (The Arabs used to tame their horses for transport or horse

racing, but the Greeks used to train them for hunting). The rider has the wisdom to get the horse and dog to run whenever they should and wherever they should, and cares for them with proper rest, food and drink. But if he is unwise he will have no control over the animals. They would run out of control and deviate from the right road, leading themselves and the foolish rider into danger. Miskawayh provides more detailed examples of how the animals should be cared for and the dangers of their neglect. He stresses the importance of having mastery over passion and anger, and of being compliant to God's guidance. Isfahani is more concise, and does not provide the details contained in Galen and Miskawayh. His passage is used verbatim by Ghazzali (see Mohamed 2006b). The three passages allude to the stubbornness of the horse and the dog. The dog is depicted as more compliant to instruction and reason than the horse. This relationship of the dog's obedience to the rider runs through classical philosophical Arabic literature, especially, Miskawayh, Isfahani and Ghazzali.

A successful metaphor is used to clarify and enrich something with precision and vividness using content that is not remote from our experience (Coombes 1953: 43–44). The dog in the rider-horse imagery is an effective metaphor, but may not have the same resonance for us as it had in classical times. Nevertheless, it is still a powerful metaphor as it still connects with our experience, though not necessarily in hunting (Mohamed 1997: 67–85). Why did the early Arab philosophers regard the dog as essential to the rider's goal? What makes the dog an effective metaphor of anger? We know from experience that the dog can be angry, and we know from experience that we too can become angry. The emotion of anger can be harmful or useful, depending on how we moderate it with our reason. There is always a reason for anger, and we should use our intelligence to assess its validity. Passions or desires are different. One cannot easily discern the reason behind it.

Modern scholars are now increasingly coming to realize the value of emotions, including anger. Since David Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence*, a "ground breaking *New York Times* bestseller", more contemporary readers have become aware of the importance of emotions for medicine, education and psychotherapy. However, their value and their sense of control are already embedded in the ancient Greek and Arabic literature. Goleman is therefore not original; but he used examples and metaphors that are new, and closer to our own experience. The metaphor of the rider expresses the self-mastery of emotions, and connects with the experience of the ancient Greeks and Arabs. Goleman acknowledges that it is an ancient Greek concept, and moreover, that the emotions are meant to be controlled, not suppressed.

A sense of self-mastery, of being able to withstand the emotional storms that the buffeting of Fortune brings rather than being passion's slave has been praised as a virtue since the time of Plato. The ancient Greek word for it was *sophrosyne*, "care and intelligence in conducting one's life; a tempered balance and wisdom" [...] The



Romans and the early Christian Church called it *temperantia*, temperance, the restraining of emotional excess. The goal is balance. Not emotional suppression: every feeling has its value and significance. [...] But as Aristotle observed, what is wanted is *appropriate* emotion, feeling proportionate to circumstance. (Goleman 1997: 62)

Like Aristotle, Goleman realizes that anger can listen to reason. He gives the example of someone driving close to you and you immediately react: "That son of a bitch". But on the other hand, one could have responded in a more charitable manner by saying: "Maybe he did not see me, or maybe he had some good reason for driving so carelessly such as a medical emergency". The second kind of reasoning will moderate the rage. Anger is never without a reason, and so if we attribute positive reasons to an action, the anger of the agent will subside (Goleman 1997: 65–66). Thus, appropriate anger is linked to sound reason. Thus, if the dog within us is tamed, it will be loyal to our reason, but if the dog within us is not properly educated and trained, it may not listen to reason. Thus the initial training of the dog by the wise owner is of paramount importance. Similarly, the adult should have good training from his parents so that he could establish sound habits from childhood. South Africa is now preparing for the Soccer World Cup in 2010, and so in her concern for security during the event, she is inviting dog handlers to come forward. But they are not merely looking for people who can train dogs, but also those who are trained, or disciplined themselves. The point is that if the rider is not disciplined himself, there is no way in which the dog can be disciplined, and therefore properly trained. As mentioned, passion is too powerful to control itself, and so we need to turn to the faculty of anger to help us control passion, just as the rider must depend on the dog to guide the horse.

In the sphere of education, Goleman tries to show us that IQ is something that is innate, but EQ can be taught, and so through emotional intelligence we can nurture the emotions. Students who are emotionally mature will perform better academically compared to those who are unable to control their impulses. We will now illustrate the value of emotional maturity in Arabic literature, especially in the domain of psychotherapy.

### **The therapy of anger**

Like Miskawayh, al-Raghib al-Isfahani also used the idea of balancing the three faculties of the soul as the key to his psychotherapy. His therapy assumes the Platonic division of the soul into the rational, the concupiscent and the irascible faculties. Their moderation and balance lead to mental health and their immoderation and imbalance lead to mental illness. We deal here with the irascible faculty (*al-quwwat al-hamiyyah*) or the faculty of anger. Moderate anger leads to virtues such as courage and



justice, but immoderate anger leads to vices such as foolhardiness and cowardice (Isfahani 1987; Mohamed 1996: 51–75). Thus, in its extreme form anger is harmful, and Miskawayh and Isfahani tried to show us how it should be controlled, not suppressed.

Anger is located in the irascible faculty. In the rider-horse metaphor, the dog leads the way in hunting, guiding the horse. This is because his sense of hearing and smell are stronger than that of the horse; furthermore, he is more amenable to reason, and hence more obedient to the owner. The dog is prone to anger, but has a submissive nature (Isfahani 1987: 86). Just as the dog is essential to the rider, anger is essential to the rational man. Anger is an important part of self-respecting response to the evils of society. It implies a dignified punishment for wrongdoing, but it has to be moderate and self-contained. Anger is useful because it makes us fighters against injustice and oppression. If a man sees his father slaughtered and his mother raped, he will surely be enraged. This is the response of a good man. Anger can also be destructive; when uncontrolled, it exceeds the boundaries of reason. People's zeal, aspiration and desire for power can be so obsessive; they lose control of their emotions, becoming violent and destructive. The religious zeal that is not moderated by reason can make a person authoritarian and judgmental. His anger hardens his spirit and he turns against humanity to the point of becoming cruel. Negative anger is rooted in fear and hatred, and it is a reaction to some external target that is perceived to be the cause of injustice and harm to one's person, property, family or country. It seeks to resist pain inflicted by the external targets. Sometimes the rage lies within the soul, and the blind reaction causes the person to identify the wrong target; blaming and attacking those who are innocent. There is a need for control and balance.

So there is something ironical about the quality of anger. An angry person always has a reason for being angry. But that very reason can be a source of irrationality and extreme vengeance. Anger is a natural quality, and so too is desire. If a person is angry it is connected to his or her reason, which is part of nature, hence anger is natural, more than desire. Anger can be tempered by reason, or accentuated by it. If it craves for justice it is good, but if it craves for hurting people, it is bad. Because of the natural value of anger, people who are stirred by it against good are less blameworthy than those who are stirred by desire against good. This is because emotional people are curable, but those whose desires are prone to evil, are not. Reason moderates the severe emotions and alters the incorrect judgements. When reason directs itself towards injustice, it is good; but when it is indifferent to injustice, it is bad.

Whether anger is innate or acquired, it is part of human nature, and can be provoked by the external environment. It is therefore not something to be obliterated or suppressed, but to be controlled by reason. According to some influential modern views that have left a deep mark on popular stereotypes, emotions like grief, anger, and fear come from an animal irrational side of the personality. They are unlearned or

innate, and therefore impervious to teaching and argument (Nassbaum 1994:79). Such negative views of emotions have had a profound influence on the science of psychology, until very recently. However, with the revival of Aristotelian psychology and ethics, writers such as Goleman, are rearticulating the positive values of emotions. Contemporary Arab writers could also participate in this revival, but be inspired by the classical Arabic legacy, not the Greek. The early Arabic literature could provide them with the impetus and support for writing about ways and means of curbing human aggression and violence.

Since anger is connected to reason, there is always someone to blame for the wrongdoing. A shift in the blame can take place if the reason for the anger can change. This has been done in the sphere of cognitive psychology; but an individual can also doctor himself, and control his own anger. But this control can only take place with reflection. Without self-examination a person is unable to explore his own emotions, and will therefore not be able to realise the extremity of it. With reflection of oneself, and also of the external circumstances, one can judge better whether the anger is justified. If, for example, a person has done some wrong to someone due to the pressure of circumstances, and the victim is aware of these circumstances, the victim will be more inclined towards pardon than vengeance. A judge could also diminish the punishment due to mitigating circumstances.

Greek and Arab thinkers were convinced that beliefs and reasoning can change, and that emotions can change if the belief underlying it can change. If a certain belief is a precondition for the anger, and a person comes to realize that his belief is false, his anger will disappear. Thus, emotions have a very intimate relationship to beliefs. My anger, for example, requires that I have been deliberately wronged by someone in a more than trivial way. But if it is proven that the alleged wrong did not in fact take place, or was not in fact a wrong, or was not done by the person in question, or was not done deliberately, it will immediately not display anger towards that person. At this point, positions diverge, "some claiming that the belief in question is a *necessary condition* of the emotion, some claiming that it is a *constituent part* of the emotion, some that it is both necessary and *sufficient* for the emotion" (Nussbaum 1994: 80, added emphasis). Thus we note that emotions are to some degree "rational" as they are open to listen to beliefs and reasoning.

Human pleasures emerge from the concupiscent faculty, and the thwarting of these pleasures could lead to anger, and this anger, or the irascible faculty, could in turn lead to all kinds of vices. As mentioned, anger can serve reason if it is properly directed. There is a definite connection between these two faculties, the concupiscent and the irascible, and the latter is always at the service of the former, depending on how well it is controlled. While these two aspects of human nature are perceived as working together, the two poles of human nature that are apparently working against each other are, physical desire and spiritual rationality. The rider-horse met-

aphor illustrates this conflict between desire and reason. Although in conflict, they are in need of each other to attain the spiritual goal. Desire offers life its impetus and gives us a reason for living; it impels us forward. To reject it, is to reject life itself. Isfahani and Miskawayh portray desire as something to be disciplined, not suppressed. Their inspiration is derived primarily from the Qur'anic literature, but they have also been inspired by elements of the Greek philosophical literature that appeared to be in harmony with Islam. Aristotle, who attracted the Islamic philosophers, also held that desire is responsive to reason, albeit to a lesser extent than emotions. So, moderate desire will require a moral education. However, it is in emotions, not appetite, that Aristotle develops the view of man's responsiveness to reason, and hence, participation in the good human life (Nussbaum 1994: 80). Like Miskawayh, Isfahani also defines bravery to refer to those who control their anger, but he is more inclined to quote from the Qur'anic revelation and a Prophetic saying as in the following; "Those who curb their anger and those who pardon their fellow-men. Allah loves the beneficent!" (Qur'an 3: 134); also the saying, "Shall I inform you of the strongest among you? He is the one who has controlled his anger" (Isfahani 1987: 345).

## Conclusion

We dealt with the metaphor of the dog in Arabic philosophical literature, and we have demonstrated the richness and appropriateness of the metaphor in the context of the rider-horse imagery, which reveals the dynamic relation of the three faculties of the soul. The textual comparison above has illustrated the transmission of Galen's imagery into Arabic literature, especially Miskawayh and Isfahani. It exemplifies the value of moderated anger in psychotherapy. Classical Arabic literature is rich in metaphors that connect man with nature. Man is viewed as a microcosm of the world, which means that various parts of his body and soul have some resemblance to some part of the cosmos. Furthermore, his rational soul is superior to the body, which controls the lower parts of the soul, namely, desire and anger. Reason is always in conflict with desire, but anger plays a mediating role in overcoming desire. The metaphor of the dog probably lost its original effect since the horse is no longer used for transport, except for recreation and sport. With the development of railroads, tractors and trucks, and automobiles, horses became less useful. The rider-horse imagery is the most fitting description of the dynamics of the human soul, and there is no reason why we cannot still use it today. The dog, which is still close to our experience, will remain a useful metaphor for anger. We keep them as pets, we use them to guard our homes, and we use them to tighten up security in the country.

The tendency to suppress the emotions, and to think it incapable of guidance, is rooted in the Augustinian religious tradition. But if we have an open mind, and examine the validity of our assumptions about human nature, we will in fact realize

the positive side of human nature. And there will be no need for undue guilt for actions that have been done on impulse and emotion. By reviving the Arabic classical literature and the Greek humanistic legacy, we could learn much about the possibilities of human nature, and its good potential, provided that it is guided by reason.

#### Works cited

- Aristotle. 1976. *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. J. A. K. Thomson. London: Penguin Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1979. *Kitab al-Akhlaq*. Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (translator), 'Abd al-Rahman Badawi (ed.). Kuwait: Wakalatul Matbu'at.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1985. *Nicomachean Ethics*. In Jonathan Barnes (ed.). *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. (Vol 2). Trans. W. D. Ross. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1729–1867.
- Badawi, A. 1981. *Dirasat wa-nusus fi-l-falsafah wa-l-ulum 'inda-l-'Arab*. Beirut: Mu'assah al-Arabiyyah li-dirasat wa-nashr.
- Barnes, Jonathan (ed.). 1985. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Translation 1–2, Bollingen Series 71–72. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Basson, Alec. 2006. Dog imagery in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East. *Journal of Semitics* 15(1): 92–106.
- Coombes, C. 1953. *Literature and Criticism*. Middlesex: Penguin books.
- Fakhry, Majid. 1975. The Platonism of Miskawayh and its implications for his Ethics. *Studia Islamica* 42: 39–57.
- Goleman, Daniel. 1997. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Book.
- Lane, Edward, W. 1984. *Arabic-English Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miskawayh, Abu 'Ali Ahmad. 1966. *Mahdhib al-akhlaq*. Constantine Zurayk (ed.). Beirut: American University.
- Mohamed, Yasien. 1996. The Ethical Philosophy of al-Raghib al-Isfahani. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 6(1): 51–75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996. al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul: A literary Analysis of Winter's Introduction and Translation. In Jalal Uddin Khan and Adrin E. Hare (ed.). *English and Islam: Creative Encounters 96*, Conference Proceedings. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. Winter's al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 14(4): 67–85.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. Islamic Psychotherapy: Isfahani's treatment of anger, fear and sorrow. *AFKAR: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought*, 4: 87–102.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006a. *The Path to Virtue, The Ethical Philosophy of al-Raghib al-Isfahani*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006b. The Islamic Philosophy of Labour and the Crafts: The view of Ikhwan al-Safa', Isfahani and Ibn Khaldun. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23 ( 1): 35–51.
- Nassbaum, Martha. 1994. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Raghib al-Isfahani. 1987. *Kitab al-Dhari'ah ila makarim al-shari'ah*. Abu l-Yazid al-'Ajami (ed.). Cairo: Dar al-Wafa' li-tiba'ah.
- Rosenthal, Franz. 1992. *The Classical Heritage of Islam*. London: Luzac.
- Walzer, R. 1963. *Greek into Arabic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Zurayk, Constantine. 1968. *The Refinement of Character*. Beirut: American University.