Chapter 9

Wisdom and Giftedness: Perspectives from Arabic Thought

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1. Introduction

Throughout the ages, much has been written about wisdom; what it comprises, who has it, how it can be developed, and how it contributes to a life well-lived. Although much of this work has historically taken place in the realms of philosophy and literature, more recently wisdom has become the focus of study in the social sciences. In this chapter, the authors will offer perspectives on wisdom from Arab thought and connect the role of wisdom and its importance in giftedness.

Perceptions about what constitutes wisdom are broad ranging and, to some extent, dependent upon implicit cultural notions (Takahashi & Overton, 2005). Sternberg, Jarvin and Grigorenko (2011) discuss wisdom as being conceptualized in implicit theories (entailing peoples' common conceptions of wisdom) and explicit theories (entailing expert opinions about what constitutes wisdom). Sternberg, Jarvin and Grigorenko (2011) further explore the relationship between the development of wisdom and chronological age, detailing the multiplicity of viewpoints and the equivocal nature of the currently available research data on the subject. In essence, advanced age is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for the development of wisdom. Sternberg, Jarvin and Grigorenko (2011), Peterson and Seligman (2004) and others argue that ethics, or an ethical sensibility constitutes an essential component of wisdom, and hence high intelligence, reasoning ability, and problem-solving in the absence of ethics are insufficient to constitute wisdom. Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2005) posit that the specific content of wisdom is culturally bound by those memes perceived in each culture as being productive towards leading a good life, and hence worthy of passing on to the next generation. As such, the wise person is the one who can distinguish those memes, assess their applicability to current conditions, act upon them, and pass on the content of said memes to future generations.

The panoply of viewpoints of wisdom represented in the literature demonstrates that the topic has important intersections in a variety of fields and that the essential nature of wisdom is still very much under discussion. To date, few contributions about the discussion of the nature of wisdom and its contributions to the role of giftedness have been translated from the Arabic literature on the subject. As almost all of the literature on the subject of wisdom in Arabic thought is from classical sources, this chapter will rely almost exclusively on those sources. We think it is justified to rely upon classical sources because what has been written in Arabic is valuable, interesting, and adds substantively to the discussion about the topic. Similarly, though it may be atypical in an academic paper in the disciplines of Psychology and Education to reference religious texts, reference to religious texts is unavoidable in trying to describe a concept such as wisdom and its linguistic and cultural associations in Arabic thought. Islamic religious texts and sources such as the Quran and oral traditions of Prophet Muhammad occupy a central role in Arabic thought and serve as common reference points in matters related to many disciplines in the

Arab world (the Quran even serves as the most authoritative academic resource in discussions of Arabic grammar specifically, and language more generally). Whereas the religious origins of Judeo-Christian thought on modern academic discourse may not (in most cases) be explicit, the same cannot be said in the Arab World, where reference to religious texts is normal and acceptable in academic discourse.

2. The Concept of Wisdom in Arabic Thought

The origin of the Arabic word (حكم) means to prevent, and from the Arabic view, wisdom is considered to be the most valuable asset or ability that a person can possess. The first meaning of prevent in this context is to prevent oppression. Additional meanings include preventing from ignorance. A wise person, in this context, is the one who has deep experience (Ibn Faris, b. - d. 1005, reprinted 1986). According to Ibn Manthour (b. 1232 - d. 1311, reprinted 2007), wisdom entails knowing the best thing, or matter, in each subject. Another scholar of Arabic language, Al Jawhari (b. - d.1008, reprinted 1986), derived the meaning of wisdom from knowledge, and a person who is wise is a person who does things perfectly. Alzubaidi (b. 1732 - d. 1790, reprinted 1984) wrote that if you try to be wise you need to have deep experience. Alzubaidi wrote that the meaning of wisdom is to show fairness in judgment and to have knowledge of the details of matters in their actual state of affairs (without distortion or misinformation), and to act in accordance with this knowledge in the most effectual manner. That is why (according to Asmayi) wisdom is divided into two functions; analytical knowledge and practical knowledge, or to put it another way, knowing and doing. In addition, wisdom entails the power of the mind applying knowledge in the most effective manner. Furthermore, the concept of wisdom in early Arabic thought included the importance of acting ethically, as epitomized in the expression attributed to Alzubaidi (reprinted 1986), which translates as “wisdom is approaching the morally right decision with knowledge and action.” In addition, wisdom was described as that quality which prevents the individual from being corrupted. The Lantern Which Illuminates (Al Fayoumi, b. - d.1368, reprinted 1905) concentrates on explaining wisdom as related to ethical dimensions. Al Fayoumi wrote that wisdom prevents or holds a person back from bad manners and conduct. Al Fayoumi concluded, after a review of more than 70 classical books on the subject of Arabic language and thought, that wisdom prevents its owner from taking the lesser of two good actions; it enables the person to choose the best action from different morally right choices. We can see in Al Fayoumi's discussion that wisdom in Arabic thought entails a unique preventive quality; it prevents the person from being corrupted, it prevents the individual from becoming oppressive to others, it prevents the individual from bad manners and coarse action, it prevents the person from judgment or action prior to assessing all available information, and it even prevents one from taking the lesser of two good choices. Arabs used to say that a wise person is one who derived the

optimal benefit from his experience in a manner which enables him to act in the right way. Wisdom in Arabic thought includes the ability to always (or usually) make the best choice, meaning the choice that will lead to optimal outcomes (including the ability to balance between ethical and non-ethical considerations), and maturity (as related to the breadth of experience and not necessarily temporal age).

Wisdom has been specifically mentioned in the Quran in more than 20 places. The overarching meaning of wisdom in the Quran can be described as full comprehension, strong logical reasoning, and understanding the fine details of a matter (Al Fayrouzabadi, b. 1329 - d. 1414, reprinted 2005). Specific mention of wisdom and its various meanings in the Quran are exemplified in verses such as the following, from 3:164:

> Certainly did Allah confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error.

This example illustrates the view that wisdom is something that can be learned, and should be taught. In a similar example from 2:269:

> He gives wisdom to who He wills, and whomever has been given wisdom has certainly been given great good. And none will remember except those of understanding.

This example further demonstrates the high importance placed upon wisdom in Arabic thought. Additionally, in 19:12:

> “Oh John (the Baptist)! Hold fast the Scripture (Torah)" And We gave him wisdom while yet a child.

Ibn Kathir (b. 1300 - d.1372, reprinted 1986) in his authoritative commentary on the Quran, described wisdom as meaning deep insight. Abdul Rahman As-Sa'adi, in his more recent commentary of the Quran (2002), described wisdom as the knowledge which benefits the individual, logical reasoning, balanced insight, and achieving the right things through speech and action. In summary, As-Sa'adi commented that wisdom entails acting according to what the situation dictates, and being decisive in a manner that marshals one's courage and strength of character to take the required actions in difficult situations. As-Sa'adi further explained that wisdom involves being able to hold back from action when it is time to hold back, and pushing forward with decisiveness when it is time to push forward. Al-Qasimi (1957) wrote that wisdom means being perfect in knowledge and acting correctly according to that knowledge (correctly entails an ethical dimension). Syed Qutb, in his famous commentary of the Quran (reprinted, 1992), described wisdom as being moderate and balanced in all matters, having a deep understanding of the unseen causes of things, and the ability to see the long-term aims in any course of action. Qutb further described wisdom as being the insight which leads the individual to doing the right thing (ethically) in speech and action. In summary, the

interpretation of the meanings of the concept of wisdom in the Quran centers upon knowledge, perfection, insight, ethical conduct, preventing oppression, and decisiveness. Furthermore, all of these dimensions are seen as being interrelated facets of the same central quality: wisdom.

Prophet Muhammad used to make it a point to teach wisdom to young bright people, as illustrated in the following narration. From the most authoritative collection of Prophetic traditions (Bukhari & Khan, reprinted 1996) Prophet Muhammad was standing before Ibn Abbas (a 10 year old boy who was recognized by his contemporaries as being highly intelligent) and made a prayer for him which is translated as "May God teach him wisdom." This example is illustrative of several points in regards to the view of wisdom in Arabic thought. First, that wisdom is seen as a quality separate from intelligence (as Ibn Abbas was already known to be intelligent and yet Prophet Muhammad made a prayer that he be granted wisdom in addition). Second, that wisdom, in the Arabic view, is not necessarily tied to age (as Ibn Abbas was 10 years old at the time of this encounter). Third, that young children should be taught the importance of wisdom (as Prophet Muhammad made this prayer openly - and as such, it was meant to be instructive towards others). Fourth, that wisdom is a venerable quality, worthy of being sought. A further narration of Prophet Muhammad illustrates the lofty status of wisdom in Arabic thought, which can be interpreted to mean "There should be no jealousy except in two matters, a person who was given wealth and spends it all in good will, and a person who was given wisdom and acts according to it" (Bukhari & Khan, reprinted 1996).

3. Historical Figures in the Arab World

Ibn Al-Haytham (or Alhazen, d. 1040) was a figure of enormous importance in the development of scientific thought in the middle centuries. Born in Basra (modern day Iraq) in 965, Al-Haytham wrote some 200 works, making significant contributions in areas ranging from geometry, analytic geometry, physics, number theory, astronomy, philosophy, optics, and other fields. His most famous work is the seven volume treatise *Book of Optics* (1021), in which he advanced a theory of vision that first postulated that vision occurs in the brain, rather than the eyes. Furthermore, Ibn Al-Haytham is widely viewed as being a seminal contributor to the development of the scientific method, as he developed a rigorous methodology of controlled testing to verify his theoretical and experimental work (Saliba, 2007).

Ibn Sina (or Avicenna, d. 1037) was a polymath who wrote over 450 works on a wide range of subjects including poetry, philosophy, philosophy of science, physics, psychology, astronomy, chemistry, and most notably medicine. Although Persian, he memorized the entire Quran in Arabic by the age of ten and then turned to mathematics and Aristotelian philosophy. Ibn Sina focused on the study of medicine by the age of 16, and was a qualified and practicing physician at 18. His best known work was the 14 volume *The Canon of*

Medicine, which remained a common medical textbook throughout Europe until the 18th Century (Gracia & Noone, 2003).

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (or Algoritmi, d. circa 850), was a scholar in the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, and was widely acclaimed for his contributions in mathematics, astronomy, geography, and cartography. Among his many contributions include the introduction of the decimal positional number system to the Western world, as well as the first systematic solutions of quadratic and linear equations in Arabic. Khawarizmi's contributions to mathematics are so significant that the term algebra is derived from the Arabic title of one of his works *al-Kitab al-Mukhtasar fi hisab al-jabr wa'l-muqabala* (The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing), and the terms Algorism and Algorithm are derived from the Latin form of his name: Algoritmi (Rashed, Armstrong, 1994).

These figures, among others, epitomize the concept of a wise person in Arabic thought as being a person with depth of knowledge and experience who is able to translate their knowledge into effective action and decision making.

4. The Characteristics of the Wise Person in Arab World View

Arabic literature is rich with descriptions of wise people. The aforementioned figures and the linguistic etymology of wisdom can shed some light on this topic. It is clear that the concept of wisdom has been linked with intelligence in general and awareness (or wakefulness) in particular. In addition, the concept of (*husna al-tassaruf*) includes the concept of acting ethically as well as performing actions in the most efficient, effective, and perfect way possible. Furthermore, wisdom in Arabic thought includes the idea of acting according to the greater good in advance of personal interest, as well as looking towards the long-term benefits instead of short-term gains. In summary, the characteristics of the wise person in Arabic thought can be assigned to three categories, cognitive traits, learning traits, and social and personal traits.

Analyzing the Arabic literature concerning the concept of wisdom we can identify three groups of characteristics under the umbrella of cognitive traits. The first category concerns the analytical and logical abilities which correspond to an analytical understanding of causes and long-term objectives (Ibn Kathir, reprinted 2007; As Sa'adi, 2002). This group of abilities works as the main tool for an individual to utilize information and knowledge gathered in the most effective manner. The second group of traits includes insight, intuition, and vision (Rashid Rida, 1990; Qutb 1992; Ibn Al Qayyim, reprinted 1973). This group of abilities enables the individual to exceed the basic understanding of information and the typical evaluation of a situation, and elevate their view to a visionary level which incorporates a comprehensive understanding of information and its behavioral and social import. Intuition in Arabic thought is similar to what has been described in the literature by Dane and Pratt (in Hodgkinson, Langan-Fox, & Sadler-Smith, 2008, p. 5) as essentially a non-

conscious process which serves an integrative function. However, according to Arabic thought, intuition has two fundamental causes; the first being enlightenment from God, the second being deep immersion in the knowledge of the field. The third group of abilities relates to problem solving, which includes planning, evaluation, and synthesis (Aljoughaiman & Ayoub, 2012; Ibn Al-Qayyim, reprinted 1973). This group of abilities helps an individual to transfer their understanding into workable strategies for addressing and solving problems.

The wise individual should have deep knowledge of a given subject, or a deep understanding of a situation (Ibn Kathir, reprinted 2007). In addition the wise person can be described as being in love with learning and he or she always feels in need of acquiring more knowledge (Rashid Rida,1990). A wise person is one who gets benefit from their experience; enriches their knowledge via practical experience (Alzubaidi, reprinted 1984). It is not sufficient for an individual to have deep knowledge of a subject to be determined wise, rather, they should have achieved a level of true mastery of their subject (Al Qassimi, 1957; Al Alusi, reprinted 2008). Rashid Rida (1990) contributes that in order for a person to be called wise, the knowledge base which they have mastered must be beneficial knowledge (knowledge that shows a clear benefit for people or society in general).

The Arabic literature on wisdom concentrates on the wise person in the role of a scholar in a specific area of life, aware of the details of their field and its long-term aims. Knowledge alone does not connote wisdom, or cannot shape a wise character; hence Al Tawheedi (b. 923 - d. 1023, reprinted 1978) explains that knowledge and its levels and tools work together for humans to learn and to act. Ibn Skawey (b. 932 - d. 1030, reprinted 2000) concurred with Al Tawheedi when he insisted that the wise individual cannot be called wise if his knowledge does not inform his behavior. Rashid Reda (1990) added a further requirement when he described the wise person as the one who has correct knowledge that inspires willingness to do good for other people.

The link between knowledge and good action has been mentioned repeatedly in Arabic literature. Ibn Abdul-Barr (b. 979 - d. 1071, reprinted 1994), Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdadi (b. 1002 - d.1072, reprinted 1984), Ibn Hazm (b.994 - d. 1064, reprinted 1921) and others insisted that it's a necessary condition to associate knowledge with action. The wise person does not pursue knowledge for themselves, but only for the positive outcomes that can be gained for the benefit of all living things. Furthermore, any knowledge that does not bring benefit for living things, or does not positively affect people's behavior is of no benefit, or is detrimental to the possessor of that knowledge. Another condition that has to be fulfilled by the wise individual, as Ibn Abdul-Barr mentioned, is that the knowledge which is attained must be used for teaching and dissemination. This is based upon the Islamic principle that once a person has acquired knowledge it is obligatory upon that individual to provide answers (when asked). Another

related issue, as mentioned by Ibn Badja (in Badawi, 1996) that the wise person learns knowledge for the benefit of others and not to be proud of it. From all that has proceeded, we can clearly see that, according to the Arabic view, good intentions form the foundation for the pursuit of knowledge.

Ibn Abdul-Barr (reprinted 1994) insisted that a further necessary condition for the wise individual is that they are truthful in presenting their findings, giving credit to their sources, and work towards progress and reformation. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi (reprinted 1984) similarly insisted on this issue by mentioning that one of the main characteristics of wise people and scholars is that they take the pursuit of knowledge as a responsibility and hold firmly to the ethics and goals of science. Both scholars insist that it is the responsibility of a wise person to teach and disseminate knowledge for the good of the individual and society.

Another of the characteristics of wisdom mentioned by Ibn Hazm (reprinted 1921), is that knowledge and action by themselves are not sufficient, the wise individual must be constantly involved in a process of self-examination; seeking knowledge, acting upon that knowledge (for the benefit of others), reviewing their actions, and reflecting upon that cycle to revise the entire process. This entire process is employed to constantly review and improve on one's knowledge. This condition was also agreed upon by Alzubaidi (reprinted 1984) when he said that knowledge is in need of experience in order for a person to employ it more broadly and effectively. So, experience and self-analysis aid the accumulation and perfection of knowledge.

A further characteristic of the wise person mentioned by Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdadi (reprinted 1984) is that the wise individual should have a strong need for continuous learning and should never feel content with their knowledge. He or she learns and enriches their knowledge from whomever they can benefit from, and are not too proud to benefit from anyone (regardless of their station in life). In line with the principle of continuous learning, Al-Baghdadi commented that the wise individual is never without their notebooks and paper to find and record knowledge. Iyaad (b. 1083 - d. 1149, reprinted 1998) mentioned that a wise person is in love with learning and feels that he or she is continuously in need for more knowledge. Al-Baghdadi added that a person who is wise is not only searching for information, but he or she is always searching for a variety of sources (e.g., experience, knowledgeable people, books, etc…). A variety of knowledge and sources allows a person to see things from different angles which helps the individual to expand their vision. Ibn Badja (in Badawi, 1996) classified people with knowledge into three categories. The first category is what can be translated as the republic category, or people who see only logic and grasp only the surface-level of matters. The second category is the theoretical category (which contains fewer people than the previous category). People in this category comprehend the issues and possess knowledge, however their understanding is restricted to the theoretical level. The third, and highest level, could be translated as the level of happy people. These people have the

ability to understand and analyze what they see, read, and their experiences, in their true essence with their details and connections with other relevant subjects (and the real world).

Ibn Abdul-Barr (reprinted 1994) specified four main personal characteristics that a wise person should possess: good intentions, patience, forbearance, and the ability to bear responsibilities and burdens with patience. Lesser characteristics (though still important) would include: modesty, humility, and reserve. Al-Baghdadi (reprinted 1984) and Iyaad (reprinted 1998) added that another central characteristic is to have interest and show care towards public affairs. Hence these characteristic help the individual to utilize their knowledge for themselves and for the benefit of others (and society at large). As-Sa'adi (2002) and Ibn Badja (in Badawi, 1996) link these characteristics with other important characteristics, which are courage properly applied and consideration for the public good (which they connect in the sense that the individual must have the courage to make the decisions necessary for the common good without fear of the derision of others that these decisions might engender). Al-Razi (b. 1190 - d. 1268, reprinted 1986) added another characteristic which is impartiality in assessment and decision making; a wise person is able to isolate their personal interest from their decisions.

Other characteristics of wise individuals that have been identified by Arabic philosophers include moderation and gentleness. Gentleness was viewed by some as being the peak of characteristics of the wise individual - this concept includes a broad array of characteristics including mercy towards others, calmness, and dealing with issues, problems, and challenges with tranquility and deliberation.

Historically, certain occupations are associated with wisdom and wise people in Arabic thought and culture. The individual with the occupation of judge or doctor were both granted the appellation “al-Hakeem,” or “The Wise One.” Both professions required the individual to realize causes that others could not see (e.g., the hidden causes of an illness).

5. Nurturing Wisdom

5.1 Theories of Intellectual Giftedness

A survey of the prevailing models of giftedness should begin, both structurally and historically, with the most narrowly-based model, that is, highly selective and using only few criteria: Terman’s g-based model (Terman, 1925). According to Terman, giftedness consists of a single factor of cognitive ability, *g*, a biologically based unitary construct, which is unchanging over time and reliably quantifiable. He measured this construct using the assessment he developed now known as the Stanford-Binet. In this early “model,” giftedness is an IQ of over 140 (Terman, 1925). In Terman's mind, giftedness was both

quantitative and a constant; in other words, high IQ should lead to high-level accomplishments, or genius (Simonton, 2000).

However, modern models are based on research that indicates that intelligence is not a unitary construct, leading to a trend in the development of models that use broader, multi-factorial definitions of intelligence. Hence, these models cast a wider net than Terman's, tending to be more inclusive, or more egalitarian in their approach to defining giftedness.

In his Multiple Intelligences Model Gardner (1983) puts forth a domain-specific conception of intelligence. Gardner differentiated seven forms of intelligence and suggested two more (logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential). Gardner defines intelligence as the biopsychological potential to process particular kinds of information in particular ways. His model of differentiation is based upon research that indicates that students engage with the world through a balance of their possession of these different kinds of minds or intelligences, such that they learn, remember, perform and understand in different ways. Each intelligence encompasses its own characteristic processes and are believed to be relatively independent of one another (Gardner, 2009).

Sternberg's Wisdom, Intelligence and Creativity Synthesized (WICS) Model of Giftedness (Sternberg, 2003) presents his conception of what is required to exhibit gifted leadership and to contribute meaningfully to society. Sternberg starts with his own model of intelligence (the theory of Successful Intelligence), which forms the basis for his conception of creativity, and finishes with an overarching construct he calls wisdom (that incorporates but goes beyond the first two elements). As an extension of his theory of intelligence, which in the most general terms involves the cognitive balance in the use of one's analytical, practical and creative abilities to adapt to, select and shape one's environment toward successful outcomes, Sternberg puts forth an investment theory of creativity. This describes a very particular application of the three components of intelligence toward not only the generation of novel ideas (the creative element), but also toward assessing these ideas, their usefulness and application (the analytical element), and finally toward being persuasive and persistent in the "selling" and implementation of these ideas (the practical element). Lastly, Sternberg describes the element of wisdom as drawing upon tacit knowledge concerning the balance among intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal interests for the purpose of achieving a common good. These three elements - intelligence, creativity and wisdom - synthesized, represent the major attributes of giftedness (Sternberg, 2005).

In his Three-Ring Model of Giftedness, Renzulli, (1978, 2005) focuses on the dimensions that affect the development of human potential into what he calls "creative productivity", the ability to produce ideas and work that can impact others and cause change. The successful development of this ability involves the interaction between above average ability (encompassing the capacity to

process information, integrate experiences so that appropriate and adaptive responses can be exercised, and the capacity to engage in abstract thinking), creativity (e.g., originality, ingenuity, willingness to set aside conventions), and task commitment (a refined or focused form of motivation that exhibits perseverance, endurance, self confidence, and action). Renzulli illustrates these three components as three circles intersecting to show the interactive aspect, with giftedness being located where the three circles overlap. The three rings are set over a black and white hounds-tooth background which represents the interaction between the personality and environmental factors that give rise to the three rings (Renzulli, 2005).

Tannenbaum (Tannenbaum, 1983) was the first to take a more detailed look at the mediating and moderating factors that can affect giftedness. He viewed giftedness as an interaction of five psychological and social factors, each of which is required at a minimum threshold to produce exceptional achievement: general ability (i.e., g or general intelligence); special ability (i.e., aptitude in a specific area); non-intellective facilitators (e.g., metalearning, dedication to a chosen field, strong self-concept, willingness to sacrifice, mental health); environmental influences (e.g., parents, classroom, peers, culture, social class); and chance (e.g., accidental, general exploratory, sagacity, and personalized action). A deficit in any of these factors will result in the failure of any potential to come to fruition. In addition, the necessary threshold levels of these five factors vary according to the specific domain of excellence. Extraordinary accomplishment, Tannenbaum concludes, is the result of a complex confluence of factors that in the end is difficult to predict. (Tannenbaum, 1986)

A parallel set of models that follow Tannenbaum focus less on traits than on process or the developmental path that leads from potential to actualization of intellectual gifts. In these models, gifted students are still characterized by particular traits, such as high cognitive ability, however the larger picture the following models display provide insight into the complexity of their developmental path.

After examining the three major approaches to giftedness - trait-based (Terman), cognitive component based, and achievement oriented (which distinguishes between potential and realized performance) - Mönks introduced the Mönks' Six-Factor Model of Giftedness (Mönks, 1992). This is an environmental or socio-cultural model, which emphasizes the socio-economic and political concerns that he believes will increasingly affect programming for the gifted population. Mönk's framework is based on human development as defined within the realm of developmental psychology, with personality and social components as the determining factors. Schematically, Mönks presents this approach as a modified version of Renzulli's three-ring model, replacing the interlocking personality-environment background with an enclosing triangle that presents in each angle the most significant social environments of family, school, and peers. Hence, his six factors are: the interacting factors of

motivation, creativity and exceptional abilities, whose productive interactions are strongly determined by the social environments created by school, family, and peers (Mönks & Katzko, 2005).

In his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Gagné, 1985). Gagné defines two "endpoints" of significance as giftedness and talent. The former being the "possession and use" of exceptional abilities such that one stands out and is amongst the top 10 percent of one's age peers; the latter being the "mastery" of such abilities within at least one particular domain such that one is in the top 10 percent of one's age peers in that domain (Gagné, 2005). In Gagné's DMGT "talent development trio" - gifts and talents, which are connected via a pathway of learning and practice - are the core elements worked on by a trio of so called "catalysts", which can contribute either positively or negatively to the core elements at various levels of intensity. These so called catalysts are intrapersonal factors, environmental factors, and chance. Gagné recognizes that it is the interactions amongst these six factors that determine the course of talent development. Gagné's reflection upon the related research, from the perspective of his model, leads him to define a hierarchy of causes that affect the outcome talent development. In order of decreasing causal influence, he lists 1) chance, recognizing the highly influential genetic role; 2) gifts, i.e., the given cognitive and physical abilities; 3) intrapersonal catalysts, such as motivation-related aspects of personality; 4) learning and practice; and 5) environment, including social milieu, mentors, and events like encounters, awards and accidents - all, according to Gagné, having the least effect on the positive development of talent (Gagné, 2005).

The Munich Model of Giftedness and Talent (MMG) (Heller, Perleth, & Lim, 2005) is a multi-dimensional conception of abilities within the construct of giftedness, in this way similar to models of giftedness by Renzulli, Mönks, Gardner, Gagné and Sternberg. There are seven relatively independent forms of ability - intellectual, creative, social competence, practical intelligence, artistic ability, musicality and psychomotor skills. These are the so-called talent factors or predictors, which may give rise to high performance in several domains, such as mathematics, the natural sciences, technology, computer science/chess, art, languages, athletics, or social relationships. The talent factors (predictors) interact with two forms of moderators, non-cognitive personality characteristics (e.g., ability to cope with stress, motivation, learning strategies, test anxiety) and environmental conditions (learning environment, family climate, quality of instruction, classroom climate, critical life events), which optimally lead to the transition of factor potential to factor expression in the form of excellent performance (Heller et al., 2005).

Based on the above model, but with a different emphasis on process, the Munich Process Model was developed (for a review, see: Heller et al., 2005; Ziegler & Stoeger, 2007). The MPM draws from research on expertise development and cognitive functioning, and research on cognitive abilities and

professional achievement. First, cognitive dispositions, perceptual dispositions, motor dispositions and domain-specific knowledge are posited as the predictors or pre-requisites for exceptional performance in any given domain. The moderating factors of personality and environment are very similar to the MMG model, but are couched in terms of the workplace (whereas the MMG uses the terms of school life). Dealing with success/failure, achievement motivation, coping with stress, working strategies, and locus of control are the given examples for important personality factors. Environmental moderators include company climate, achievement motivation, appreciation of achievement, and provision of further training. The most marked difference from the MMG is the emphasis on the pathway from initial dispositions (potential) to exceptional achievements. This pathway signifies a clear direction and magnitude of the formation of expert knowledge and routines that increase during the course of the active learning process.

The Munich Dynamic Ability-Achievement Model (MDAAM) is an extended version of the MMG (for a review, see: Heller et al., 2005; Ziegler & Stoeger, 2007). The MDAAM extends the MMG by bringing together the research in giftedness and the research on process-oriented cognitive and expertise development toward high achievement. In its visual representation, MDAAM maps the process from initial abilities and skills (attention/control, habituation, working memory, level of activation, visual perception, motor abilities), through the various age-based/educational phases (preschool age, school age, university/profession), during which the environmental and personality moderators change in composition (for example, from family to classroom to partner/spouse). The success of this process is determined by the growth of expertise through learning and deliberate practice, and how this is moderated by the interactive affects of personality and environment.

Finally, there is a set of approaches to giftedness that are completely egalitarian, which eschew selection and espouse the idea that all students have equal potential, in some greater or lesser sense. Feldhusen generally outlines a comprehensive set of aptitude domains (to include all manner of abilities), recommends assessment, and appropriate subsequent programming and support. Piirto presents a visually pleasing portrait of giftedness using a pyramid and suns with an aim to promote understanding of the construct amongst parents, teachers, and other educators.

Feldhusen (1998) strongly advocates the need to actively identify talents in all students and serve them accordingly. His “model” is a prescription for carrying this out. First, Feldhusen defines talent as capabilities in specific domains of aptitude, such as academic domains (e.g., math, science, literature), artistic domains (such as art or performance areas), technical domains (such as computers, domestic arts, nursing), or interpersonal domains (such as leadership, teaching, counseling). Second, Feldhusen recommends assessment instruments and methods for the identification of talents in these domains [such

as Renzulli et al.'s Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (1997), and the Purdue Academic Rating Scales and Purdue Vocational Rating Scales (Feldhusen, Hoover, & Sayler, 1997)], aptitude and achievement tests for identifying academic and vocations-technical talents, auditions for talents in the arts, and portfolios in the graphic arts. Feldhusen further suggests that the identification and development of talents should be seen as a long-term process, involving parents, schools, and the students themselves. Third, programming directed at helping students develop their particular talents should be commensurate with that talent, and should be accompanied by help and emotional support from parents, school resources, a supportive peer environment, and mentors who can model levels of expertise and creativity in their area of talent potential.

The Pyramid of Talent Development model (Piirto, 2000) presents the elements that comprise giftedness as six general "aspects": the genetic, emotional, cognitive, talent, vocational and environmental. Piirto argues that, given that there is no exact science underlying the process of gifted identification, inclusiveness, rather than exclusiveness, needs to be the prevailing approach governing gifted education (Piirto, 1999). The first five of Piirto's aspects are illustrated in the form of a pyramid: genetic aspect forms the base (given predispositions); the emotional aspect/personality attributes are above the genetic (and are posited as being possibly more important than intelligence); the cognitive aspect/intelligence (IQ) then follows, for which it is emphasized that different talent domains require different minimum levels of intelligence; the talent aspect - high ability exhibited in a particular domain like drawing or math or sports - is described as innate, of an indefinable nature, and absolutely necessary, and it forms the top part of the pyramid; the final point, illustrated as an asterisk above the tip of the pyramid, is the vocational aspect or so-called "thorn" that drives an individual to exceptional achievements in life. This thorn is conceptualized as the passion, motivation, and commitment needed to take talent to its fruition. Where the pyramid represents the individual, the sixth aspect, environment, is comprised of the external forces that can influence an individual's development to various degrees. These are represented by 5 suns, three large and two smaller. The three primary suns are home and family, community and culture, and school. The two smaller suns are gender (as in how individuals may be treated differently, or may perform differently according to gender) and chance (Piirto, 1999).

5.2 Connections and Contributions from the Arabic View of Wisdom

There are several areas of overlap between modern models of giftedness and the Arabic view of wisdom. It is apparent from analyzing the Arabic literature on wisdom that there exists an unambiguous link between the concept of wisdom in the Arabic conceptualization and elements of both giftedness and excellence as currently conceived (especially with regards to cognitive elements). The wise

individual from an Arabic perspective is a person who possesses high cognitive abilities and a high level of intelligence, this is clear from the aforementioned descriptions of the characteristics of the wise individual: intelligent, high analytical abilities, and problem solving skills. The mind of the wise person is also actively employing cognitive skills (comparison, analysis, synthesis) in a manner similar to other gifted individuals. However, according to our understanding of what has preceded, the wise person in Arabic thought is able to withhold forming their opinions and making decisions until they can adequately synthesize all available information with their knowledge and experience to arrive at the "best" response to a given situation. This mental habit, of slowing down decision making and objectively evaluating opinions as they form, is crucial in the development of wisdom.

Wise individuals as viewed in Arabic thought are able to employ their high cognitive skills in cultivating in-depth knowledge and expertise in a manner which allows that individual to become prominent in a particular field (e.g., science, arts, or social reformers). This aspect in particular overlaps with what has been mentioned by Heller et al. (2005), Gagné (1985), Mönks (1992), and Ziegler and Stoeger (2007), when they described the transfer from individual potential to expertise or high performance in a given field. This development of expertise can happen through learning and dedicated practice. The development from giftedness and ability towards expertise and excellence in a given field requires investing effort for acquiring knowledge, and being able to employ this knowledge (with support from the surrounding environment). Gifted individuals are distinguished by their love for reading and learning, and their high analytical ability helps them to develop their knowledge in their specific field(s) of interest to reach expertise or excellence (contingent on being provided appropriate challenges and environmental supports). The success of this progression from potential to expertise is determined by the cultivation of expertise through learning and deliberate practice and how this is mediated by the interactive effects of personality and environment.

The personality characteristics associated with wise individuals in the Arabic literature tend to be ethical and behavioral characteristics reflecting the focus on public interest and good conduct towards individuals. This is an expression of the importance placed upon qualities such as good intentions, patience, forbearance, and the ability to shoulder responsibilities and burdens with serenity. It is certain that gifted individuals are in need of these characteristics (in general), though these qualities have not been mentioned as common characteristics of gifted children (such as Aljughaiman & Abu Farash, 2007; Aljughaiman & Abdulmajeed, 2008; Davis, Rimm, & Siegel, 2010; Silverman, 2007). It is worth mentioning that these characteristics are important for the development of good gifted citizens. These characteristics overlap with what has been mentioned by Sternberg (2003) when he outlined leadership giftedness as the trait which is found in gifted individuals who contribute meaningfully to

society and balance between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal interests for the purpose of achieving a common good.

Creativity is one of the components of giftedness as viewed by most of the recent models, though it has not been explicitly mentioned as one of the components of wisdom in the Arabic literature. However, since the concept of wisdom in Arabic literature insists on intuition and insight as necessary elements, a link exists between creativity, giftedness, and wisdom. In one of the earliest and most influential models of the creative process, Wallas (1926) describes four stages of creativity as: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. In this description, intuition serves a central role in illumination, hence describing the connection between intuition and creativity (and hence between wisdom and creativity).

There is a conglomeration of qualities that is viewed as essential components of wisdom in Arabic literature. The qualities of will-power, task commitment, and decisiveness are viewed as intrinsic capacities that allow the wise individual to transfer knowledge into action and to motivate oneself and others to support those actions. The wise individual is capable of approaching novel situations in novel ways, to catalyze their knowledge and experience into decisions which fit the circumstances at hand, and to mobilize themselves and others to rally around their decisions. This amalgam of qualities is viewed as a singular ability in Arabic thought (*al iraada al quwaaiya*), yet each of the features of this concept has been described in depth in various modern models of giftedness. For example, task commitment as described by Renzulli (1986) seems to be linked to this concept in Arabic thought. Task commitment represents a high level of motivation to focus on one particular problem or task. A further example is the ability to make decisions and convince others is an element of practical intelligence in Sternberg's model (2005).

Wisdom in Arabic thought is viewed as a developmental process which includes the merging of intelligence, experience, knowledge, decisiveness, and other personal characteristics. From our review of recent literature on both models of giftedness and programs for the gifted there is ample evidence of the importance of a variety of features, such as knowledge, creativity, thinking skills, and personal and social skills, and yet, these qualities alone do not necessarily create wisdom or wise individuals. Even though wisdom has been mentioned in some of the models for the gifted (as in Renzulli, 1986), the discussion of wisdom in this context has mostly been limited to wisdom and its ethical component. Most of the gifted programs give importance to the development of thinking skills such as analytical reasoning, critical thinking, divergent thinking, fluency in problem solving, and similar skills, without ample attention being devoted towards other cognitive skills such as intuition and insight. Similarly, most of the gifted programs are concerned with increasing knowledge, practicing with that knowledge, and equipping children with the tools to seek knowledge. However, these programs may not be giving adequate attention to how that

knowledge should be reflected in their behavior. Another essential component that may be overlooked is the focus on instilling good intentions among the participants in gifted programs; meaning that young people should be encouraged to reflect on the higher aims in seeking knowledge – to benefit others, solve problems facing humanity, and ultimately contribute to the common good. In order to be more effective in shaping tomorrow's leaders, gifted programs must include an element of experiential learning which challenges the participants to grapple with real-life ethical questions; relying upon their knowledge of issues, involving their critical capacities, and engaging their moral sensibilities to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

In order to better instill wisdom among the gifted, programs that serve this population should begin to pay attention to characteristics not typically addressed in standard curricula for the gifted. Good intentions, patience, forbearance, the ability to bear responsibilities and burdens with serenity, modesty, humility, moderation, gentleness, calmness, clemency towards others, and dealing with issues, problems, and challenges with composure and deliberation are all noble qualities worth pursuing in their own right. In addition, this cluster of qualities, if developed, will allow gifted individuals to better actualize their unique potentials in a manner which benefits them in the long run, and ultimately benefits humanity as well.

6. Conclusion

The quality of wisdom in the Arabic tradition can be described as having four main components; intelligence, knowledge, vision, and decisiveness. These four components give a clear picture of wisdom, and as much as these components coalesce in one person, to that extent can we view that person as wise. Intelligence by itself does not make a person wise. Intelligence without knowledge and experience leads to shallow hypotheses and a lack of depth of knowledge. In addition, knowledge without high intelligence does not aid the individual to make the best use of that knowledge. Intelligence coupled with knowledge allows individuals to create new ideas, new knowledge, whereas knowledge without intelligence allows only for the transfer of existing knowledge, without adding any value. Similarly, knowledge without high intelligence prevents individuals from acting decisively in the moment - they will arrive late to the party. Having high intelligence combined with knowledge is not sufficient to produce wisdom unless it is coupled with vision and decisiveness. The ability to be decisive, to act decisively in the moment (including the ability to withhold a decision until all relevant information has been gathered and assessed), allows the individual to rally his or her intelligence and knowledge to effect the best outcomes; decisiveness produces behavior, not only mental activity. However, to be considered wise, the individual must have sense of vision, to be able to balance the various elements in any decision, together with ethical considerations, to arrive at the best decision for all parties

involved. Intelligence, being viewed as an innate and heritable potential, knowledge being viewed as experientially based, vision, being viewed as the ability to see the big picture, to view and balance the multiple ramifications of an action, and decisiveness being viewed as the ability to effectively bring these qualities to bear upon the situation in the moment to render the best outcome. When these attributes come together in the same individual, wisdom is also found.

7. References

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