ALI 243: Approaches to Spirituality
Session One

Questions

1) Why is it important for us to know how the soul functions?

2) What are the positive and negative points about the philosophical approach to the soul:

- according to this article?

- according to yourself?

Definitions

How would you define the following:

1) Self-control
2) Self-purification
3) Spirituality
4) Morality

Philosophical Approach

Three Quwwahs (faculties, abilities, energies…)
1) Quwwah al aqliyyah – rational faculty
2) Quwwah al ghazabiyyah – faculty of anger
3) Quwwah al shahwiyyah – faculty of desire

Quwwa al-Aqliyyah

Deficiency results in
Foolishness

Moderation results in
Wisdom

Excess results in
slyness

Quwwah al-Ghazabiyyah

Deficiency results in
Cowardice

Moderation results in
Courage

Excess results in
Recklessness

Quwwwah al-Shahwiyyah

Deficiency results in

Lethargy

Moderation results in

Chastity

Excess results in

Greed

Justice

Justice is the complete mastery of the quwwa al Aqliyyah over the other faculties of the soul, so that all faculties are used to obtain human perfection and closeness to God.

The intellect is the King of the body. If justice prevails within in, it will also prevail in its domain.

Importance of self-development

If an individual cannot make justice prevail within the domain of his own individual self, how can he put it into effect in others?

If he cannot reform himself, how can he reform others?

Thus self-development is most important.

Hadith

Surely God has characterized the angels by intellect without sexual desire and anger, and the animals with anger and desire without reason.

He exalted man by bestowing upon him all these qualities.

Accordingly, if man's reason dominates his desire and anger, he rises to a station above that of the angels;

because this station is attained by man in spite of the hurdles which do not vex the angels.

Imam Ali (a)

Source:

Jami al-Sa'adat, The Collector of Felicities
by Muhammad Mahdi ibn Abi Dharr al Naraqi