



ALI 266: Spiritual Growth

Session One - Movement towards Perfection

Man's real perfection lies in his liberating himself from the straits of illusory lusts and physical pleasures and in advancing on the path of humanity . . .

Ethics and Spiritual Growth, Sayyid Mujtaba Musawi Lari

What do you understand from the above quote?

What would you add to the definition of perfection?



Agenda

Defining Perfection

Desire for Perfection

Growth towards Perfection

Factors of growth

Defining human perfection

- Reaching high levels of potential fulfillment
- Being what God wants you to be
- Overcoming weaknesses and enhancing strengths
- Making the most of your circumstances
- *Liberation from constraints of lust and physical pleasures*
- *Disciplining the self and becoming acquainted with higher ideas and a wider horizon*

Desire for perfection

- The human being has a natural, innate love for perfection. This comes to the surface when opportunities arise.
- There is a desire to grow to the fullest capacity

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
الْكَفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ

But Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you Unbelief, wickedness, and rebellion.

Sura Hujurat, 49:7

Hadith

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا أَحْيَا أَمْرَنَا فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: وَكَيْفَ يُحْيِي
أَمْرَكُمْ؟ قَالَ: يَتَعَلَّمُ عُلُومَنَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا النَّاسَ فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ لَوْ
عَلِمُوا مُحَاسِنَ كَلَامِنَا لَاتَّبَعُونَا

May Allah have mercy on the servant who enlivens our affairs. I said to him; How can he enliven your affairs? He (Imam) said; He learns our sciences, and teaches them to people, for if people know the goodness of our teachings, they will follow them.

From Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a)

Biharul Anwar, Vol. 2, page 30

■ To not strive for perfection is to reject the status of the human being as a vicegerent of God

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth a vicegerent.

Sura Baqarah, 2:30

■ To not strive for perfection is to reject and to deny the principle of human dignity.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ
الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

And surely We have honored the children of Adam,
and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We
have given them of the good things, and We have
made them to excel by an appropriate excellence
over most of those whom We have created.

Sura Israa, 17:70

Growth towards Perfection

I - Overcoming hindrances

- Sins; major and minor
- Materialism, love of comfort
- Self love
- Excess in anything; relationships, family love, work, eating, halal pleasures . . .
- Negative thinking
- Hard heartedness
- Heedlessness



II - Using agents of growth

- Close connection to God
- Obedience in all matters
- Trust and reliance in God
- Self Knowledge
- Accumulating good deeds

Factors of Growth

What creates growth?

Light – Faith in God

Water – wisdom (guidance) from God

Fertile Soil – soft heart of the human being

Time and Effort



اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light;

Al Baqarah, 2:257

وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ
وَأُنْبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ

and you see the earth sterile land, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells and brings forth of every kind a beautiful herbage.

Sura Hajj, 22:5



Next week

Chapter 3 – Growth and Development of
Personality