



◦ ALI 266: Spiritual Growth

Session Two – Development of Personality

The impact of personality . . . As well as the acquisition of those qualities which go into the making of a person, play a more profound and fundamental role in the welfare and woes of individuals.

Ethics and Spiritual Growth, Sayyid Mujtaba Musawi Lari

- How does personality have such an important impact on our lives?
- What is the difference between character and personality?



Agenda

Understanding personality

Formation of personality

Happiness and personality

Inadequacies of personality

Developing personality

The ideal Islamic personality

Understanding Personality

- Personality is what makes one person different from another.
- Personality is based on a group of qualities that can be found in a person most of the time.
- Personality determines the true worth of a human being.
- Personality is always growing, changing. It has potential for both upward or downward movement.

Formation of personality

- Family, school, and social environment are three important factors in determining personality.
- The foundation of personality is laid in childhood. Later changes can happen, but with a lot of effort.
- Few people have the strength and will to resist the influences of the environment around them, both social and cultural.

Happiness and personality

- Happiness of a person does not lie in external circumstances. It is dependent on the inner interpretation of outer circumstances.
- What causes happiness/unhappiness?

Event + Interpretation = Emotion

Interpretation is dependent on personality.

Inadequacies of personality

- Personality is not one dimensional. It is a complex mix of many different elements that wholly make up the personality of a person.
- Often, people will have inadequacies in one or more aspects of their personalities. That should not make a person despair of himself, or allow others to condemn him. It is only one part of his personality that is undesirable.
- Some qualities compensate for the defect of other qualities in a personality.
- The secret to a great personality is to recognize one's inadequacies, not make excuses, and work on them.

Developing Personality

1) Contemplation. Thought is the single most effective way of nurturing personality growth.

Accustom yourself to thought and contemplation, because that will deliver you from misguidance and reform your actions.

People's immersion in thought about something is the preparatory stage for that thing's coming into existence.

Imam Ali (a)

2) Effort. Building personality is a difficult task. *Strive to liberate your soul in the same way as you toil for your livelihood, for without doubt your soul is entirely dependent for its welfare on your conduct and character.*

Imam as-Sadiq (a)

3) Self discipline. Without self control, the human being becomes a slave to his urges. *One who dominates his desires preserves his human dignity and worth.*

Imam Ali (a)

4) Setting goals – The higher your goals, the more developed your personality

5) Connection with God

- The only way to bring about a balance and equilibrium between the ascent of the soul and the pressures and heaviness that pulls the soul down is establishment of a steady and enduring bond between God and man.

- Faith is the basis of all virtues, it stabilizes and is the foundation of great personalities.


Sayyid Musawi Lari

The ideal personality

The person presented by Islam as a finished product of its education is a thoughtful human being, positive, active, and disciplined.

A human being whose cognition, thoughts and conduct, and ultimately all aspects of whose life are informed with a peculiar moderation and harmony.

Sayyid Musawi Lari



Thus, the God-fearing, in it are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put their ears to that knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain in the time of trials as though they remain in comfort.

Khutba 193, Nahjul Balagha



Next week

Chapter 5 – The Mainsprings of inner peace