

ALI 266: Spiritual Growth

Session Three – Mainsprings of inner peace

Life is not made for happiness but achievement. The history of the world is not the theatre of happiness; periods of happiness are blank pages in it, for they are periods of harmony, and this dull content is unworthy of man. History is made only in those periods in which the contradictions of reality are being resolved by growth, as the hesitation and awkwardness of youth pass into the ease and order of maturity.

From Ethics and Spiritual Growth, Sayyid Mujtaba Musawi Lari

What simple truths of life do you get from the above passage?



Agenda

- Why anxiety
- Effects of Anxiety
- Suppressing anxiety
- Removing Anxiety
- Faith – the Ultimate cure of anxiety

Why anxiety

Although problems and afflictions are part of everyone's lives, people react differently to them. For some it creates a lot of uneasiness. This could be due to:

- weak faith which does not allow for complete trust in Him and acceptance of His decree.
- unrealistic expectations of life.
- excess of materialism; it creates endless greed and attachment to unenduring things.
- Concern about the past or the future

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

Certainly We have created man to be in distress.

Sura Balad, 90:4

Effects of anxiety

- Irrational responses
- Lack of self confidence
- Grief and sorrow
- Meaninglessness in life
- Physical manifestations.

Suppressing anxiety

When someone tries to banish a painful thought and forces himself to forget about it, it rebounds and could cause more pain.

Suppressing anxiety can lead to nervousness, tension, negative thinking, feelings of incompetence . . . Etc.

It can sometimes manifest itself in a change of behavior, attitude, personality etc.

Removing anxiety

1) Physical activity

One of the effective ways of relief from anxiety is to engage in some profitable activity.

2) Being intellectually active

When a wise man is visited by an affliction, he is not enveloped by grief. Rather, with forbearance and farsightedness he removes the rust of sorrow from his heart and makes use of his intellect to find a solution.

Imam Husayn (a)

3) Talking to some people

Unburdening one's heart with loyal and sincere friends is one of the means of obtaining relief from grief and mental tension . . . This matter has been given complete attention in the traditions of religious leaders and it has been pointed out that the man of faith is a source of comfort to others.

The best of actions with Allah is making a believer happy, relieving him of hunger and distress.

Holy Prophet (s)

When one of you is afflicted with sorrow then he should let his brother know so he can help him over himself.

Imam Sadiq (a)

4) Maintaining cheerfulness

- Keep a smiling face
- Talk and behave cheerfully

Keep up your good spirits in adversities and maintain a lively disposition in times of affliction.

Be pleased and you will be pleased with.

Imam Ali (a)



Faith – the ultimate cure

Faith in God is a shield which protects the human being from the attacks of anxiety and unrest.

Faith in God, like a relief valve, helps regulate psychic urges which are themselves the mainspring of man's spiritual afflictions. Faith in God gives a visage of perfect beauty to life, because when one has the conviction that everything does not come to an end with this life, it creates inner peace and makes him traverse the entire course of life with steadiness and moderation.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

So lose not heart, nor fall into despair; and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers.

Sura Aale Imran, 3:139

From Nahjul Balagha

God the Exalted has made His remembrance the light and burnish of the hearts. It is by means of His remembrance that the hearts recover their hearing after being deaf, regain their sight after being blind, and become soft and tractable after being savage and rebellious. It has always been the case that in times of spiritual apathy, from time to time, God Almighty has confided His inspiration to the thoughts of His servants and spoken to them through their intellect.

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