

## Emotional Intelligence

*O people, take charge of the disciplining of yourselves and redress them from the wildness of their habits.*

Imam Ali (a), Scale of Wisdom, H#6194

Intelligence is of many different types and can vary across individuals. It is important to know how intelligence can improve well-being and speed progress on the path to achieving life's goals. Without that there is not much use of brilliant intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence is being smart about how you navigate yourself through life and achieve maximum success in your self-development and personal interactions. It includes the following;

1) **Emotional Awareness** – being conscious of what you, and others, are feeling.

This requires an alertness to the self. When you are able to watch your thoughts and emotions from a distance almost, it is possible to see them as others would. Then there can be action on them as required. Imam Sadiq (a) says; *Be like someone who has shed his soul from his body or like someone who is attending the great parade on the Day of Reckoning, not distracting yourself from the obligations which your Lord has laid on you . . .* (Lantern of the Path, pg 31)

2) **Emotional Understanding** – knowing where the emotions spring from. Self-consciousness includes identifying the roots of an emotion and knowing why you are experiencing that particular emotion. It could be baggage from the past, assumptions, or unreasonable fears . . . etc. This knowledge equips you to counter the emotion if necessary or channel it appropriately. Sometimes some emotions mask other emotions. Understanding them may reveal the hidden emotions.

3) **Emotional Management** – overcoming negative emotions and harnessing positive ones. Although the initial emotion is often involuntary the decision to indulge in that emotion lies with us. We can stop and control the emotion as necessary. This is difficult and can come with prayer and practice. It has to be done in the initial stages for it to be effective.

Imam Khumayni says about controlling anger;

Among the practical remedies the important ones involve withholding the self in the initial stages of anger. This is because it is ignited little by little, becoming more intense until its furnace is set burning fiercely and its flame becomes violent and furious. When that happens it gets completely out of control and shuts off the lights of one's faith and intellect. . . . therefore one should be on one's guard so as to disassociate oneself by some means before its fierceness mounts and its fire becomes more violent.

### The Internal Capacity

Internal capacity of a human being can be compared to a vessel. How much can it take? Just as human beings differ in their physique, in their characters, they also differ in their capacities. Imam Ali (a) says: *O Kumayl, these hearts are like vessels and the best of them is*

*the one most aware (understanding)*. Reactions of human beings to situations and people depend on their inner capacities. The bigger the vessel the smaller the reaction.

### Signs of Emotional Intelligence

- 1) **Pleasant Manners** – Good manners even with those who don't deserve it shows a large inner capacity. The Holy Prophet (s) says; *Good Nature is half of religion* (Scale of Wisdom, H#1928) Imam Sadiq (a) says; *There is no life more wholesome than that lived with good nature* (Ibid, H#1933)
- 2) **Balanced Temperament** – does not get overly sad or excited about things in life. That is the ultimate inner equilibrium recommended for a believer. Allah says; *So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you* (57:23)
- 3) **Tolerance and Forbearance** - The ability to endure without responding. Some people have a low threshold for tolerance. Forbearance has been described in Islam as the friend of a believer, his Minister, his beauty and adornment.
- 4) **Not focusing on small things** – Realizing that there is a lot more to life than petty things which don't matter much.
- 5) **Knows their triggers** – Understanding what causes certain emotions and being able to plan accordingly.
- 6) **Does not blame others** – It is a sign of low emotional intelligence to avoid responsibility and look to shift the blame on others. A mistake must be acknowledged, amended if possible, and learned from for the future.

### Increasing Emotional Intelligence

- 1) Take time to focus and contemplate.
- 2) Reflect on your interactions. How could you have behaved differently? Practice it net time.
- 3) Think of others. Empathise with others and learn to prefer others over yourself.
- 4) Keep things in perspective. Having the big picture helps to increase internal capacity.
- 5) Learn from inspiring examples in history. Great leaders such as the Imams demonstrated high levels of emotional intelligence.

### Dua to help increase emotional intelligence

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي  
وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

O my Lord! Expand my chest for me, and make my affair easy to me,  
And loosen the knot from my tongue that they may understand my word

(Sura Taha, no.20, verses 25-28)