

# Personal Development Sessions

## Session One: Self Knowledge

What is self development?

# Knowing the self

A life lived without knowing the self is potential lost.

Self knowledge allows a person to become familiar with his or her abilities and aptitudes.

Self knowledge leads to a meaningful life

## From the Quran

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

O you who believe! take care of your souls.

Sura Maidah, no.5, verse 105

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ  
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Do not be like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget their own souls. It is they who are the transgressors.

**Sura al-Hashr, no.59, verse 19**

# Understanding perfection

Perfection is the maximum conditional use of all inner faculties (innate and acquired) to achieve the highest possible stage of development.

# Identifying Yourself

- a) Strengths and Weaknesses
- b) Temperament – type of personality
- c) Goals in life – vision for yourself
- d) Interests – what you enjoy doing
- e) Discipline – control over yourself

# Steps towards Self Knowledge

- 1) Know your strengths and weaknesses
- 2) Watch your thoughts. Thoughts are your interpretations and are the origins of your emotions.
- 3) Understand your baggage from the past
- 4) Know your motivations and your triggers
- 5) See yourself from outside yourself

# Obstacles to Self Knowledge

- **Love of self** – we like to think well of ourselves and overlook any faults in us.
- **Love of ease and comfort** – its hard work to know the self and then work on it. It can be emotionally draining.
- **Pride and ego** – makes us refuse to accept criticism from others. It also makes us willing to accept praise from others.

# Process of Self Refinement

## 1) Have a vision for yourself.

- What positive qualities do you want in yourself? What negative qualities do you want to remove from yourself?
- What habits would you like to have?
- How would you like to be when you present yourself to God when you leave the world?
- How would you like people to remember you?  
Write it down, picture it, remind yourself of it often.

## 2) Analyze yourself according to your vision

How do you react to certain circumstances?

What thoughts and interpretations go through your mind?

Take a step back and rethink.

Counter the thoughts and emotions that are not in line with your vision. Plan strategies to help you reach your vision.

### 3) Inspire yourself with noble teachings

a) Verses of the Holy Quran – choose verses that you remind yourself of often.

b) Hadith – inspire yourself with a daily hadith, a vitamin for your soul.

c) Excerpts of duas – Makarimul Akhlaq, Munajaat of Sahifa Sajjadiyyah, Abu Hamza Thumali . .

d) Books – religious and secular

4) **Persist** – the process is continuous. Don't give up after some time, or take it lightly. It is a serious matter of grave consequences.

5) **Take gradual steps** – Focus on small ways of understanding and watching yourself. Repeat them often and make changes accordingly.

## Some questions

- 1) What are two things you like about yourself?
- 2) What are two things you dislike about yourself?
- 3) Imagine that you could transform yourself into a completely new type of person. How would you describe this new you?