

## The Reason for Individual Differences in People's Personalities

### What Does the Acquisitions of the Soul Mean, and What Is the Reason for Individual Differences?

As we know, as humans, we have different personality traits and moral characteristics, but what is the reason for individual differences? Each of us has many strengths and weaknesses that form the foundation of our personality and morality. For instance, some people are short-tempered and sensitive, becoming upset and seeking revenge when faced with inappropriate behavior or insults. On the other hand, some are more forgiving and dignified, forgiving others for their mistakes and giving them the chance to set things right without holding any grudge. Some are stingy and mean, unwilling to let go of anything, while others are generous and charitable, sharing their possessions without expecting anything in return. Some individuals do not let their loving relationship with God be affected by even the severest problems, while others bitterly complain about their current circumstances with the slightest difficulty. Some easily welcome the truth with open arms, while others trample the truth despite recognizing it.

- What is the reason for individual differences, and why are people's personalities different from each other?
- Although our *fitrah* and the structure of our soul are the same, why are our actions and behaviors so different?
- What is the law of acquisition, and how do acquisitions of the soul impact our personality?

In the previous lesson, we became partly familiar with the concept of acquisition and learned that all our decisions, relationships, behaviors, and thoughts are part of our deeds, each storing something in our soul. Eventually, the ultimate structure of our soul is shaped by these acquisitions and assets which are acquired through our deeds. This lesson is the continuation of the same concepts.

In this lesson, we will discuss the reason for individual differences and their relationship with what each person acquires. In fact, in this lesson, we will not only understand the reason for individual differences and people's different personalities, but we will also discover the root cause of good or bad moral characteristics within ourselves and others. Once the root of these moral characteristics is found, it becomes easier to improve them. Therefore, acquisition is not just a theoretical and impractical concept, but rather it greatly contributes to self-knowledge and self-improvement.

### **What Is Acquisition, and How Does It Lead to the Development of Moral Attributes?**

Do you remember the first days of school? Do you remember how much time and effort we put into learning the alphabet? Sometimes, we would practice writing a single letter for several consecutive days. Sometimes, the letters we wrote were poorly written or too big or small, and we had to erase them and start over. It took months to acquire the ability to write the alphabet. But now, the ability to read and write the alphabet is a part of us; it is an acquisition and a mental asset that no one can take away from us.

Acquiring a skill or asset requires practice and repetition, and this applies to all skills. For example, weightlifters who lift hundreds of kilos have not had that ability since the very beginning; they have acquired it over time. The beautiful and pleasant sound of a piece of music comes from years of practice, and musicians have acquired this skill through repetition. A translator who translates heavy texts into other languages fast has not reached this point overnight; rather, she has spent years striving and practicing to acquire this ability and so on. Based on these examples, we can define acquisition as follows:

**Acquisition is an asset that is acquired through the continuous repetition of deeds and ultimately leads to the emergence of a name or attribute in individuals.**

Based on this definition, we do not call someone who accidentally kicks a ball into the goal a football player. Likewise, we do not consider someone who randomly presses piano keys and produces a few harmonious notes a musician. We call someone a football player or musician when he has acquired these attributes and made them his own. The same applies to moral attributes. Someone who occasionally wakes up early in the morning is not considered an early riser. Someone who forces himself to smile reluctantly is not considered good-humored. Someone who has had to tell lies only a few times in his lifetime is not considered a liar, and so on. Therefore, not every good or bad deed becomes an acquisition. A deed turns into an acquisition, first, when it is done willingly and repeatedly, and second, when it becomes deeply rooted in one's soul through repetition and persistence.

## **The Reason for Individual Differences and Its Relationship With Acquisition**

Based on the points mentioned, you have probably understood the reason for individual differences in personality.

The reason for individual differences lies in the difference in what we acquire. Nothing in the world is neutral and ineffective. Everything we interact with, from the tools we use, clothing, and the food we consume to the people around us, the things we see, the sounds we hear, the emotions we experience, and even the words we speak, all have a positive or negative impact on us.

If our interactions and companionship with a person or phenomenon continue, our soul absorbs the positive or negative effects of this companionship over time, and these effects gradually become ingrained in our soul, or in other words, become united with it. Therefore, who we are today, whether happy or sad, generous or stingy, patient or hasty, fearful or brave, religious or non-religious, close to God or distant from Him, and so on, is the product of our past acquisitions.

We are hostage to our acquisitions, which shape our inward state or the structure of our soul or spirit. Even in the hereafter, each of us will be accompanied by our acquisitions, which result from our deeds. Interestingly, our acquisitions are not limited to our childhood and adulthood; even in the fetal stage, we acquire various effects from the world around us, and the results of these acquisitions become apparent after birth. This is why, in Islam, there are numerous guidelines regarding the conditions for conception, the consumption of permissible and pure food by the mother, and keeping the mother away from stressful and sinful environments, etc. Any mother who wishes to give birth to a healthy and righteous child must follow the guidelines set out by Islam in this regard.

In this lesson, we examined the reason for individual differences and different personality traits and provided some answers, but many questions remain unanswered, such as

- How do our desires and inclinations to do a certain deed affect the acquisition or non-acquisition of that deed?
- What does it mean to be hostage to our acquisitions?
- How can we find out what we have acquired so far in our lives?
- Are our acquisitions amendable? Can we amend unsound acquisitions and replace them with new sound acquisitions?

We will address these questions in the upcoming lessons. In the meantime, we invite you to test your knowledge and think about the answers to these questions.

Please share your answers with us.