

## What Is the Key to Spiritual Growth and Acquiring Human Assets?

### How Can One Achieve Spiritual Growth?

Growth and progress have always been among humanity's enduring goals and are considered a measure of success in all aspects of life. Each of us, seek growth and progress in different fields based on our interests or perceived needs, some of us pursue financial development, while others strive for progress in the field of arts. For some, increasing the beauty of their appearance holds significant value, while for others, rising in status and rank within their career or profession is of great importance. Some also aim for growth and progress in academic and educational fields. In addition to all these, there are individuals who seek spiritual growth.

However, since our true essence as human beings lies in our human or supra-rational dimension, and we have an eternal life ahead, the most important concern for all of us should naturally be spiritual growth and the acquisition of human assets. This means striving to manifest God and become closer to Him by acquiring divine attributes and a sound heart. Growth and progress in other fields should also serve as a means for our improvement in this field because our inner happiness and peace in this world and our bliss in the hereafter depend on the extent of our human assets and the number of divine names we have received from Allah. The critical question is: How can we achieve spiritual growth?

As we know, the foundation and prerequisite of every asset and growth is the knowledge and information we have acquired in that field. In other words, it is our knowledge that, through various stages, transforms into assets and ma'rifa, leading

to spiritual growth. Practice and consistency in action are among the most important stages of this transformation, which we will discuss in this lesson.

### **Consistent Practice, the First Key to Spiritual Growth**

In the previous lessons, we mentioned that in order to acquire assets in all dimensions of existence and in any field, after acquiring knowledge and information, the next step is taking action. Action transforms our knowledge into assets; if knowledge is not put into practice, it will not lead to strength, ability, or growth. Spiritual growth or acquiring assets in the human dimension is no exception to this rule. But does any deed, under any condition, lead us to our purpose? Certainly not. No action leads to assets or skills without consistency and perseverance. It is only through repetition that we acquire a perfection. Just as a weightlifter who trains for months and years to be able to lift his desired weight, achieving spiritual growth and acquiring human assets and divine names (*Asma' al-Ilah*) is not possible without practice, repetition, and consistency in the gym of this world. This is because temporary actions cannot impact our fundamental structure, and this is entirely natural. We only attribute a trait to someone when they have consistently demonstrated it in action, and that trait has become an integral part of their being. For example, we call someone *Jawad* (generous) when their generosity and giving to others are consistent and permanent, not just occasional. Similarly, we call someone *Sattar* (concealer of others' flaws) when we have observed their concealment of others' faults in various situations throughout life.

All the divine names and attributes can only be acquired through consistent practice and repetition in various situations of life. For instance, a *haleem* (forbearing)

person has practiced the trait of Hilm (forbearance) in different life circumstances for a long time to establish it within themselves. In fact, marriage, having children, experiencing illnesses, various blessings, hardships, and trials in life are all exercises for us to manifest God's attributes. Without exaggeration, in every moment of our lives, we can be in the process of "becoming" and acquiring assets. Just as a chick inside an egg breaks through the shell by persistently pecking at a single spot, we too must open the path to closeness to God by acquiring divine attributes through practice, perseverance, and consistency. That is, through our continuous effort and by receiving more of the divine names, we draw closer and closer to God.

### **Obstacles to Acquiring Assets**

There are many factors and obstacles on the path to our spiritual and human growth, the most important of which can be divided into two categories:

- Lack of self-knowledge
- Laziness and Apathy

#### **1. Lack of Self-Knowledge**

Lack of self-knowledge is an important factor that hinders progress, effort, and practice in the pursuit of human assets and *ma'rifa*. As long as we do not know the truth of our existence, that is, our supra-rational or human dimension, we will lack the desire or passion to draw closer to our True Beloved, Allah, and the acquisition of a sound heart.

## 2. Laziness and Apathy

Laziness and apathy are other important obstacles in the path to acquiring divine attributes and spiritual growth. These two enemies prevent us from acting on our knowledge and practicing it consistently. Prioritizing our beloveds and remembering death are factors that can help us overcome laziness and apathy.

In this lesson, we discussed the importance of practice and consistency in action, which are the keys to achieving spiritual growth and acquiring human assets. Our knowledge and information alone do not grant us power or ability; it is acting on that knowledge that leads to growth and the acquisition of perfections and assets. However, the important point here is that occasional action is of no benefit; rather, we need consistent practice and repetition. Just as a painter, carpenter, engineer, doctor, or an athlete cannot achieve skill or mastery without practice, repetition, and applying their knowledge, we too, in our supra-rational dimension, cannot acquire assets or a sound heart without acting on our knowledge and engaging in continuous practice. Lack of true self-knowledge and falling into the traps of laziness and apathy are significant obstacles on the path to acquiring assets.