

How Can One Build Spiritual Similarity? | Do We Become Similar to What We Love?

What Does Spiritual Similarity Indicate, and How Does It Occur?

Spiritual similarity and the reasons behind its formation constitute one of the fascinating topics within cognitive studies. Many of us may have experienced—or noticed that whenever we develop a deep affection for someone and form a close bond with them, we gradually become similar to them. This similarity can manifest in various areas, such as the way we speak, moral and behavioral traits, interests, and personal tastes. But how does one build this spiritual similarity?

How is it that people who were once strangers to each other—and had different interests and preferences—build a spiritual similarity after a period of companionship and relationship?

How can we explain this phenomenon? And how can we apply this principle in our lives?

In this article, we will examine the causes that lead to the formation of spiritual similarity between different individuals and will outline how its mechanism can be utilized in our daily lives.

The Relationship Between Spiritual Similarity and Emotional Connection

Affinity, closeness, and reciprocal connection build similarity. We use the terms "becoming similar" and "similarity" when we perceive or observe shared behaviors, common viewpoints, or common patterns of thought among individuals. This phenomenon, which we refer to as spiritual similarity, is the result of close interactions between two individuals. In other words, any similarity is a product of establishing a relationship infused with affinity and love.

For example, when a student holds a special affection for one of their teachers, they begin—often unconsciously—to imitate that teacher’s demeanor and behavior. Through this imitation, the student gradually builds a similarity between themselves and the teacher they admire. This very similarity can, in turn, lead the teacher to develop more affection and attention toward the student. As a result, the cycle continues, and the degree of similarity between the student and the beloved teacher steadily increases.

In another instance, we have often observed that when parents notice a particular behavior in their child, they look for its source in the child’s relationships and circle of friends. This is because any new behavior signals the formation of a new relationship. In other words, spiritual similarity between individuals is a sign of emotional bonding and continuous interaction.

This phenomenon is also clearly observable in marital relationships. Spouses who share a deeper emotional bond gradually become similar in their mindsets, thoughts, ethics, and behavior, thereby attaining spiritual similarity.

However, all such similarities can manifest in either a positive direction—contributing to personal growth and development—or a negative one—leading to spiritual decline. This largely depends on what or whom we have shown affection toward and with whom we have formed a relationship.

In general, we can say that spiritual similarity is both a product and a sign of an existing affinity and relationship. We grow similar to something—or someone—when a form of connection has been established and a sense of affinity has begun to emerge.

The Mechanism of Using the Principle of Spiritual Similarity

As we noted earlier, spiritual similarity is the outcome of forming a relationship and developing a sense of affection between individuals. Moreover, the more the connection between people increases, the more their affection and love grow—leading to a greater degree of similarity. Therefore, if we aim to strengthen affection and love between two individuals, we can do so by fostering similarity between them. This follows the very same mechanism we employ when learning a new skill, profession, or field of knowledge.

When we intend to acquire a new skill, we first choose a mentor who not only possesses a high level of expertise in the desired field but with whom we also feel a sense of familiarity and affinity. Once that relationship is established, we begin imitating the mentor in that specific discipline. For example, in learning the art of calligraphy, one starts by copying the instructor's handwriting; in martial arts, one mimics the master's movements. Even in academic studies, we memorize what the teacher has taught through practice and repetition.

The outcome of these actions is the establishment of similarity between us and our mentor in the area we have imitated. If we continue on this path of developing similarity, we may reach a point where we ourselves attain mastery in that skill or field—perhaps even surpassing our teacher. Yet the beginning of this entire process lies in the act of imitating the mentor; and as this similarity takes shape, the affinity and the spiritual similarity between us and the mentor gradually deepen.

Spiritual Similarity and Nearness (*Qurb*) to the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace Be Upon Them)

All of us utilize the principle of spiritual similarity in our daily lives, and we are often familiar with the way this mechanism functions. One of the most significant ways this principle can help us and pave the way is in fulfilling the purpose of creation. In

previous lessons, we explored in detail that God's purpose in creating human beings is *ubudiyyah* (servitude) and the most important human goal is to attain a balanced existence—one that is compatible with the structure of the Hereafter. In order to help us reach this goal, God has established the principle of spiritual similarity and provided us with perfect mentor and guide to follow. Since all of our relationships, behaviors, decisions, and thoughts influence our journey toward acquiring spiritual similarity and compatibility with the structure of our eternal life, our mentor on this path must serve as a reliable role model in all four of these aspects. So that, through imitation and adherence to such a guide, we can develop spiritual similarity to the structure of the Hereafter—and acquire similarity to God.

Becoming similar to Allah means actualizing and acquiring Divine names and attributes, which exist potentially within every human being. As we stated, similarity is a sign of relationship. Therefore, to attain similarity to Allah, we must become acquainted with Him and cultivate a relationship and friendship with Him. However, our material existence cannot establish a relationship with an Infinite and Unlimited Being. To understand Allah, we need a mirror that perfectly reflects His attributes. These reflections, perfect examples, or mentors of humanity, are the perfect manifestations of Allah, and acquiring spiritual similarity to them is equivalent to acquiring spiritual similarity to Allah. By modeling our lives on the human lifestyle and divine attributes of the Ahl al-Bayt— Household of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them)—as the most perfect manifestations of Allah and the most similar created beings to Him—we can move forward on the path of spiritual similarity to Allah and fulfill the purpose of our creation.

For example, in order to acquire the Divine Name *Al-Ghafūr* (the All-Forgiving) and to become similar to Allah in this regard, we must overlook the faults and

shortcomings of others—just as Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) do. We should respond with forgiveness to those who have wronged or harmed us and avoid harboring resentment toward them. By doing so, we acquire the Divine Name *Al-Ghafūr* and draw closer to Allah, and become more similar to Him. This spiritual similarity is the result of our connection with God, the Household of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them), the friends of Allah, and the mentors who have traversed this path and themselves attained nearness and similarity to Allah.

In this lesson, we explained that spiritual similarity is a sign of relationship, affection, and inner inclination. When we feel affection toward something, we form a relationship with it—and the result of that affection and relationship is a similarity that gradually develops over time. This can be clearly observed in close friendships. Typically, individuals who have a deep affection for one another and form close bonds, over time, tend to become quite similar in character and behavior. Understanding the principles such as the principle of spiritual similarity helps us traverse the journey of life more swiftly and with greater ease.