

How Do Imagination and Intention Help or Hurt Our Life's Journey and Goals?

Imagination and Intention—Tools That Help Us Achieve Our Goals

Have you ever wished to go beyond the limits? Have you ever thought that life could have a deeper meaning? Constructive imagination and intention are exactly the tools that can turn these dreams into reality. Conversely, if imagination and intention are not positive and constructive, they can stop us from achieving our goals.

Life is a complex phenomenon. Despite many limitations, we have unique opportunities for growth in it. Our time on earth is limited. So a question arises: Although we cannot do enough good deeds in this world, how can we achieve spiritual elevation? Have you ever wanted to enter the hereafter with more spiritual assets than those gained through your deeds? How can this desire be fulfilled? What role do constructive imagination and intention play in this path?

In previous lessons, we discussed that due to limited time and place, the human being cannot fulfill all their desires in this world. However, constructive imagination and intention create a shortcut; by taking it, we free our mind and soul from worldly limitations. These two fundamental powers can help us to go from the lowest level of perfection to the highest level of personal growth. In other words, through constructive imagination and intention, we find a new way to approach perfection and human dignity. They lead us to horizons of growth beyond our abilities.

To what extent imagination and intention help our soul soar toward higher human status? In this article, we explore the role and impact of constructive imagination and intention in life, and how these inner capacities help us transcend the limitations of our physical body and deeds to attain human perfection.

The Role of Imagination in the Growth of Our Human Dimension

As we stated, constructive imagination and intention are key tools for our personal growth. In this section, we will examine the role of imagination in this process. Imagination is one of our inner powers that plays a fundamental role in our growth and education. Positive imagination activates mental health, as a result we can freely envision our desires, values, and noble thoughts, and nurture them. This type of imagination goes beyond simple fantasies or fleeting thoughts; it enables us to visualize our goals and desires clearly, helping us make a purposeful plan for the future.

From an educational perspective, positive imagination can serve as a bridge between heartfelt desires and our deeds. Islam considers positive imagination as a driving force of the heart that leads to personal growth [1]. The Quran depicts Heaven and Hell as educational examples so that the human being fosters a desire for goodness and avoid evil by imagining them. Visualizing the blessings of Heaven boosts our motivation and shifts our life path toward human elevation. Thinking about the qualities of Heaven also help us go beyond material possessions and boost our motivation to avoid greed.

Constructive imagination not only causes us to overcome superficiality and being materialistic but also creates harmony through our intention and action. So imagination as an inner power, if guided properly, can elevate us to the noble human status.

Furthermore, positive imagination causes us to transform our souls, allowing us to think about human values and aspirations, and nurture them. We can even use these imaginations to establish a heartfelt connection with God and Prophet Muhammad's Household (Peace be upon them). Constructive imagination enhances our ability to envision a brighter, more purposeful future. It also helps us to keep hope alive during tough times, and focus on inner growth through mental visualization.

How Does Intention Help Us Develop Our Human Dimension?

Continuing our exploration of imagination and constructive intention, we now focus on intention. According to religious teachings, on the Day of Judgment, people will be judged based on their intentions [2]. Intention is not just a wish or decision; it is the foundation of our inner growth that deepens our character. It influences our outward behavior and manifests whatever happens in our inward state. For example, someone whose intention is to help others creates a connection between their intention and deeds. As a result, they become a compassionate and social person.

Although similar deeds of people are almost the same in appearance, the true value of a deed depends on the intention behind it. A deed that seems good on the surface but a superficial or impure intention is behind it has little or no real effect

and may even hinder the growth of our human dimension. If we liken intention to the number "one" and our deeds to the zeros, we can see that it is our intention that gives value to our deeds—without intention, even the best deeds are meaningless.

Intention, even in the absence of suitable conditions for action, can still lead to human growth. This means that a sincere intention, regardless of the outcome of the action, is a reflection of our inner desire and can, on its own, create motivation for change and self-elevation.

A positive and sincere intention adds meaning and value to our everyday lives. For instance, someone who helps others or raises their children with the intention of drawing closer to God or serving humanity gains more and better spiritual rewards than those who do the same without such intentions. High and positive intentions magnify the worth of our deeds. In fact, they make our soul grow, so we stop complaining. We are never tired and are free from attachment. A person who has genuine concern about humanity becomes a problem solver. Even if they do not do all they intend, their intentions influence their character when they are awake or sleep, so they find a better way to get closer to God.

Moreover, people with deep, purposeful intentions tend to be calmer and more resilient people in the face of obstacles and failures. This is because they understand their intentions are aligned with higher goals beyond worldly life.

Intention also has an effect on our inward state or character. Unlike deeds whose results we see in the external world, intentions have profound effect on our inward state. Each good intention shapes our inward state, molding our character to match that intention.

Imagination and intention are two fundamental human powers that play a key role in spiritual growth and elevation. Constructive imagination through positive visualization guides us toward higher goals. On the other hand, sincere intention adds value to our deeds and adjust our goals. So it brings us closer to moral and spiritual growth. In this article, we examined the effect of imagination and intention on the human being's life. We showed that these two inner powers help us go beyond material limits and walk on the path to perfection.

References

- [1]. *Nahj albalaghe*, sermon 165.
- [2]. Al-Bukhari, Muhamma ibn Ismail. *Sahih al-Bukhari*. vol.3, "Book of Fasting," Chapter 6, p. 69.