

How the Dominance of Human Perfections Determines Our True Path in Life

Analyzing the Dominance of Human Perfections in the Human Soul and Its Educational Effects according to Religious Teachings

The discussion about the dominance of human perfections in the inward self has always been one of the most important and challenging topics in the fields of psychology and upbringing. Many people—especially in modern societies where the desire for personal growth has increased—seek answers to this question: How can one achieve a healthy, balanced, and elevated inward state through the growth and the dominance of human perfections?

In religious teachings, humans are not viewed as limited beings; rather, they are seen as “comprehensive beings,” meaning that all levels of existence—from the material world to *Alam Malakut* (realm of ideas)—are gathered in humans. A human has the capacity to move in the upward journey from the material level to the rank of closeness to God. However, the state in which individuals end up after a lifetime of effort depends on the existential dimension and inner perfection which has gained dominance over them. For example, if the material dimension of the self and the lower qualities overpower them, they will become worldly and limited human beings.

The reality is that the dominance of human perfections within us is not limited to appearance or external behaviors. Rather, this triumph shapes the core of our moral, spiritual, and psychological identity, and shows whether we only *appear* to be good, or our inner world is truly filled with human virtues as well. From this perspective, a few practical questions can make the topic more tangible: Have you

ever seen someone who appears religious or ethical, but behaves differently in real situations? Which kind of perfection takes over in family relationships or at the workplace? What methods can help us ensure that the higher and divine perfections dominate our inner state and show their effects in our daily lives?

In this article, we try to answer this key question: What impact does the dominance of human perfections have on our inward self, how does it appear in real life, and how can we create conditions that allow divine perfections to dominate other existential dimensions, so that both the individual and society benefit from their effects?

Understanding the Role of Perfection Within the Human Inward Self

To better understand the dominance of human perfections within the inward self, we must first examine the precise meanings of the two key terms: “perfection” and “inward self.” In previous lessons, we defined perfection as the actualization of potentials or inherent qualities. From the perspective of Islamic ethics, perfection in its religious sense, goes beyond outward refinement and refers to a state in which knowledge turns into an inner asset. That is, knowledge becomes the source of transformation in one’s intention and behavior. It is a condition in which *ma’rifa* takes root within us and causes Divine Attributes to appear in our being. The deeper this *ma’rifa* becomes in our soul, and the more the spiritual perfections dominate over other dimensions of our existence, the closer our inward self is to the state of the perfect human. This is because the existential similarity between us, God, and the perfect human forms specifically within the inward self.

However, the “inward self” refers to the hidden realm of our being—the place where true intentions, motivations, and faith reside. The inward self is the source

of outward behavior. As long as the human inward self is not truly formed in us, the appearance of virtuous qualities does not hold sufficient value, and may even work to our disadvantage. The difference between human beings becomes clear precisely at this point. Many people may appear righteous or religious outwardly, but what determines a person's true worth is their intention and inward elevation. That is, the dominance of one type of inner perfection defines the true reality of a human being.

In Islamic teachings and in the words of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), the dominance of human perfections within the inward self is considered the main standard of human value before God. The more people draw closer to Divine Attributes—such as honesty, dignity, justice, and compassion—and the more these qualities triumph over other low desires within them, the brighter their inward self becomes and the more peaceful their being grows. This inner brightness is the manifestation of *ma'rifa*—a force that elevates us from the level of the material realm to the realm of *Malakut*, and strengthens our bond with the Source of existence. From this perspective, the dominance of perfection within the inward self is not a temporary condition, but the path to realizing true humanity—a path that begins with knowledge but ends to the true assets and maturity of the soul.

The Influence of The Dominance of Human Perfections on the Human Inward Self

One of the important yet often overlooked dimensions of the dominance of human perfections is that our inward self is directly shaped by the type of perfections that become dominant within us. Put more simply: Although a person may possess various kinds of perfections, over time, the inward self and personality begin to become similar to the very type of perfection that has gained dominance.

Inherent qualities of human beings are generally classified into five main categories: inanimate, vegetative, animal, intellective, and human or supra-rational qualities. When an inherent quality or potential is actualized, it is referred to as a perfection. The essential point is that whichever of these perfections dominate within us, our inward self and personality will take on the color and character of that perfection. Its effects become clearly visible in the way we view the world, make decisions, and even handle difficulties and successes. For example, if the dominance of human perfections—meaning the supra-rational perfections—is evident in someone's inward self, their lifestyle, choices, and even family life will be organized through a spiritual and divine perspective. In such a case, the person's ultimate goal is closeness to God and attaining divine pleasure, and all their relationships and activities are adjusted to this measure.

Our inward self is like a clear mirror or a transparent container that takes its color and shape from whatever becomes dominant inside it. Just as the container appears red if poured some red liquid into it and appears blue if filled with some blue drink, the soul and the inward self also become aligned and colored by the perfections that dominate it. In reality, the inward self not only reflects the dominant perfections but, over time, takes its form and identity from them. Gradually, we take on the color of whatever holds the greatest power within us: If it is light, we become brighter; and if it is darkness, we become darker.

The Relationship Between the Dominance of Human Perfections and the Human Inward Self

In Islamic teachings, the dominance of human perfections refers to an existential rank in which the Divine Names manifest within human beings. This dominance is

not merely knowledge, but a stage in which the truth of the human being becomes evident. That is, upon achieving that level, the Divine Attributes become actualized in us and our inward state flourishes accordingly. In reality, the dominance of human perfections is the inner manifestation of the Names of God within us, elevating us from the material level to the supra-rational or truly human one.

Our inward self, initially, merely holds the potential for becoming and elevation. This potential becomes actual through intentional actions and conscious faith. That is, whenever we actualized one of the spiritual potentials within ourselves and that attribute dominates within us, our inward self becomes adorned with one of the Divine Names. The human inward self is formed through this very process—through ascending degrees of perfection and acquiring God's attributes, each of which is a reflection of a Divine Name. The more strongly these attributes appear and triumph within our soul, the greater the growth of our inward self will be.

From the epistemic perspective, the dominance of human perfections and the human inward self cannot be separated because the inward self is the place where perfections appear, and perfection is simply a potential of the inward self that has become actualized. The more we advance in purification, understanding, and sincere intention, the more clearly the Divine Names emerge within us. And when these attributes triumph over the lower levels of the self, our inward self transforms from potential to actual. In truth, self-knowledge means understanding the inward self as a collection of Divine Names and Attributes that have actualized within us and have dominated other desires and lower traits.

Therefore, our inward self is not fixed or unchangeable—it has the capacity to grow, and this growth becomes possible through the dominance of human perfections. For this reason, the perfect human is the symbol of the dominance of human

perfections and contains the complete inner reality of existence because all the Divine Names have been actualized within them and have triumphed over every other dimension of their being.

The Reason We Focus on Secondary Perfections Instead of True Human Perfections

One of the major obstacles on our path to inward growth is misunderstanding what true human perfection actually is. Many of us, instead of paying attention to the human perfections that are the purpose of creation and the final destination of our existence, become attached to secondary religious perfections—acts such as prayer, fasting, or *hijab*. These are valuable, but in reality, they are means, not the ultimate goal. The root of this mistake is that, because a certain action carries reward, we assume it has inherent primacy and treat the act itself as a perfection. However, in religious teachings, the value of these acts depends entirely on their alignment with the main purpose: achieving human growth. By themselves, they have no independent value.

Although religious perfections are indeed part of the path of elevation and help us grow mentally and materially, they must not be confused with true human perfections. These acts are tools that allow us to progress, serve others, and gain the strength needed to move toward true perfection. But when we stop at the tool, and allow these secondary perfections to triumph over our being, the journey toward true perfection remains incomplete, and the inward self becomes blocked from moving toward truth.

Human perfection in Islamic teachings is the state of inner elevation and existential similarity to the Divine Attributes. All other perfections are only steps leading to this

stage in which we rise beyond outward attachments and reach the understanding of meaning, truth, and divine love. Therefore, focusing on religious perfections without understanding their divine purpose becomes a form of ignorance, which seems beautiful apparently, but pulls us away from the true purpose of creation. Recognizing this distinction is the key to correcting the path of perfection and spirituality. As long as we do not know which perfections are the destination and which are merely preparation, we cannot discover the true role of perfection within our inward self. Only when the tools of life serve purification, spiritual refinement, and divine *ma'rifa* does the dominance of human perfections take place, allowing us to walk the path of becoming a true human being.

The Dominance of Human Perfections in Our Inward Self and the Process of Its Formation

The dominance of human perfections over our inward state becomes evident when Divine Attributes move beyond belief and claim, and begin to appear in our daily behavior, speech, and reactions. People who have honesty, patience, kindness, and forgiveness remain committed to moral principles even in difficult situations, and show the truth of their faith through action. The harmony between the outward self and the inward self is the result of a conscious process that Islamic teachings call self-purification—an inner *jihad*/struggle to cleanse the heart of corrupted desires and prepare it to receive the light of divine *ma'rifa*, allowing Divine Attributes to take over low desires.

Inward purity is achieved when the nourishment of the soul comes from divine sources and when we keep away from harmful thoughts and behaviors. An impure inward self, neither has the capacity to manifest Divine Attributes, nor the strength

to remain on the path of the dominance of human perfections. For this reason, guarding one's intention in all actions is the central factor in forming this inner triumph. Deeds that stem from selfish or hypocritical motives leave no lasting positive effect on the inward self and may even cause harm. For example, a person who performs prayer not out of desire for closeness to God, but to attract attention and gain praise—although outwardly engaged in worship, inwardly acts from an ego-driven and self-displaying motive. As a result, the worship that should have helped the triumph of human perfections instead becomes a tool for strengthening pride and hypocrisy.

Another factor in strengthening the dominance of human perfection over our inward self is recognizing the inner enemy. One of the main obstacles on the path of spiritual elevation is ignorance about Satan and the ways he influences the human soul. The Quran repeatedly warns that Satan lies in wait and uses moral weaknesses as openings to infiltrate our soul [1]. Recognizing temptations and practicing resistance is essential for protecting the heart and soul. As long as we do not truly identify Satan as the real enemy within, our inner struggle/*jihad* will not lead to the dominance of human perfections.

Perseverance in these principles leads us away from the darkness of the lower self, and our inward self begins to move toward divine light. At this stage, perfection within us is no longer merely an inner state; it becomes visible in our behavior and in the decisions we make as well. A complete human being does not sacrifice justice, fairness, or honesty for short-term benefits, even in times of crisis. Instead, even in the hardest situations, such a person maintains dignity, forgiveness, and integrity. A person like this has turned the inward self into a mirror of the Divine Names and

Attributes, and draws nearer to true humanity—a state in which virtue is not only a belief but the very essence of everyday life.

What forms our inner identity and character is the type of perfections that have truly settled within us and have gained dominance over our inward self. The dominance of human perfections in the inward self is extremely fundamental. Just as the color of a container changes the appearance of the water inside it, the type of perfection that triumphs within us shapes the direction of our life, beliefs, and values. If we, instead of becoming absorbed in lower needs and concerns, move toward cultivating the dominance of human perfections, we not only achieve personal growth, but the positive effects of this triumph extend into society as well. The type of perfections we strive for determines the truth of our inward self and the direction of our existential journey. For this reason, the more divine and heavenly the triumphant perfection within us becomes, the brighter our inward self will be and the closer we will move toward the rank of the perfect human being.

References

[1]. Quran, 7:16-17