



## **Seven Stages Of The Ego, by Rumi, as told by Elif Shafak**

The first stage is the Depraved Ego (Nafs), the most primitive and common state of being, when the soul is entrapped in worldly pursuits. Most human beings are stuck there, struggling and suffering in the service of their ego but always holding others responsible for their continuing unhappiness. If and when a person becomes aware of the ego's abased situation, by starting to work on himself, he can move to the next stage, which in a way is the opposite of the previous one. Instead of blaming other people all the time, the person who has reached this stage blames himself, sometimes to the point of self effacement.

Herein the ego becomes the Accusing Nafs and thus starts the journey toward inner purification.

In the third stage, the person is more mature and the ego has evolved into the Inspired Nafs. It is only at this level, and not anytime before, that one can experience the true meaning of the word "surrender" and roam the Valley of Knowledge. Anyone who has made it this far will possess and display patience, perseverance, wisdom, and humility. The world will feel new and full of inspiration. Nevertheless, many of the people who reach the third level feel an urge to dwell here, losing the will or the courage to go further. That is why, as beautiful and blessed as it is, the third stage is a trap for the one who aims higher.

Those who manage to go further, reach the Valley of Wisdom and come to know the Serene Nafs. Here the ego is not what it used to be, having altered into a high level of consciousness. Generosity, gratitude, and an unwavering sense of contentment regardless of the hardships in life are the main characteristics accompanying anyone who has arrived here.

Beyond that lies the Valley of Unity. Those who are here will be pleased with whatever situation God places them in. Mundane matters make no difference to them, as they have achieved the Pleased Nafs.

In the next stage, the Pleasing Nafs, one becomes a lantern to humanity, radiating energy to everyone who asks for it, teaching and illuminating like a true master. Sometimes such a person can also have healing powers. Wherever he goes, he will make a big difference in other people's lives. In everything he does and aspires to do, his main goal is to serve God through serving others.

Finally, in the seventh stage, one attains the Purified Nafs and becomes Insan-i Kamil, a perfect human being. But nobody knows much about that state, and even if a few ever did, they wouldn't speak of it.

The stages along the path are easy to summarize, difficult to experience. Adding to the obstacles that appear along the way is the fact that there is no guarantee of continuous progress. The route from the first to the last stage is by no means linear. There is always the danger of tumbling back into earlier stages, sometimes even from a superior stage all the way down to the first one. Given the many traps along the way, it is no wonder that in every century only a few people manage to reach the final stages.

---

*Published at [www.awakin.org](http://www.awakin.org) on Apr 16, 2018*