

## Two Types of Character

Character is of two types: **Natural** and **Acquired**. The first is the favor of Allah which He gives to whomever of His servants He Wills - like the Prophets of Allah and those whom He has chosen from among His *Awliyaa'* (pious, believing servants).

Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

**“Verily Allah has divided among the people their *good morals*, in the same way that he divided among them their *means of livelihood*.” [Reported by al-Bukhaaree (Mawqoof)]**

Sometimes you may see someone whom the *tongues of the people* - which are the pens of truth - declare to be of *high morals and good character* since childhood. That is because of the praiseworthy *character (moral standard)* upon which Allah, the Most High, has created him.

As for the second type (of character) - it is the *Acquired Characteristics* that someone attains after struggling against himself and training/taming it. Such is the one who is certain that he possesses a type of evil characteristic, and knows the consequence of it. He also knows that it indicates weakness of faith, and the good rewards that will pass him by (because of this bad characteristic).

He therefore, declares war against himself and continues to be firm with himself, taking account of what he does, encouraging (the good) and warning (intimidating) himself from the evil, until he resigns to do good and is purified (from the evil characteristics).

In time, his moral behavior and character is improved little by little; stinginess is transformed into generosity; a short temper is transformed into one of taking it easy and patience; pride changes to humility; hatred and spite for others is followed by love of good for other people; the liar becomes one who makes every effort to be truthful. One who was known for breaking promises and violation of trusts becomes one who keeps his promise and delivers the trusts to its rightful recipients and so on. It is as though he became another person.

The Messenger of Allah (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) spoke the truth when he said:

**“Achievement of knowledge ('Ilm) is through *learning*, and achievement of *gentleness and forbearance* (Hilm) is through one's striving to be gentle [in one's dealings with others]; and whoever strives to attain 'good' (Khair) will be given it, and whoever guards against evil (Sharr) will be protected from it” [Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer, 1/461, no. 2328; Abu Hurairah]**