Some believe that art is inferior to nature. But that is not so. Art completes nature; in art there is something divine, for it is God Himself who through man completes the beauty of nature, and this is called art. In other words, art is not only an imitation of nature, art is an improvement upon nature, be it painting, drawing, poetry, or music. But the best of all arts is the art of personality. This must be learned, in order to use it in every walk of life. It is not necessary for every man to become a musician, nor is it necessary to become a painter or an architect. But it is necessary for every man to learn the art of personality. Someone once came to me and said with great pride and satisfaction, 'I was brought up by my parents just like a plant in the forest, growing naturally.' I answered, 'It is a pity. If your parents wanted you to grow naturally they should have kept you in the forest. It is a pity that you are in the midst of the world. The world is made by art; in order to be in the world you need to know the art of personality.'

Very few of us distinguish between individuality and personality. Individuality is that which we brought with us at our birth; we are born as a separate entity. That itself makes us individual. Individuality is the soul's consciousness of its oneness, in spite of its various belongings with which it still identifies itself; and that individuality can be seen in the child which says, 'No, I don't want this toy, I want that other toy.' The moment the soul says 'I' it becomes conscious of an individuality in spite of having different organs in the body and different thoughts which direct these organs. Then the tendency is to attribute to oneself all the different parts while realizing that one is one in spite of being many, or in other words, in spite of being composed of many aspects.

Personality is an improvement on individuality. In becoming a person the beauty which is hidden in an individual develops itself, and it is the development of the individuality which is personality. Individuality is nature, whereas personality is art; it is something that is acquired or gained. It has not come with us.

Therefore in ancient times people had to learn and practice the art of personality as part of their education. That was the ancient culture. Today a person has to pass examinations and as long as he has got a degree he thinks he is safe, he thinks he can go into the world and will get on. But such an external qualification is not enough. It is the inner qualification, the inner culture that counts and it can only be obtained by the development of personality.

How does one make use of personality? In business the salesman makes a success according to the power of his magnetism; his influence depends entirely on his personality. It is his personality that attracts, whether he goes to a shop or to other business; it is his personality which stands out and which gives one the idea of buying or selling or dealing with him; and the lack of this makes one go away never to come back. A statesman, a politician, a teacher, a solicitor, a barrister, a lawyer, all require personality. A physician may be a great physician, a highly qualified one, and yet if his personality is not agreeable, if he is rude or unsympathetic, however many patients he may have his medicines will make them feel bad, and his personality will make them feel worse. And very often a doctor with a sympathetic personality, a good
manner, and wisdom, can cure a patient by a word of consolation before he has given him any medicine. It is the same with a barrister, a lawyer. He can dishearten a client in one visit; and when a person has lost courage and hope then naturally there is little chance of being successful. Power of mind is needed, and if the power of mind is strong then a lawyer can succeed. In all walks of life what counts is the personality. The one whose personality is against him has the world against him.

The rose brings forth fragrance, colour and beautiful structure; so the soul, with its unfoldment, shows personality, atmosphere and refined manner.

Hazrat Inayat Khan: Vadan - Talas

There are four categories of personality. The first personality is likened to a date, the next is like a walnut, the third like a pomegranate, and the fourth like a grape.

The date-like personality is soft outside and hard inside. As soon as one puts a date into one’s mouth and feels the stone between the teeth one has a horror of it. And then there is another personality which is walnut-like. There is a hard shell, hard to penetrate, but when you know the person more it is like breaking the shell, and finding a nut which is soft. Thirdly there is a pomegranate personality. It is hard outside and hard inside. The pomegranate is hard, the skin is hard, the seed inside is hard too. Lastly there is the grape-like personality which is soft outside and soft inside. You will always find these four classes of persons.

The one whose personality is soft outside and hard inside will at once attract people; but they will not stay with him. They will stay for some time, but then they leave him. Then they know him and turn away from him. The personality who is hard outside and soft inside is repellent at first, but in the end you will become his friend. That is why he does not make so many friends; you can only understand this man when you reach his inner being. And the personality who is hard outside and hard inside is isolated in the world. This is no place for him. Everyone will want to keep away from him, and then after some time he will find himself in difficulties. But the one whose personality is soft outside and soft inside will naturally be most magnetic. The grape is the most attractive fruit.

At every stage in the evolution of man there is a different kind of magnetism. There are four different aspects of magnetism: physical magnetism, intellectual magnetism, sympathetic magnetism which is sometimes called personal magnetism, and spiritual magnetism.

The development of one’s personality is the real purpose of human life.

Hazrat Inayat Khan: Gayan - Boulas

Freshness, purity, good health, cleanliness, harmonious movements, regular form, all these help physical magnetism. Every man who is loving, affectionate, kind, gentle, and who has developed a sympathetic nature will always attract without knowing it; for sympathy has
the greatest power, and this magnetism is lasting. In whatever relationship you may be to a person, if there is no link of sympathy there is no attraction.

By the lack of development of the sympathetic nature a blockage is produced in the mind and in the body. In the physical body there are some nerve centers which are awakened by the development of sympathy; otherwise they are closed. It is for this reason that a butcher will seldom be intuitive, as everything that keeps a man away from sympathy robs him of intuition. Sympathy develops life in the finer centers, and the absence of that sympathy takes away that life. And so it is with the mind; when the heart is not sympathetic there is something missing in the man's mentality. Very often a person may be highly qualified, very intellectual, imposing in appearance, and yet being without feeling he will lack magnetism and in many cases will fail to succeed because of his lack of sympathy.

The fourth kind of magnetism is spiritual magnetism. It can be recognized in the innocence of a man, in his purity, in his simplicity. A spiritual person is considered very evolved, but in his appearance the spiritual person may be the most simple, the most innocent one. He is not ignorant but less complicated, broader in outlook, keener in perception, with lofty ideals, with a high consciousness; and yet humble and democratic in the true sense of the word.

The idea of democracy is wrongly understood by many today. The principle that 'I am as good as you' is a wrong principle of democracy. It takes away humbleness, gentleness, and the high ideal. Besides how childish to think that camphor and bone, chalk and sugar are all equal! It seems a very kind idea that everybody is equal; but when you tune the piano with all the notes at the same pitch there is no more music. This wrong conception of democracy is like tuning the whole piano to the same note; then the music of the soul becomes dull. It is more an obsession with democracy than democracy itself.

Real democracy is raising oneself higher by appreciating the ideal one meets. In this way one rises to a higher ideal; but many people do not appreciate a high ideal. Democracy means being equal on a higher plane instead of being ignorant. Pulling a high person down to the earth and then speaking of democracy is wrong democracy; it is the spirit of the revolutionary, of people who are obsessed by one particular idea, regardless of anything else, as has been seen in many places. For instance, when there came a revolt against the Catholic Church, what happened? The revolt was not only against the Church, but against the ideals of the Church. Every good aspect was disregarded. It was not only a revolt against what was not desirable, but against everything connected with it.

It is from that time that the sense and depth of religion which existed in the Western world seem to have been diminishing, and they are diminishing further every day. In spite of the many churches there is less idealism. The ideal which is necessary in some form or other for every soul has been drowned. It is drowned because people have revolted against something regardless of what is good in it.

*The sun, air, water, space and fertile soil are necessary for the rose to bloom; intelligence, inspiration, love, a wide outlook and guidance are required for the soul to unfold.*

Hazrat Inayat Khan: Vadan - Talas