

## **Do You Know Yourself Well?**

### **What Is the True Self or the Soul Child?**

#### **Who Is the Human Being? A Definition of the Soul or the Soul Child**

“If we knew ourselves as a human being, we would be able to solve our problems and achieve happiness and peace.” How much do you agree with this statement?

You might wonder how someone may not know himself as a human being. Unfortunately, this often happens. Many of us identify ourselves as a woman, man, wife, mother, father, teacher, doctor, engineer, manager, boss, artist, athlete, or some other titles. Of course, all of these are respectable, valuable, and important, but they have nothing to do with our humanity. In other words, most of us do not know ourselves, or better said, we do not know what the true self or the Soul Child is.

In your opinion, does self-knowledge mean knowing characteristics like personality and emotional traits, or knowing physical and artistic talents and abilities? Psychology has made great efforts to help people know themselves well, aiming for better, calmer, happier, and more mindful lives. However, despite these efforts, rates of suicide, emotionally cold family relationships, divorce, and mental illnesses, including depression, continue to rise.

What is the reason for this opposite result? The problem is that we define ourselves in a limited or even wrong way, and we do not know the most important dimension of our being, which is the human or supra-rational dimension, or the Soul Child.

Who is the human being? Where has he come from? What does he do in the world, and where is he going afterwards? What is the Soul Child? What are the consequences of not knowing one's self? Why do some people seem to be a human on the outside but are an animal on the inside? We will address these questions in this article.

### **Definition of the Human Being**

In Arabic, the word *insan* means human. Some believe that *insan* is derived from the word "*nesyan*," meaning "forgetfulness." This is because the human made a covenant with God but forgot it. Others believe that the human being is called *insan* because he has the capacity for intimacy, companionship, and familiarity (*uns*) and the ability to establish connection between himself and other beings.

Scientists, psychologists, and philosophers have many different opinions about the essence of the human being. Some of these opinions are similar, while others are completely opposed to each other. For example, some people think that the human being is a talking animal. Others believe that the human is the evolved form of other beings. Still others believe that the only difference between humans and other beings is that humans have intellect. So what is this complicated being called the human being?

Before we know who the human being is, it is better to first understand the [inherent qualities](#) of other beings, so that we know what the human being is not and do not define ourselves the wrong way.

There are different types of inherent qualities, including:

- Inanimate qualities such as weight, volume, size, and elemental properties.
- Vegetative qualities such as the ability to eat, grow, and reproduce; physical strength, beauty, and gentleness.
- Animal qualities like having instinct, various desires, attraction to the opposite sex, marriage, commitment, seeking for shelter, a sense of responsibility and effort for oneself and one's family, loyalty, decency, kindness, entertainment, and serving fellow and non-fellow beings
- Intellective qualities such as the desire to acquire knowledge and discover the laws governing creation.

Human beings have five existential dimensions, namely inanimate, vegetative, animal, intellective, and human dimensions. Therefore, all the qualities that exist in inanimate objects, plants, and animals also exist in human beings. Like angels, human beings also have intellective qualities, and therefore, they are interested in learning.

Any wise person accepts that humans do not take on the name of human because of the inherent qualities they share with other beings. For example, if someone is a good and responsible spouse or a kind and compassionate parent, they are not necessarily a good human being in the true sense of the word. That is because, as mentioned earlier, these qualities also exist in animals.

The only difference between humans and other beings is their supra-rational or human qualities. In other words, we earn the title of 'human' only because of our supra-rational qualities. Therefore, our true self is our human part or the Soul Child. The significant point is that inanimate, vegetative, animal, and intellective qualities

are also very precious and important, but they must be under the rule of the human part of our being. In this case, those qualities will not hinder the growth of our true self or Soul Child, instead, they can become the very means for its development.

### **Where Has the Human Being Come from, Where Is He Now, and Where Is He Going?**

The answers to these three questions are essential to know the human being. These questions have occupied the curious mind of humankind for a long time.<sup>1</sup>

To gain a truly deep knowledge about the human being, we need to take into account all levels of his existence. There are three stages of human life: before the world, the world, and after the world. The human being was with God before the world. After that, he came to the earth and took on a physical body. He lives in the world for a while and then returns to God: "...To Allah we belong, and to Him we will return."<sup>2</sup> The word *maad* (resurrection) does not mean "going," but rather "returning." This means that the human being once lived somewhere and now he desires to return there. The human is immortal, and as long as God exists, he also lives and does not die.

After living in the material world, the human being enters a system that is billions of times more perfect, advanced, and attractive than the earth. It has its own laws, formulas, and regulations. The one who knows where he has come from, where he is going, and defines himself as an eternal being will have a purposeful and fully dynamic life on earth. He will make the most of his time on earth. This is because

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<sup>1</sup>. "Whence have I come, why this coming here? Where to must I go, when will my home to me be shown?" -Rumi

<sup>2</sup>. Quran, 2:156

he knows that he has lofty goals to achieve, and that he must grow and nurture himself for very high positions.

The relationship between this world and the hereafter is like the relationship between the mother's womb and the world. As you know, a fetus spends nine months in the womb, working to develop organs such as hands, feet, eyes, ears, a nose, and a brain to be prepared for a healthy birth and life in a bigger world. If the fetus does not bring the necessary tools for the world from the mother's womb, such as ears or eyes, he will live a life full of pain and suffering in the world. Similarly, the human being must grow in the womb of the world in a way that is compatible with the hereafter, preparing for a healthy birth there. If a human does not grow in a way that is compatible with the structure of the hereafter and does not acquire the necessary tools for that place, he will encounter hardships. In other words, he will end up in Hell.

### **What Is the True Self or the Soul Child?**

The Soul Child is the human dimension or the true self of our being. The presence of this part in the structure of our existence makes us a human being. Now, the crucial question is: "What is the true self or the Soul Child?" The true self or Soul Child is the Spirit which God breathes into our body after conception: "...and I breathed into him of My Spirit..."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>. Quran, 38:72

In his first manifestation, God created a truth called the Spirit or “light of Muhammad”; it is the most comprehensive manifestation of God and has all the divine names and attributes. Then He breathed this Spirit into us.

The Spirit, Soul Child, or true self is in love with the Absolute and Infinite Perfection, that is God. Therefore, no limited perfection can satisfy it. Hence, those who seek worldly perfections such as wealth, beauty, or power, the more they acquire these perfections, the more they become dissatisfied, and even greedier. Like the salty water of the sea, the more someone drinks, the thirstier he becomes. We all have seen people like this: those who constantly crave more land, property, or gold, becoming greedier with each acquisition. Or women who seek endless beauty through cosmetic surgery and makeup. Or those consumed by the pursuit of power and promotion. Despite their efforts, none of them find true [happiness or peace](#). Why? Because they are trying to satisfy an infinite desire with finite worldly possessions. It is like trying to quench thirst with colorful food when water is the only solution.

The beloved of the Soul Child or the true self of our existence is the Infinite Perfection. We cannot find peace unless we connect with Him. Therefore, the statement “There is no deity but Allah”<sup>4</sup> is a fundamental principle. It means that the human being has no beloved other than Allah. This principle is the slogan of our true self. The statement “There is no deity but Allah” speaks of a relationship of love and devotion. If the Soul Child is not mature, the human does not enjoy Allah, just like a child who has not yet reached sexual maturity and lacks the understanding of spousal and romantic relationship.

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<sup>4</sup>. *La ilaha illallah*

Therefore, the statement “There is no deity but Allah” is a criterion for measurement. We must all examine our deeds and see if God is our main beloved or not. The health and vitality of our soul is measured by the degree to which we actively long for our Beloved. In other words, we are human beings to the extent that we consider Allah our beloved and we demonstrate this in action.

Unfortunately, those who do not have a correct knowledge about themselves do not recognize the human dimension or the Soul Child as the truth of their existence. Therefore, their material nature dominates them. This prevents the nourishment and growth of the Soul Child.<sup>5</sup>

The human being can only reach true and lasting peace and happiness by developing his human dimension, that is, through being intimate with and similar to the Infinite Perfection.

### **The Effects of Not Knowing the Human Being**

Self-knowledge or humanology is the most essential issue of our lives. We all seek happiness and peace, but we cannot achieve true bliss unless we know ourselves truly. Is it possible to bring bliss to something we do not know? Of course not.

Lack of self-knowledge makes all our efforts for a better life futile and wastes our talents. For example, since all fields of knowledge are designed for humans, any effort to make advances in them is futile until we have a clear and a correct knowledge of what it means to be a human and his status in the world. In other words, it is like flogging a dead horse. For instance, there are so many useless and

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<sup>5</sup> “I fear that this body which is a veil for my soul will abort my soul child (true self).” - Mahdi Elahi Ghomshei

false philosophical ideas that waste our time and energy, and there are so many ethics books that make us feel down, depressed, and unhappy, instead of making us happy, calm, and healthy. There are also thousands of different theories in economics, psychology, sociology, and management that often disagree with each other. In fact, we cannot truly know anything until we know the human and the truth of human existence. The main cause of all problems in scientific, educational, family, social, political, and economic areas is that we do not have a correct knowledge about the human being.

If we do not have a correct knowledge about ourselves, our relationships, decisions, behaviors, thoughts, and any other aspects of our lives will not align with our true self. Despite our intelligence, awareness, and education, we still fail. For this reason, many of us regret the choices we made in past, such as our marriage, academic major, or profession. If we could go back in time, we would make different choices. However, we will keep making the same mistakes until we have a correct knowledge about ourselves.

All our [mental problems](#) such as anxiety, worry, and despair are rooted in not having a correct definition of ourselves and lack of knowledge about our true needs. Someone who does not have a correct definition of being a human and only focuses on inanimate, vegetative, animal, and even intellectual perfections feels anxious and disappointed when facing any failure in these aspects. But someone who sees himself as an eternal being and a lover of Allah has lofty goals, desires, and concerns, and worldly problems does not affect his happiness and inner peace. In general, if we do not know the true self or Soul Child, we allow the lower dimensions of our being to control us. As a result, we neglect our spiritual growth

and focus on developing other perfections. In this case, the human dimension of our existence will not grow, and we will not have a human inward self. This means that we will not enter the hereafter as a human being.

The state of the world is very unfortunate because most people have a wrong view of themselves. This wrong view has led to misery, corruption, war, poverty, divorce, suicide, murder, and plunder. Knowing our true self must be the most important thing in our lives. Then we must manage all the affairs of our lives, including our relationships, decisions, actions, thoughts, as well as what we hear, see, and read in a way that constantly reminds us of the greatness, value, destination, and purpose of our creation. This way we can nurture ourselves in accordance with the eternal life ahead.

In this article, we first addressed the problem of not knowing ourselves properly and the wrong definition we have of ourselves. Then we stated that human beings have all the inherent qualities that exist in inanimate objects, plants, animals, and angels. It is certain that we are not called a human because of any of these qualities. Rather, our humanity stems from our human or supra-rational dimension. We also discussed that there are three stages of human life: before the world, the world, and after the world. We are eternal beings. Before the world, we were with God, and after this world, we will return to Him. Our true and eternal self is the Spirit God breathed into us, and it loves the Infinite Perfection. Therefore, we can only achieve inner and lasting happiness and peace by becoming close to and resembling God. Finally, we also discussed the very negative effects of not knowing our true self. What are your thoughts on this? To what extent have you found peace with your Soul Child?