

## What Is the Element of Existence? Does the Soul Also Have It?

### Exploring the Concept of the Elements of the Virtuous and the Element of Existence of the Upright in Ziyarat Jamia Kabeera

-What is the element of existence in human beings?

-Is this term only relevant to the physical dimension?

The term element refers to the principle, the primary essence, and the fundamental substance of everything. Ancient philosophers believed that the Earth consisted of only four elements: water, air, earth, and fire. According to them, the human body was composed of these four elements, and depending on which element predominates in an individual, their personality traits and moral characteristics vary. For instance, some are calm, some are warm-hearted and passionate, and so on.

Nowadays, we know that what the ancients referred to as "elements," are composed of much finer materials. Therefore, we are no longer faced with just four elements in nature; rather, over one hundred elements have been identified so far, some of which, like iron, zinc, magnesium, and others, also exist in the human body. However, our intention here is not to discuss scientific topics regarding the elements present in nature. Instead, we introduced this background to address the concept of the "element of existence." We all know that our physical dimension or body is composed of various elements whose deficiency or excess can affect the body's functioning. Yet, we may not have considered our spirit or the spiritual dimension of our existence from this perspective before.

-Does our soul, like our body, have an element of existence?

-If so, what is the essence of this element, and what does it contain?

We will explore these questions in the following sections.

### **What Sets the Virtuous and Upright Apart from Other People**

Ziyarat Jamia Kabeera is one of the famous Ziyarat texts compiled by Imam al-Hadi (Peace Be Upon Him). Since it originates from the words of an infallible expert, this Ziyarat has deep epistemological content, and many formulas and principles of divine humanology can be extracted from its content. One of these principles is the concept of the element of existence. Part of the Ziyarat Jamia Kabeera, addressing the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them), states: "Peace be on you O Household of the Prophet ... and the elements of the virtuous" who are the element of existence of the Upright." In this phrase, the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them), are introduced as the element of existence of the virtuous and the upright. But what does this mean, and what is the relationship between the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them), and the virtuous individuals of the world?

The virtuous and the upright in the spiritual dimension possess admirable traits and noble characteristics that form their existential and personal essence. These qualities include beneficence, kindness, happiness, peace, sincere love for others, generosity, concealing others' flaws, confidentiality, trustworthiness, forgiveness, and, in short, all kinds of moral and personal virtues and beauties. The root and

origin of these good qualities can be traced back to a single factor: the existential elements within the souls of these individuals.

Righteous individuals do not differ from others in terms of their physical dimension; what sets them apart is their spiritual superiority, which arises from their element of existence and inner essences. These essences include "Allah, the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them) and *jihad* in the way of Allah"; in other words, the very criteria that separate the believers from the *fasiq*, as we discussed earlier.

Righteous people all are like gold, but the purity of this gold varies among individuals. Some are 18-karat gold; they are gold, but their purity percentage is lower. Some are 22-karat gold, with a higher purity percentage than the previous ones. Others are pure gold, 24-karat, meaning they are one hundred percent pure gold and free from any impurities. These are the ones whose entire essence is filled with love for Allah, the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them), and *jihad* in the way of Allah, leaving no openings for impurities and corruption to enter their hearts.

### **We All Carry the Element of Existence of the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them)**

The Infallibles (Peace Be Upon Them) are our origin, root, and heavenly family. Our soul is of the same essence as the Infallibles, and each of them exists within us as an element of existence. We all have a Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Family), an Ali, a Fatima, a Hassan, and a Hussain (Peace Be Upon Them) within ourselves. We all potentially possess the element of existence of the Fourteen Infallibles in our souls. The difference lies only in the strength or weakness of these

elements, which is not due to the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them), but is entirely due to our own actions.

Our spiritual connection with the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them) is like the relationship between the body and nutritional elements. As we know, our body is composed of various elements and its health depends on the sufficiency of these elements in the body. When we neglect proper nourishment and instead fill our stomachs with useless or harmful substances, our body suffers from a deficiency of micronutrients, and this endangers our health. The situation is much the same in the spiritual dimension. What maintains our balance, happiness, and peace throughout the different stages of life is the extent of love we have for Allah, the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them), and *jihad* in the way of Allah. These three elements are the ones that play a crucial role in our spiritual health.

Allah is the Absolute Perfection and the source of all goodness and beauty. The Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them) are the perfect manifestations of Allah and the greatest guides for mankind toward the purpose of creation. Jihad acts as a pair of wings that lift us away from the animalistic and worldly life, allowing us to soar toward Heaven and the celestial realms. The more pronounced and intense these three elements of existence are in our soul, the greater our spiritual health, and the further we distance ourselves from them, the greater our chances of contracting various spiritual diseases and moral corruptions.

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that the extent to which Allah and the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them) are present within us depends entirely on our willingness to accept them. The more we reduce our resistance against them and align our will with theirs, the sooner and deeper our connection

with them grows, and the more stubborn and obstinate we are, the less we will be able to benefit from these existential treasures.

The story of us human beings going against the will of Allah and the Household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them) can be likened to the difference between wet wood and dry wood when exposed to fire. Dry wood, offering no resistance, immediately ignites and burns brightly upon contact with the flames. Wet wood, however, due to the internal resistance caused by its moisture, must endure prolonged exposure to heat before it begins to burn even slightly.