

What Is the Soul Child?

Its Needs & Path to Spiritual Maturity

The Growth of the Soul Child and Achieving Spiritual Maturity: Why and How It Affects Our Lives

A singular truth known as the spirit, which is the first manifestation of God and the closest being to Him, is breathed into our body in the mother's womb. This truth is referred to by names such as heart, innate nature (*fitrah*), supra-rational faculty, and the soul child. The soul, or the soul child, possesses the same infinite inherent qualities within all of us; this means that the divine names and attributes exist in our souls potentially. In fact, the reason for our coming to this world is the growth of the soul and the actualization of these attributes.

As we reach the end of our worldly life, we will return to our original homeland. However, when returning, we do not all enter the hereafter with the same soul or heart. The state of each of us at the time of birth into the hereafter depends on the quantity and quality of the attributes we have acquired throughout our lives.

Just as newborns do not all have the same conditions at birth and not all of them born into the world with healthy bodies. They may come into the world with weak, sick, disabled, or defective bodies, there are also various types of births into the hereafter. Only some of us leave this world with a mature soul and a sound heart. This very type of birth and the state of our heart determine our eternal place, whether it be in the ranks of Heaven or the depths of Hell. In other words, the heart is our only asset and determines our happiness or misery in eternal life. Therefore,

our main goal in this world is to achieve spiritual maturity and acquire human perfections. Not only is this the purpose of our creation, but it is also the purpose of the entire creation system. Since according to what we previously proved, human beings are the central subject of all creation, and all created beings, including the earth, sky, stars, etc., are a means for the human soul to grow, mature, and reach the status of Allah's deputy. Now the question arises: what needs does our soul child have to achieve maturity, and what care does it require?

Caring for the Soul Child

Just as a newborn requires special and constant care to gradually grow, the soul or the soul child also needs special care to slowly develop and achieve spiritual maturity. For example, a mother feeds her child only milk during the first six months after birth. After this stage, she gradually adds supplementary foods like porridge, which contains milk, to the infant's diet, and then introduces easily digestible, nutritious foods like eggs and apples. Eventually, the child grows to the point where they no longer need special nutrition and can eat regular family meals, becoming less dependent on the mother's constant care and following a normal growth path.

Caring for and nourishing the soul child is similar; before reaching maturity, it must be under special care and provided with suggestion and appropriate nurturing to facilitate its growth. The first step in this journey is self-knowledge or knowledge of the human being. We must know where we came from, why we were born, and where we will go. We need to understand that our true essence is not our body, but the Spirit breathed into us by Allah, which is eternal and seeks the infinity.

Once we grow and achieve spiritual maturity, we will naturally have human and spiritual inclinations and desires and will no longer need initial and special care. However, we must not forget that our soul always requires proper nourishment, and if neglected or overlooked, it can become weak or even sick, just as our body always needs adequate and proper nutrition to maintain its health; otherwise, its health is at risk. The maturity of the soul child has signs and symptoms that we will discuss in the following.

Signs of the Maturity of the Soul Child

In general, maturity in any dimensions of existence has its effects and signs. For instance, someone who reaches sexual maturity in the animal dimension becomes attracted to the opposite sex. Maturity in the human dimension or the soul child leads to our inclination and attraction to Allah, who is the deity and beloved of this dimension. Thus, "There is no deity but Allah" is a human statement that is only activated in those who reach spiritual maturity.

The maturity of the soul child not only brings love for Allah but also affection for the *Ahlul Bayt* (Peace be upon them) and *Jihad* (striving in the cause of God). Because the *Ahlul Bayt* (Peace be upon them) are the perfect reflection and manifestation of Allah, they are the only ones that can guide us toward Allah and on the other hand, they are our true family. Striving in the cause of Allah also removes the obstacles in our path toward Him. Therefore, if we achieve spiritual maturity, our hierarchy of love will always prioritize Allah, the *Ahlul Bayt* (Peace be upon them), and striving in His cause. Consequently, one of the signs of spiritual maturity is that a person yearns for establishing a relationship with their Beloved

and heavenly family; for example, they feel like reading the Quran, supplicating, visiting the shrines of the *Ahlul Bayt* or the descendants of the Imams (Peace be upon them). Thus, someone who does not desire to engage in prayer and intimacy with Allah or does not miss their heavenly family and is solely focused on worldly matters like buying a car, house, jewelry, promotions, or educational degrees has not yet achieved human and spiritual maturity. However, spiritual maturity does not mean that the perfections and beloveds of the inanimate, vegetative, animal, and intellectual dimensions are not respected or enjoyed. But we must not forget that they are temporary and merely tools for reaching our True Beloved. Therefore, we do not become envious, competitive, angry, or resentful over them, keeping our souls untainted.

In general, spiritual maturity ensures that all our relationships, decisions, thoughts, and behaviors align with love for Allah and the acquisition of divine attributes. Consequently, the issues, problems, and difficulties of life, which pertain to our material and animal dimensions, cannot create anxiety, worry, anger, or despair in us or deter us from moving toward Allah. For example, facing challenges such as losing loved ones or financial bankruptcy will not lead to despair or hinder our growth and development; rather, with the right attitude and patience, they can become opportunities for acquiring assets and resembling Allah.

Ultimately, when our human dimension matures and we fall in love with the Infinite Perfection or Allah, our Beloved is always by our side, resulting in our constant happiness and tranquility. In a way that the closer we become to Allah and the more we get acquainted with Him, the greater our happiness and inner peace.

In this lesson, we discussed the needs and care of the soul or the soul child, spiritual maturity, and its effects and signs. The soul child, like a newborn, requires special care, attention, and nourishment to grow adequately and mature. In spiritual maturity, our true and main beloved is Allah, and the organization of our beloveds prioritizes Allah, the *Ahlul Bayt* (Peace be upon them), and striving in His cause. When we love Allah, our Beloved is always with us, and as a result, we are always happy and at peace, free from jealousy, competition, anxiety, stress, and despair over material and animal beloveds.