

The Three Primary Components of Man

The complete man is a compound of three primary component parts, i.e., Spirit, Soul and Body. While a more extensive subdivision into principles may be given, these three remain the most primary and have the greater importance. The more detailed classification is important for the purposes of practical occultism, but for the purposes of the most primary transformation of human consciousness it is essential to understand the relationships simply of the above three.

Spirit, as here used, means the Self and also Consciousness in the sense of the subjective power to be conscious. It is permanent and unchanging since it stands superior to time. It is not born and never dies. It is never an object sensed, nor can it, in its purity, even be an object of thought.

The body corresponds to matter and is quite objective. It is always in a state of continual becoming, so it never remains the same for even the briefest period of time. It has only a dependent existence and thus radically contrasts with Spirit since the latter is Self-existent.

The Soul occupies a position intermediate between Spirit and Body, partaking of the nature of both. In a subtle sense it is material, but likewise, in a gross sense, it may be called spiritual. It is subject to a dual attraction on one hand, toward Spirit and, on the other, toward the body. It may be called the vehicle of self-consciousness in the sense of the capacity to be conscious of consciousness.

If in a given individual the primary interest is directed toward the body and matter, that is the various concerns of the external world, then the soul will become more material and take on the qualities of matter. If such a tendency

becomes extreme then the soul becomes mortal like all material forms. In contrast, if the central focus of consciousness is directed toward Spirit then the soul gravitates toward the spiritual pole and assimilates immortality. In this way individual immortality may be achieved.

The soul tends to become like that in which the interests of the individual are centered. It becomes dominantly conditioned by the predominant interest. Hence, for him who would attain individual or self-conscious immortality the primary interest should be centered upon the spiritual pole of life. This is compatible with a secondary interest in bodily and material concerns.

Pure spirit is not and never can be an object of consciousness as it is always the subject to all consciousness. Hence, in the strict sense the problem of spiritualization of consciousness is that of attaining a state of consciousness without an object. This is not easily achieved without preparing the way by means of intermediate steps. These steps essentially consist in focusing the interest upon objects which correspond to and are relatively more like the spiritual pole than objects in general. The following practices are helpful:

1. Cultivate interest in that which is most universal and least affected by the wearing of time.
2. Cultivate a feeling and practice of brotherhood in the most universal sense possible.
3. Subordinate personal self-interest to impersonal and general interests.
4. Cultivate detachment.
5. Lay the primary emphasis upon integrating principles rather than upon the differentia of things.