

<http://www.indotalisman.com/>
<http://www.bezoarmustikapearls.com/>
luxamore@indotalisman.com

Mystery of the Soul

"They will ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord, and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little" (Al Israa 17:85)

Introduction

At present we are living in a very complex era that humankind's intelligentsia call the "Space Age," the "Computer Age," the "Atomic Age," the "Information Age," and the "Technological Age." These are descriptive culminating "Ages" of the Piscean period that will soon give way to other developments. In time, we will hear terms or phrases such as, the "Ascension Age," the "Quantum Age," the "Hyper-Space Age," and the "Photon Age." All of these latter Ages allude and refer to the characteristic nature of the forces that will soon interact, interface and integrate with humanity in the coming Aquarian Age causing a transmutation within the psychosomatic system of man at cellular and atomic levels. The two-helix DNA structure comprising our genes would split and multiply into twelve strands, in accord with the same law that divides a cell. Certain atoms within the pineal gland would simultaneously become active, as would certain sections of the brain. The synapses and dendrites of the neurons of the brain would form new connections all over the grey matter linking both the right and left hemispheres, and both the cerebellum and the cerebrum. Chakras beyond the major seven would likewise be stimulated and anchored into man's lower force-field. Additionally, the various layers of the chakric-system and their many petals or attributes would unfold giving man untold abilities. It is said that the attainment of enlightenment is not merely a psychological event, it is also a chemical and electrical one. It is in fact an alchemical affair. In short, in the Aquarian Age man will be spiritually mutated, and made anew to a greater perfection-but only if man is prepared and works to facilitate this. This transmutation is the evolutionary quantum leap that awaits humanity.

With all of the awe-inspiring metaphysical developments that would occur, there are still simple truths that would need to be addressed to enlighten the layman, such as the existence of the soul, which is the topic of this paper. There are lots of seekers and potential seekers of a higher reality that need to be shown the way. It is the writer's hope that this paper would fill the void in people's mind regarding the hidden side of their existence, and hopefully, cause them to fathom further in the marvelous mysteries of the universe.

The Search for the Soul

The scientific search for the soul began ever since the dawn of spiritualism that had its onset in the early decades of the 19th century when the Fox sisters claimed communications with the spirit world. Still, in spite of all the "marvelous" high-tech achievements of man in these latter days of the Piscean Age, the question of the existence of the soul and its survival of physical death remains unanswered successfully by conventional science. The soul's existence has not been academically and scientifically "proven" in the laboratory to the satisfaction of scholars of all branches of learning; on the other hand, however, the non-existence of the soul has not been proved either. To our knowledge, the devices that would monitor, measure, and scan frequencies beyond the known energy-spectrum remains to be

invented ere the concrete proof of the existence of the soul required by Science may be attained. The many inventions of Tesla and Edison revealed that they were pioneers working on this problem.

Throughout the centuries philosophers have been speculating upon the existence of the soul and its survival of the body; of its nature and relationship to the physical form; of its origin and destiny; and also of its possible glorified nature, or its state of immortality. However, intellectual and analytical reasoning have failed to provide any substantial evidence of an independent entity existing apart from the physical body. The serious search for the soul by our world philosophers and thinkers through a priori, or reason alone seems to have waned in the twentieth century. Perhaps it is realized that the intellect has its limitations in grasping, comprehending, and truly knowing abstract and metaphysical matters, or it could also be the realization that any concept that could be thought of has already been conceptualized in the past--that any novel ideas would merely be variations of former metaphysical speculations and of the wide variety of theories, and would not make man any more wiser. This would once again substantiate the eternal truth that there is nothing new beneath the sun. Still, there are always die-hards.

The physical senses, the mortal mind, and the intellect are poor faculties when it comes to determining the nature of Reality or the Absolute. What is relative may be known intellectually and experienced objectively; relative absolutism may be speculated upon though without knowing whether one's conclusions are of the absolute truth in the absence of scientific proof, even if they be rational and logical; examples of this is the "Unified theory" of Einstein and the "Idealism" of Kant. Absolute absolutism is simply indescribable and ineffable. It transcends the intellect, and anything said about it in conventional terms is simply misleading. Even our description "indescribable and ineffable" may be inappropriate. From the standpoint of the Absolute all that we know of whether through our senses or intellect are perhaps erroneous and illusory.

In the Qabala, the esoteric oral tradition of the Hebrews/Jews, the Absolute is called "Ain Sof." It is the hidden God, the Source of all not mentioned in the exoteric scriptures. Jehovah, the god of Moses, with his human characteristics, is merely a reflection of the supreme god found in the pantheons of the coexisting cultures of the time. The existence and nature of Ain Sof was not publicized because the Initiates knew that the mental capacity and spiritual development of the masses had not reached the required level whereby such revelations could be intuitively grasped and safely applied. This state of affairs still exist nowadays but with a twist. Now the mental development of man has far outpaced his spiritual side. Whenever abstract matters are discussed, the human mind tend to concretize and anthropomorphize that which cannot be objectified or understood intellectually; and with man's failure of apprehending abstract matters he comes to the conclusion of their non-existence. Man, therefore, becomes ignorant of his ignorance.

Though the above ideas concerning Reality may appear to be distinct, in actuality, they are interrelated and are connected with one's mode of apperception and intuitive insight. Superficially, they are our different ideas or understanding of Absolute Reality. We will not speculate further upon this, for the more we delve intellectually, the further we stray from the truth. Reality may only be known and experienced mystically.

How is the soul related to the above concepts? Is the soul merely another invention of the mind, or can it be known and experienced in a physical and concrete manner, or any way that transcends the physical senses and intellect? As the Age of Pisces relied heavily upon analytical thought in order to apprehend "truth," so the Aquarian Age will rely most emphatically upon altered states of consciousness, intuition and other higher faculties in order to perceive, experience and comprehend abstract realities. Whether the intuition or a higher faculty proves the existence of the soul will depend entirely upon the empirical knowledge acquired by each individual in an absolute state of awareness.

That science would finally prove the existence of the soul, or certain aspects of it at some future date we have no doubt, but the answer to such a question may be acquired here and now through mystical means. In the coming Age there will be a shift of emphasis from speculative metaphysics to applied metaphysics or practical mysticism. Though this is already occurring with the varied activities of the proponents and exponents of occultism and metaphysics in the last few decades, this condition will intensify further in the next millenium. The true knowledge of the soul would have to come from the soul itself. It cannot be otherwise. Science may only discover aspects of it.

When Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity he ushered man onto the road of civilization and into the path of spiritual inquiry. Fire relieved prehistoric man of many fears. With the discovery of fire, man could for once in his life relax in the comfort of his cave without the fear of being attacked by unexpected predators. In his new-found ease man commenced to think and introspect. His higher mind began to awaken and he started off pondering upon the existence of invisible realms and a "self" independent of the material form. This cogitation was triggered by certain experiences that he had such as dreams, psychological impressions, and unexplainable instinctive knowledge. In dreams he felt that something within him goes forth out of the body to continue the activities of the day. This was the birth of the belief in the existence of the soul. The belief and search for an incorporeal principle of human life, therefore, goes way back beyond recorded history and is to be found in all cultures in one form or another. So far, only the spiritual cream of society--the mystics and saints--have solved the problem of the existence of the soul through experimentation in the laboratory of the Spirit.

Throughout the ages mystics, sages, and prophets have impressed upon us the importance of knowing the immaterial entity that animates and directs the body. Some consider this entity to be the mind, the self, the soul, the life-force, the spirit, the ego, the personality, the psyche, the Spark of God, etc. They declare that it is only through knowing this intangible reality of man is it possible to know one's Source and one's purpose of being. The instinctive drive that motivates and impels man to search for the soul stems from the imponderable soul-factor itself. The importance of the search is sensed by the mind but the exact reason is not known explicitly. This is what Jung called the religious instinct. Moreover, this "instinct" is not to be found in man alone, but also in the other primates and the cetaceans. Another curious fact is that the higher animals exhibit many so-called human qualities such as guilt shame, and pride. If these feelings are associated with the soul, then soul, or at least soul-essence may be said to indwell in animals also. However, man is considered the only being that wonders about the soul, death, the after-life, etc. In *The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience*, William Ernest Hocking (1873-1966), the American philosopher says that,

"Man is the only animal that contemplates death, and also the only animal that shows any sign of doubt of its finality."

Does the soul really exist? And what is the value of identifying the soul? Without the search and discovery of the "soul" along with the knowledge of its purpose of existence through whatever means possible, there would always be a feeling of dissatisfaction and uneasiness in the bosom of man. Without the undeniable proof of the survival of individual identity life would appear to be a series of meaningless events and experiences. If the soul does not exist and everything ends at the death of the human form then all the struggles and all the strivings in life serves no purpose. Why bother with the harsh teachings of life if all will end up in total annihilation with not a single iota of the immaterial man surviving the physical form? Suicide would be a convenient escape; and yet, somehow, we sense that suicide somehow violates cosmic rules--rules laid down by whom or what?

On the other side of the coin, man's inflated ego has caused him to believe that he is the only creature on earth with a soul. His "superior intelligence" is proof of it. Man believes that no other creature

possesses faculties such as imagination, reason, and the will as he has--the vital faculties needed to control and direct the environment. This reasoning gave man a sense of supremacy and uniqueness; and also the sense of being the chosen one of God, for was he not made "in the image of God"? This is basically an egocentric point of view, one that gives rise to the exploitation, abuse, manipulation and ultimate destruction of Nature. Associated with this belief is the presupposition that intelligent life only exists on earth, and that Man is representative of it. Man is so blinded by the ego that he does not realize that life adapts itself to whatever conditions it finds itself. The chemical and environmental necessities for sentient life here on this planet may not be the requirements for the manifestation of life on another planet. Life may subsist on other or unknown elements. For instance, carbon being the basis of life on this planet may not be the basis of life on other planets. Other planets may make use of silicon, silica, or other materials instead. That which gives life is not any of the known gases, but the universal life-force called prana. Aside from this, from the metaphysical point of view, life does not solely exist in the spectrum of energies that we objectively perceive, but exists even beyond that. So, as an example, a planet such as Venus or Pluto may be host to intelligent beings residing in the higher dimensions of the planet without being detected by the crude telescopes or instruments that we call technologically advanced, such as the Hubble Space Telescope.

Vital questions that might be addressed are whether animals possess souls, or is this a unique gift to man alone; is soul a substance or a function; and that if man evolved self-identity out of the functions of the life-force, at what point of his evolution did he acquire it; and should soul be considered an entity, at what point in the fetal development does it ensoul the form, or does it enter when the baby takes in its first breath? Such questions may only be answered should we possess a true knowledge of the metaphysical part of life. A study and understanding of all of the seemingly intangible aspects of nature such as the microcosmic constituents and functions of man--the etheric elements supporting organic life, the divine spiritual force that sustains the microcosmic structure, the three-fold Soul, etc., assists greatly in answering profound questions.

Man possesses subconscious knowledge of his soul, but for some reason he blocks this out consciously by "pretending" to be ignorant. He hypnotizes himself into disbelieving immaterial realities for this is the line of least resistance to him. Actually it is much easier to remember than to forget. The proof that the soul, the spiritual essence of man exists is that we are searching for it! It is the mystery of the soul searching for itself.

We realize that this topic is controversial in nature, and as being related to religion, it acquires a certain sensitivity among religious fundamentalists. However, this emotional sensitivity should be shelved aside in the rationalistic study of the soul; for one must be objective, open-minded, sensible, tolerant, and circumspect in the acquisition of beneficial knowledge. Unrestrained emotionalism is a hurdle towards the acquisition of truth. Hopefully this paper would offer the reader a greater insight into the mystery of the soul and our intense search for it. This is a complex subject and it would not be possible to wholly satisfy the intellect. Its purpose is no more than to act as a stimulus for the mystical consciousness of the one perusing its pages. Whenever we use the word "soul" we are generalizing and mean the whole immaterial part of man, unless otherwise specified or implied.

DEFINITION

The Webster's Dictionary defines soul as "the immaterial essence, animating principle, or actuating cause of an individual life," and also as the "spiritual principle embodied in human beings, all rational and spiritual beings, or the universe." It also defines the soul as the "person's total self."

Religion and philosophy regards soul as the immaterial aspect or essence of the microcosmic man that confers a sense of self and being--a sense of being an independent entity, quite apart from the external

environment. Basically, religious philosophical thought believe the soul to be eternal in essence. Neoplatonism is one of the school of thought that propounds this tenet. The theologian and prelate St. Augustine likewise, believed in the immortality of the soul, as did Cicero, the Roman orator. The soul is often thought to be synonymous with the mind or consciousness. Theology builds up upon the above definitions by considering the soul to be divine in nature and capable of surviving the dissolution of the physical form. In our modern times the belief in soul survival is called Survivalism. Certain schools of metaphysics further assert that the soul, or spirit to be a spark or emanation of the Source of all and that it is an evolving aspect of the microcosm working towards apotheosis or deification.

Perhaps it would be superfluous to say that the soul-concept is subjective. Whether it exists is beside the point: the Self, or soul as an essence has never been perceived objectively by anyone. What are seen as phantoms or ethereal forms by psychics or the average person during certain psychological states are possibly the sheaths enshrouding the spiritual essence. If we have a soul, then what are we? What is "it" that is supposed to possess a soul or Self? Can a Self possess a Self? Is the soul to be differentiated from the Self? Unless we recognize that there are various aspects to the immaterial man we would not begin to understand him. It is in this respect that Occultism, Mysticism, the Ancient Wisdom and Metaphysics in general, are far in advance of the knowledge possessed by exoteric Religion, Philosophy, and Science.

The soul is not wholly definable. We may generalize and say that the soul is the immaterial aspect of man; and yet this non-substantial quality of man is composed of various components, not all of which may be immediately apprehensible by the various faculties of the mind. Also, our media of information conveyance such as words, signs, and symbols are incapable of transmitting the whole truth as it is. The divine aspect of the immaterial man cannot be expressed through language, nor can they be formulated into ideas. A faculty of a lower aspect of the microcosm is incapable of knowing a higher aspect in its entirety. In order for a higher aspect of the microcosm to be known it is necessary to exercise the faculties associated with it. For instance the cliché "it takes a thief to catch a thief" describes and supports our proposition exactly. No one knows a thief better than another thief. Likewise, in order to know something we must be that something or function at its level. This metaphysical principle has a very wide application, and many unusual occult phenomena may be produced from its use.

Although the academic definition of the soul has been given above, there is no standard agreement or understanding as to the terms "soul" and "spirit" and also of the other spiritual concepts taught in the many religions, sects and cults. This lack of standardization causes confusion and often result in senseless heated debates and even physical conflicts. Some systems of metaphysics consider the above terms as archaic and specific words denoting the various aspects of the soul or spirit are utilized instead. Should religion update its terminology and doctrines in accord with the modern findings of science and the pure spiritual teachings of mysticism it would be more aligned with the plan of God and attract more followers into its fold; as it is, true religion appears to be withering in the temples of God. This statement may be contradicted, however, those that argue against it may not understand what true religion is.

The many attributes of the soul are generally known to be the personality, the conscience, the emotional feelings, the mental faculties, the Ego, the memory, the various levels of consciousness, and the will. Generally speaking, philosophy, religion, and metaphysics are all in agreement as to this.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

When we speak of religious beliefs we mean its theological tenets. Christianity and Islam share common ideas and beliefs having their roots in a common source--Judaism. This religion in turn

derived many of its doctrines and beliefs from the Persians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, and the Sumerians. Perhaps it would be true to say that almost every religion is syncretic, though they may try very hard to cover this up.

Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Taoism are more mystical in nature and differ greatly from the Semitic religions in many basic principles; Hinduism comprising of many philosophical schools of thought, embraces various theological ideas. Some schools of Buddhism teaches that there is no permanent entity called the soul; that what is thought to be the soul is simply a collection of karmic tendencies transmittable from one incarnation to another. Their extreme views are nihilistic in nature; however, it is doubtful whether this was implied in the teachings of the Buddha. For instance, if there is no Self, then there is also no Gautama Buddha in existence; and yet, prayers are still being directed by the faithful to this exalted being. Fundamentally, although these religions have diverse concepts regarding the soul they all point or refer to the One where all sentient beings originate. All have their own particular name or names for this Source, and all have their personal ideas regarding this Divine Essence.

Theological precepts are often tainted with the frailties of the human ego and intellect and thus offer a poor basis for the study of true religion and its revelations concerning the soul. Nevertheless, we will strive to present its beliefs with as little bias on our part as possible. This section will be brief, for to do justice to the subject would require many pages and go beyond the scope of this work.

In Christian theology it is believed that the soul prior to birth is devoid of any individuality or personality. It is only when God breathes through the nostrils of man that the soul acquires self-consciousness, and is a "living" being--and this condition of being alive is believed to remain with the soul after death. In the Book of Genesis it is recorded that,

"God made man out of the dust of the earth, breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and made man a living soul." (Gen 2:7)

The phrase "living soul" is equated to the state of being self-conscious. According to this notion unless there is an awareness of the existence of an ego, or a self, a person or being does not truly have a soul. Such a creature is "soulless." A person may be alive imbued with the soul-essence, the life-force, and yet remain soulless, in the sense that it is not self-aware. Some states of insanity may represent beings who are "soulless." While the living soul is associated with the awareness of the ego, immortality is associated with the awareness of the superego, the Higher Self. This idea, though, falls in the province of metaphysical thought.

Basically, theology consider the soul to be a substance implanted in man. It is believed to be an entity divinely created and bestowed upon man when man takes his first breath. Christian theology formulated the idea that man is a divine creation, the highest of all beings, and that the whole universe was created for man alone in support of his existence.

In Christianity the terms "lost souls" or "degraded souls" are often expressed. The moral quality of a person's life is believed to be able to affect the soul. However, from the metaphysical point of view soul-essence is immaculate, perfect, immutable and divine. What may be affected is not its essence but its conscious expression. The consciousness arising from soul essence is that which evolves and strives to reflect the image, archetype or blueprint that God created for man. This is stated emphatically in Genesis; however the statement is often interpreted literally. This blueprint is the image or divine qualities of God. It does not refer to form but to the inner nature of the life-essence.

The Hindus, generally speaking, believe the soul to be an entity that resides in the physical body and is subjected to reincarnation in accord with its karma. The Upanishads says that, "The Supreme Person, of the size of the thumb, dwells forever in the heart of all human beings." Its esoteric wisdom, moreover, tells us that the immaterial man is constituted of various principles each having their own particular function. The highest principle within the microcosm of man is the Atma, or according to others, the Paratman.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the microcosm is represented by Krishna, Arjuna, the carriage, and the horses. Krishna is the Spirit, the highest aspect of man; Arjuna the evolving soul; the carriage the mind; and the horses the senses. Graphically five horses are often represented. They represent the senses of man through which the vital force escapes and runs uncontrolled. In yoga and esoteric practices the senses are subdued so that the vital force may be directed within to awaken the sluggish Arjuna. Krishna is the guide that assists Arjuna in this project.

ANCIENT BELIEFS

As we mentioned before, the belief in the survival of the soul after death goes way back to the earliest development of humankind. Primitive Neanderthal tribes, for instance, would bury food, tools, and weapons along with the corpses of their departed in order to provide them with the bare necessities in the afterlife. This custom still survive in some cultures and is a clear indication that not only is soul survival believed in but that the afterlife as a continuation of the sort of life lived in the physical world is likewise presumed.

Animism was the prevailing belief among prehistoric man. Everything was considered alive and pervaded with a soul-force that even gave inanimate objects a consciousness and an intelligence of some kind. Stars in particular were believed to be souls long dead and living in heaven. To the primitive mind, the sky or firmaments were considered to be heaven, just as hell was thought to lie beneath the earth.

That the soul "resided" and functioned in the physical body, a location was sought for its residence. Some believed the heart to be the organ of the soul, others pointed to the head. Some primitive cultures thought that the blood was the vehicle of the soul--that the blood carried soul-substances to every part of the body. The demon Mephistopheles in a play written by Goethe (1749-1832) declares the blood to be a "curious thing." The belief that the blood is the vehicle of the soul is not without foundation, however. If the soul in this context is considered to be the life-force, prana, chi, or even oxygen, one can only surmise how the primitive mind intuited this scientific fact. Scientifically, it has been noticed that blood-transfusion often causes a temporary change in character in the person receiving the donor's blood. Could it be that blood is impregnated with one's soul-characteristics? As the blood was associated with the soul, many primitive tribes such as the Scythians evolved the custom of drinking the blood of their enemies or victims in order to absorb their courage, strength, power, and abilities. The custom of forming blood-brothers is also based upon the belief in the importance of the blood as related to the soul, and its transcendence over fleshly ties. Members forming blood-brothers would drink the blood of fellow members thus forming a soul-bond overriding the normal flesh-and-blood relationships.

The ancients often depicted the soul as a bird often human headed, perhaps referring to its ability to fly. The Aztecs, ancient Greeks and Egyptians among the many ancient races, for instance, often portrayed the souls of their dead in murals and pottery as a winged bird taking flight from its lifeless corpse. Eagles, hawks, doves, peacocks and phoenixes were often used to represent the soul.

Not only the head, heart, and blood were believed to be the seat of the soul, but likewise the breath. Believing that the breath is associated with the soul and life, the aborigines of Papua New Guinea would breathe through tubes into effigies of their forefathers in order to confer a certain vitality to their departed souls. This is a magical practice based on the law of similarity. Many tribal cultures practiced the placement of obstructions in the nostrils of their dying ones as a last effort to saving their lives. This they believe would effectively prevent the soul from escaping and causing the death of the body.

It is believed among ancient and savage people that the soul being associated with the life force, illnesses or feebleness of the physical body are caused by the escape of the soul from the gross form. In extreme cases the soul force was "captured" by some evil spirit and it was the task of the shaman, the tribal witch-doctor to recapture the soul and restore it to the corporeal body. The ability of the shaman to dissociate his incorporeal aspect from the gross form supposedly facilitated this sort of work.

The Ancients' concept of the soul has evolved throughout the ages, and even now our scientific understanding is constantly in a state of change. Our conceptions regarding the soul is associated with our various notions regarding God. As man evolves so does his awareness of the soul and his Source. Man has formed many ideas regarding the nature of his creator. In this context it can be seen that the phrase, "God creates man, and man creates God" has a basis in truth.

Among the ancient cultures, the Egyptians and Hindus were the most advanced in their understanding of the soul. We in particular refer to their mystics, hierophants, and sages. They regarded man as a microcosm with many aspects, both material and incorporeal, with each aspect having its own function to play in the life and destiny of the soul. Their many teachings live on today in contemporary metaphysico-occult philosophy. The ancient Greek philosophers and sages such as Thales, Plato and Pythagoras derived much of their occult knowledge from these wise priests of the Orient.

SCIENTIFIC VIEWS

Along the scientific vein, certain schools of thought believe the self or ego to be a by-product of a brain function, and yet what gives rise to this function is not known, and only given an educational guess. The section of the brain that "causes" a sense of self is likewise not yet discovered. This concept of the "brain causes consciousness" is fundamentally the viewpoint of the mechanists that sees man as merely a machine. The above concept is flawed, however, because portions of the brain have been known to be destroyed and yet the presence of a sense of self still remained. In the condition known as hydrocephalus, for instance, large sections of the cerebral cortex may be destroyed or missing, being filled instead with cerebro-spinal fluid, and yet individuals suffering from such a condition may lead normal lives without suspecting their blight. They may even have an I.Q. above average.

The mechanists, Freud (1856-1939) among them, claim that our behavioral actions are automatic responses to external stimuli, and that life is a result of the right combination of chemicals derived from food and oxygen. That an animating force exists to vitalize the organism they may concede but this force is looked upon as a physical energy akin to electricity. The mechanistic theory describes how perception takes place through the stimulation of the senses that creates nerve impulses, and how these nerve impulses travel to the sections of the brain related to the senses, and how they form sensations; but the theory does not consider the real perceiver that tries to make sense of the sensations. To mechanists, the perceiver is thought to be one of the functions of the cerebral cortex. In short, the mechanistic concept leaves no room for the existence of the soul. To a mechanist the purported existence of the soul is considered as an absurdity.

If the eminent neuropsychologist Karl Lashley (1890-1958), author of *Brain Mechanisms and Intelligence*, after years of research could not discover the seat of memory in the brain, how much

more difficult would it be to discover the seat of the self or soul--not withstanding Descartes' (1596-1650) assertion that the pineal gland is its locus. This French philosopher and mathematician also declared, "cogito, ergo sum," or "I think, therefore I am" thus implying that the Self arises into existence as a result of thought, or as a function of the mind. Nevertheless, mystics have proved to themselves the possibility of transcending thoughts and yet remaining in existence, and possessing an exalted sense of Self, unified with the Cosmos. The mystic's standpoint is supported by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), French philosopher and writer. To Sartre, existence does not depend on the functions of the mind, that a being does not exist simply because it thinks. According to Sartre, existence precedes the mind--or thinking.

Rene Descartes' statement is therefore erroneous, or perhaps our interpretation of his statement is wrong. "I think, because I am" would be closer to the truth. In spite of this, Descartes was somewhat accurate in believing that the pineal gland plays an important role in man's occult physiology as we shall see later when we discuss the metaphysical purview.

Mainstream science may disavow the existence of the soul on the pretext of its immateriality, undetected by their instruments; and yet, matter in its actual state is similarly immaterial. This was the proposition of Leibniz (1646-1716), the German philosopher, who considered matter as a manifestation of Mind--"a stupid variety of mind." To explain this graphically, for instance, what we call concrete matter is actually made up of moving molecules. Molecules in turn are made up of whirling atoms, and these are composed of even smaller particles. Should these sub-atomic particles be magnified "nothing" would be found. Matter, is therefore, made up of "emptiness." We may call this void "energy," "mind," or "spirit," but whatever we call it, the fact remains that matter is actually as insubstantial as the soul. If the reality of one is accepted why not the other? The many particles composing matter are filled with this "nothing," or space. Another curious fact is that if we were to remove the space inherent within a human body, for instance, and all the "particles" united, the total compaction would result in a piece of matter no larger than a mite of dust. Leibniz's theory is also paralleled by the thoughts of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), the American Transcendentalist. According to Emerson matter is "a phenomenon, not a substance." He also considered the material world to be,

"a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day."

Science informs us that nothing is destroyed. That matter is just energy possessing a certain structure and magnetic-field. It is acknowledged that everything in existence is made up of energy. Now as the existence of consciousness and a sense of self are undeniable, they should be thought of as indestructible as well, for Science has already implied the idea in its equations. So why then does Science not accept the possible existence of disembodied consciousness--the soul?--because it cannot be perceived? Quiet an absurdity, really--even while embodied the Self cannot be seen. Can you see your Self?

From whence does the sense of self-identity come? It seems that mainstream science is still a long way in finding this one out. However, new paradigms are being formulated by open-minded scientists who are now considering the world-view of eastern mystics in conjunction with the new developments and discoveries in the field of physics and psychology. The theories of quantum physics and transpersonal psychology are closing the gap between essential religion and conventional science. Regarding the mystery of the Self in relation to the brain we are reminded of the words of the researcher and scientist George Buletza who said in the Rosicrucian Digest (Sept. 1983) that,

"Rather than the brain producing Self, it is the other way around. The brain is a product of Self, of Being ever striving to be. The brain is the incredibly fine instrument created by Self in the process of expressing its own nature . . ."

It has been observed in many laboratory experiments all over the world that human consciousness reveals an ability to extend itself beyond the boundaries of the brain and body, that somehow it may perceive or influence events at distant places. Such mental activities suggests to some scientific observers that consciousness may exist independent of the corporeal form.

Many branches of science such as physics, psychology, astrophysics, and biology, are investigating the soul, and each has their own particular methods of inquiry. Perhaps the most important branch of science that has been developed in recent times, relatively speaking, is parapsychology.

Parapsychology

Parapsychology is that branch of science that studies the nature of psychic or paranormal phenomena. Its scope of investigation covers a wide range of subjects: for instance, ESP, hauntings, poltergeist activity, Near-Death Experience, Out-of-the-Body Experience, UFOs, Strange Creatures, Weird Phenomena, etc. There are now many institutes investigating, studying, and teaching this branch of science. The word "parapsychologist" is often misunderstood. Many people seem to think that being a parapsychologist is synonymous to being psychic. This is erroneous. A psychic may not be a parapsychologist, and vice versa. A psychic is someone who perceives impressions through higher senses not ordinarily registered by the physical senses. Psychics may not generally understand the impressions that they register, and may simply believe and be fooled by illusions and appearances. A parapsychologist seeks to understand unusual phenomena through scientific analysis, and by using empirical methods with the aid of carefully devised instruments. A mystically inclined metaphysician, on the other-hand, basically strives to understand phenomena with the aid of his intellect, intuition, and other higher faculties. The parapsychologist's basic methods are three-dimensional, the psychic's four-dimensional, and the mystic-metaphysician's, five-dimensional, or even higher.

To illustrate the difference between a paranormal and a metaphysician's understanding of phenomena, we will just illustrate one out of many. As an example, supposing a psychic were to receive impressions of an impending disaster, he would consider it to be truth and proclaim it to others. He would make all sorts of predictions anent the impressions that was registered in his mind. He would consider it as a revelation of God.

The metaphysician on the other hand, knowing Cosmic and natural laws, understands the impressions received to possibly be thought-forms-mind creations of fearful beings. Man radiates thoughts, and these thoughts, perhaps without a basis of truth, are received by psychics. The unfortunate thing in all of this is that thoughts are creative. What we habitually think about with intense emotion have a tendency to materialize. So dire predictions often come true; however it does not have to be. We have to learn to eliminate fear. When psychics make predictions they are instilling and intensifying fear among the masses. Now this is a vicious cycle. When people are made fearful by psychics they begin to imagine more catastrophic horrors and these thoughts radiate out again to susceptible psychics who repeat the whole procedure over again. The momentum eventually grows until it manifests physically.

However, let us not digress too far and return to our subject: Parapsychology has established various avenues of research for determining the reality of the soul and the survival of personal consciousness. Although the results of their research are inconclusive by the standards of mainstream science, parapsychologists have been successful in acquiring evidence and vital knowledge that when analyzed seemingly validates the age-old belief in the existence of the soul and its survival of bodily death.

Nevertheless, parapsychologists have formulated various theories as to their findings, not all of which aligns with the traditional view of the soul. It is also important to note that the term "soul" is rarely used in mainstream science or parapsychology. The terms "mind," "consciousness," and "personality" are often used instead.

In general, the various branches of parapsychological study related to the soul are Near-Death Experience (NDE); Out-of-the-Body Experience (OBE); Biomagnetic Radiation/Field (aura); Hauntings; Possessions; Bilocation; Past-Life Regression, and ESP.

Many instruments and methods are used in the investigation of psychic phenomena. Hypnosis is often used to uncover subconscious knowledge on a subject. Such a method has been successful in regressing a person to a past life and even between lifetimes. Much knowledge related to the after-life and the soul's continued existence have thus been acquired.

Unorthodox methods that purports to contact disembodied intelligence might include séances, the Ouija board, the planchette, automatic writing, and the pendulum; some of these methods are similar to the Indonesian *Jailangkung* and *Nini Towok*.

One of the former presidents of the Society of Psychical Research, C.D. Broad (1887-1971), believed that paranormal research might eventually prove that psychological events can survive bodily death. He theorized that man had an invisible constituent; this he called the psi-component, or "psychogenic factor." Ever since the days of Broad, parapsychology has indeed made much progress.

METAPHYSICAL VIEWPOINTS

When we speak of the viewpoints of metaphysics questions might arise inquiring of the source of these teachings. Generally speaking, the tenets of metaphysics are derived from the esoteric transmissions of lofty beings to select members of the human family. These beings have already evolved far beyond the human kingdom and its pinnacle--the perfect human being as portrayed by the archetype Adam Kadmon. These teachings are based on their personal experiences and awareness of the Truth of all things. Some of the students of these lofty beings were able to verify, again by personal experience, part of the teachings that was conveyed by these Spiritual Masters. This would leave aspects of metaphysical teachings as theoretical or hypothetical from the student's perspective.

There are also metaphysical teachings that have been formulated by students intellectually without knowing its truth experientially before-hand and may consequently be without a foundation in reality. This is the reason why certain metaphysical doctrines are ever-evolving. May the reader ever keep this in mind.

From the superficial investigation of metaphysical conceptions one comes to the conclusion that they are as diverse as the many theories developed by science or theology; however, in essence they all share a common thread in that the soul, the spirit intelligence, is regarded as being a distinctive part of the human organism and has a divine origin. One of the most basic fundamentals in contemporary metaphysics is that there is only One Substance, One Power, One Life, One Mind, One Law in the whole Universe, and each being in its innermost "I AM" core, is part of that One. The other laws and principles of metaphysics stems from this basis. The above statement is not entirely accurate, however. We referred to the One as being in the Universe, when in fact, it is entirely opposite. The Universe is in the One, or is a partial manifestation of the One. To the metaphysician, everything has a divine origin and is essentially eternal. We emphasize the word "essentially," for there is a difference between form and expression, and its divine essence. For instance we may liken the essence with electricity, the form-the electric bulb, the clarity and power (wattage) of the bulb its expression. Electricity is

indestructible, so is the Spirit, the divine intelligence in man. The bulb, the form of man, is ephemeral in nature. The clarity and the wattage, the power that it gives off, is the evolving aspect of man called the soul. The clarity is dependent upon the purity of the bulb, or the soul. It is often tainted by dust and dirt--or the negative emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes. This illustration would indicate that the Spirit is immortal, the form transient, and the soul that aspect of the microcosm that seeks to ever grow spiritually until it is aware of its essential nature. By being aware it becomes immortal, meaning that it is continually conscious of its essential nature. The soul, therefore, is only potentially immortal.

After making our statements above, it should be understood that the soul-concept is ever-evolving, whether from the scientific, theological, philosophical, or metaphysical point of view. One could argue that truth is changeless and that what was true in the past is likewise true for the present and the future. We concur with this, but the problem here is man's understanding of truth, and the presentation of truth, and not truth itself. Metaphysics may be understood intellectually--this has its limitations; or it may be understood mystically--this provides real knowledge that the intellect has trouble analyzing, formulating into ideas, and putting into words.

One school of metaphysical thought believes the soul to be a function or development arising out of the vital life force that animates all living forms. This vital life force permeates the whole universe. Matter is evolving to the point where it may support life while living organisms evolve to the point where they may eventually support the development of self-consciousness, and this we call "the soul." However, this does not signify that souls are dependent upon matter for their existence. They are associated with the vital principle of the universe. Some scientists regard the universe as a living organism, or a living thought rather than something lifeless or mechanical. The soul or self-consciousness may be regarded as a higher expression of the life-force that permeates the universe. This signifies that the soul is a dynamic potential inherent within energy. As energy is indestructible, so is the soul in its essence indestructible. As energy is kinetic, forever in movement, so is the soul never the same in its expression--it continually evolves.

Esoteric teachings classify the microcosm into, three, five, or even seven aspects. In the threefold division we have Personality, Soul, and Spirit; or in Indonesian we may say *Jiwa, Roh, and Sukma*--but keep in mind what we have said before that there is no standard agreement as to the terms used. Sukma may be called "Ingsun," "Atma," "the Self," whatever. Terms are not important in this context, principles are. In the Judaic Qaballa, the threefold microcosm is designated as Nephesh, Neshamah/Ruah, and Yechidah. In Buddhism as Nirmanakaya, Sambogakaya, and Dharmakaya. In Theosophy as Personality, Ego, and Monad. In Hinduism as Rupa, Jiwa, and Atma. In ancient Egypt as Khat, Ka, and Ba.

These threefold divisions have subdivisions. In certain Hindu teachings they are subdivided into five. Theosophical and Rosicrucian teachings divides the microcosm into seven:

ROSICRUCIAN	THEOSOPHY
Monad/Virgin Spirit	Monad
Divine Spirit	Atma
Life Spirit	Buddhi
Human Spirit	Higher Mental/Causal
Mental Sheath	Lower Mental/Kama Manas
Astral Body	Astral Body

In the Rosicrucian system, the Divine, Life and Human Spirit may be considered as the Soul. The Monad as the Spirit, and the other lower components as the Personality. Each of these components of the microcosm reside in their own plane or dimension, and they are composed of the substances of their respective realm. Each has its own particular function in the operation of the microcosm. Each component vibrates at a certain frequency. Vibrations may be perceived as sound, light, or hue. The seven components of the microcosm, therefore, collectively produces a musical chord, or as a certain color--the conglomeration of all the colors of the components. This collective sound or color may be said to be our "soul" name. This sound may be dissonant or harmonious depending upon one's soul-development. Each microcosm vibrates at a different frequency; there are no two microcosms quite alike, just as there are no two snowflakes of the exact same pattern. Each component of the microcosm has its primary faculty. The intellect is the faculty of the Lower Mental, the imagination of the Higher Mental, the Intuition of Buddhi, and Inspiration of Atma.

Since this is not a thesis on the occult anatomy of man we will not delve too deeply into the subject, suffice to say that there are many more components in the microcosm than what we have referred to above that are vibrating at a frequency undetectable as yet by our modern technological instruments. However, we will discuss a little so as to give a brief picture of man's hidden composition.

Aside from the seven major components in man, the microcosm, there is also the thread that connects them all. This is called the *sutratma*. Forces and impulses from the highest aspect of the microcosm flows to the lower aspects via this connecting bridge. Our reaching up towards our divine Source builds another bridge called the *antahkarana*. This antahkarana grows from the lowest aspect of the microcosm and eventually anchors itself to the Monad.

The etheric body of man is constructed out of "lines of force." These are the counterpart of the physical nervous system. Where they criss-cross a power-spot is formed. These are the acupuncture points, the minor and major chakras, and the tan-tiens. Certain energies from external sources accumulate in the etheric body of man. Kundalini is one of them. Kundalini is the cosmic fire, the force that has the power to purify and awaken the lower energy structures of the microcosm. When it awakens it flows through certain pathways of the etheric body. There are various main channels associated with kundalini awakening.

Another vital aspect of the microcosm are the seed atoms. These atoms are records of the evolutionary development of the soul, physically, emotionally, and mentally. They also store our karmic tendencies, expressions, and records. Though each of the seven components of the microcosm has its seed, only three are normally considered in esoteric writings. These are the *Physical Seed-Atom*, the *Emotional Seed-Atom*, and the *Mental Seed-Atom*. Each of these seed atoms has its position in the physical body. The mental seed atom lies in the pineal gland, and this is where our consciousness is seemingly focused. As can be seen from this, Descartes was not entirely wrong in presuming the pineal gland to be the seat of the soul.

As we said before, the seeds are records. They may be thought of as our recording angels. They record our every thought, feeling, and action. Our karma are stored in these seeds as well, and from time to time, when the time is ripe, they release the effects of the karma that we put into motion in our past. The timing of this is determined by a higher aspect of the microcosm, the Ego and our Solar Angel in conjunction with the advice and decree of the Lords of Karma--those beings that assists humanity in balancing and harmonizing all karmic actions.

The pineal gland is also the host of other spiritual components, and this is what makes it the most important gland of the endocrine system. The pineal and pituitary glands are psychic complementaries and their harmonized functioning results in a more perfect human expression. They are there not merely to secrete the known hormones but they play an important role in occult physiology. We regret that very little can be said in this paper.

Within the physical heart lies a spark of the Ego, the Soul, or the Higher Self. The Upanishads refer to this as the "Supreme Person, the size of the thumb." This spark is threefold in nature, in has three aspects-power/will, love/wisdom, intelligence/activity. They are represented by three colours-blue, pink, and yellow, respectively.

According to mystical thought the physical body is the temple of the soul, and although religion is in agreement, many religious persons have turned their temple into a tomb, with its occupant dead asleep in the darkness of ignorance. Outward ceremonies, forms, and rituals are actually devoid of any true spiritual benefit when mechanically conducted. They may please the emotions but they deceive devotees into believing in their piousness. The outward forms are merely signs of spiritual realities within. It is by understanding and living these realities that one progresses in a true religious sense. For instance, formal religion may ask us to pray once a day, or five times a day; but in true religion we have to be in a constant state of prayer, "25 hours a day, 8 days a week." Prayer is a certain mental attitude and awareness. It is not in requesting something but accepting that all that we could ever ask for is ours and is being done to us right now. Succinctly, Religion is Mysticism poorly understood as Science is its child that is undergoing a maturing process. More could be said of this but we would stray too far from our main subject.

Origin of the Soul

Man's innermost being is the Monad. This is the SELF, the God within Man. Its nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda--Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss. The Monad is a spark of the Divine Flame which is the One Existence. The Monad is not a creation, it is an emanation. It is God individualized within the microcosm. The Ego, or the Soul, is in turn an emanation of the Monad, and the Personality an emanation of the Soul. It is the Soul that "creates" the physical body.

All things are manifestations of the One. IT manifests as energy. Energy is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. It is indestructible and eternal. Man, like everything else is made up of energy. He has certain magnetic fields and structures all composed of energy. The Monad within man qualitatively speaking is of God, is God. Quantitatively, the Monad is but a miniscule fragment of the infinite whole. When man is aware of his divine SELF-nature, he experiences the inner essence, the God within and thus declares "unification" with his Source. He realizes that essentially he is "God"--however, keep in mind that this refers to the God nature within and not to God's totality, to the essence of man and not to his physical form or false ego. Like Jesus Christ he affirms: "I and my Father are one." This is not blasphemy as theology might teach us. It is the recognition of the love of our Source who has bestowed ITs very being upon us. IT has given us ITs identity. This whole notion might be incomprehensible to some, nevertheless, it is a Truth experienced by mystics of all generations and cultures. There is no separation between God and Man, between God and the Universe. God is immanent within all, and also transcends all. The forgetfulness of this divine union is Man's fall from divine grace. Man ate the forbidden fruit of intellectual knowledge and has forgotten his essential nature. This densified his being and he was made to wear "animal skins," that is, the physical body. Man's innermost being is Light, but because of ignorance he fell into the lower dimensions. Each dimensional descent enshrouded his light with a thicker and thicker vestment until finally he wore animal skins in the three-dimensional world and entrapped himself in matter--the most stupid part of

the Mind as Leibnitz said. Man's original sin is the sin of ignorance and forgetfulness. He who will hear let him hear!

Purpose of the Soul: Evolution

Change is one of the laws of the universe, it results in the cycles of creation/destruction; involution/evolution, etc. The Monad, a spark of the One, is in essence divine. It possesses a divine collective consciousness without any particular awareness of individuality and separation from its Source. However, it was emanated by its Progenitor for a purpose. As a focus point of the One Being it was manifested so that the One could experience various aspects of Itself, to grow in awareness of ITs inner potentiality, nature and power. In order to do that it had to further densify ITs being to the lowest possible dimensional reality. This is the act of involution. Thus, the Monad issued from itself a threefold-Soul which in turned manifested the four-lower bodies: the physical, etheric, astral, and lower mental. Having undergone the involutory cycle, man is now on the upward path. Humanity is presently on the path of evolution as a continuance of its soul-journey and purpose. Along the path of evolution humanity's consciousness grew through various lower consciousness levels typified by the consciousness of the minerals, plants, and animals, until finally it attained human-consciousness. What is the end of the soul's journey? It probably has none. There is no end to evolution in the school of life, or spiritual and cosmic growth. We could say that the end is to merge with God but that is only half the truth. Words cannot express what goes on beyond that, neither can the intellect conceive. Absolute Inertia does not exist in the universe. Galaxies are born, and galaxies die, this goes on eternally. By attaining God-Consciousness, or a higher consciousness level, one goes on to even more lofty spiritual heights that are beyond human understanding. The human kingdom is not the ultimate achievement, infinite possibilities lies before the evolving soul. With God all things are possible--and God partly lies within our being experiencing all things through us. We concede that what we have said above is not easily assimilable and is controversial; however, realize that we do not force ideas upon anyone. It is rather difficult for us to convey abstract ideas with words, therefore, a debate upon this is needless. What we have explained above is simply the main points regarding the soul's purpose and its cosmic trek, and is not to be considered as the whole-truth. It is merely a partial revelation. The whole subject of the soul's purpose would take us deep into the study of cycles, rhythms, spiritual races, etc.

There are two aspects of evolution: the evolution of form and the evolution of consciousness; and also two factors regarding the soul to consider: soul essence and soul expressions. When we speak of evolution we refer to the consciousness aspect, and the expression of the soul of its innate divinity.

It takes a complex nervous system and brain to support a higher expression of the Soul, or the sense of Self; and an even greater unfoldment is required for the sustenance of a higher form of consciousness called "Christ Consciousness" or "Cosmic Consciousness." This is, however, related to organic development.

The evolution of Darwinism refers to the form aspect of life and need not be considered further in this paper except to say that what Darwinism refer to as evolution might simply be a case of adaptation or genetic mutation.

Above we mentioned "soul-essence" and "soul-expression." The soul's inner essence is God-essence. It has all the powers, virtues, potentialities of God inherent within it. All of God's attributes are encoded within the fundamental nature of the soul, just as the human blue-print is encoded in the DNA of every cell of the physical body. Though the soul's inner nature is divine, its expression or personality is ever-evolving. While incarnated in physical form the soul has a dual task of removing the stains accumulated upon its personality, and of awakening its inner divine being that its expression would reflect the perfection of its essence.

AGE OF THE SOUL

Although generally speaking, spirit essence is ageless and eternal, it is possible to classify souls in terms of its evolutionary unfoldment or development. Here we do not speak of the origin of the soul, for from a certain occult point of view, not all human souls originated at the same "time" or from the same imaginary point in space. According to this viewpoint, not all humans are of the same spiritual race. Our many racial conflicts have its source in the very depth of our souls where our metaphysical blueprints are diverse and heterogeneous. In the channeled teachings of the New Age, our points of origin are associated with certain constellations in the starry sky.

The so-called age of the soul may be determined in various ways and there are many forms of classifications. These methods of determining the evolutionary stage of the soul assists us to greatly understand the behavioral patterns and mental/spiritual differences in human beings.

We call some of the various methods of classifying soul development, "the Caste-System," "the Planetary Initiatory System," and "the Chronological-Aging System." Each system has its own method of delineating soul-progress. We believe that psychology would improve its understanding of the human psyche if it took the issue of soul-age under consideration.

The Caste System

According to the Hindus, thousands of years ago Manu, the progenitor of humanity, instituted the caste system called *jati* in Sanskrit. In this system there are four classes called *varna*. The highest varna is the Brahmin, the priests and scholars. Next in rank is the warrior/ruler-caste, called Kshatriya. Below this are the merchants and the farmers--the Vaisyas. The lowest class is that of the Sudras, the laborers. Outside of the class systems are the "Untouchables." These are the Dravidians, the original inhabitants of the land colonized by the Aryans. This caste-system is still in existence today, however, its rigidity has caused a great amount of civil problems and unrest; fortunately though, numerous political and social reformers have caused positive changes and abolished many of the caste-system strict rules.

According to the exponents of the caste system every soul is born into the caste in accord with its karma. If one is born in a lower caste, it is because of its karma. Only if it ameliorated its karmic condition would it be born in a higher caste in a next life. Members of a certain caste were not allowed to marry those of another class. In such a strict system the opportunity to progress was not provided. The lower class eventually became the slaves of the higher.

Although the physical form of the caste-system is abhorrent to the fine, sensitive nature of the evolved soul, its essence has a basis in truth. Spiritually speaking, every person belongs to one of the class of the caste system. In other words, our soul functions at a certain caste-level and it eventually evolves through all of the castes. At present we may function at a Sudra-consciousness level, or a Ksatriya-consciousness level, etc. From the spiritual point of view, there are also classes above the Brahmin level. These are the great souls, men and women who have reached the state of perfection.

Briefly, the soul begins its evolutionary journey as an Untouchable, this is the soul-stage where one simply struggles to survive. One has no concept of sin at this stage, one simply lives according to the basic instincts. The Untouchables are simple, ignorant people. Their mentality and spirituality are not yet awakened. At the next stage, as a Sudra, the soul has evolved an egoic sense and begins to work for self-aggrandizement and self-centered purposes. As a Vaisya the soul becomes very ambitious and materialistic and seeks money for its sake alone. The Vaisya cares for none but for self alone. Everything that exists the Vaisya seeks to own. The Ksatriya on the other hand has evolved a sense of responsibility. He seeks to serve humanity, however, his attempts are still tainted by his ego which is

now functioning in a subtle manner. The Brahmin has commenced to renounce the many vices and negative traits that acted as hurdles towards his spiritual progress. There is now little ego left in him. He often has a mystical disposition. In his mind and heart he often feels that he has "seen it all" and "have known it all." This results in his distaste for the mundane world, and he usually becomes a renunciate. The Brahminic soul finds more pleasure in things of the spirit rather than in worldly pleasures.

From the above we can see the hypothetical situation where a Vaisya, spiritually speaking, is born into a physical Ksatriya caste, or becomes president of a country. This results in a ruler with tyrannical tendencies. Someone who misuses the trust that people places upon him. He exploits his position in order to own and acquire the riches of the world for self-centered purposes.

We can see the difference in soul development as related to class by an individual's understanding of the concept of power. Each class has its own characteristic understanding of the word "power." Ask someone with a Sudra soul-development what his understanding of power is. He will show you his muscles--"muscle-power." The Vaisya on the other hand, will declare that money is power, or even that psychism is power. To the Ksatriya, position, rank, or office is power . . . perhaps his sword too. Brahmins would maintain knowledge to be power. The person who said that the pen is mightier than the sword was a Brahmin. The higher spiritual classes without doubt would declare love to be the highest power.

Though the Caste-system has four, five, or even six classes, they are not clearly distinct. In some cases we have an overlapping of classes. For instance, a soul may be a Sudra-Vaisya, or a Vaisya-Ksatriya, etc. Or a much more precise way of classifying this is to consider each class as having four sub-classes. The following is an example: Sudra-Sudra, Vaisya-Sudra, Ksatriya-Sudra, and Brahmin-Sudra. The next set of sub-classes would be Sudra-Vaisya, Vaisya-Vaisya, Ksatriya-Vaisya, etc. This would make 16 sub-classes in all, and each sub-class would have its own characteristics.

We can also see how the pattern of the caste-system corresponds with the four-fold personality of the microcosm: Sudra--physical body; Vaisya--astral or emotional body; Ksatriya--the lower mental (concrete mind); Brahmin--the higher mental (the abstract mind).

The Planetary Initiatory System

In order to understand the planetary initiations and its relationship to the stages of soul-unfoldment, we should first discuss briefly the meaning of initiation and the institution behind it.

Initiation may be defined as the "act of inducing, introducing, or instructing." It is often ritualistic in nature and is to be found in various social ceremonies. Fraternal organizations often extend an initiation to their member-candidates to impress upon their minds the importance of the step that they would be taking. There are many forms of initiation related to the life of a human being; for instance, birth, adolescence, adulthood, parenthood, etc.-all of these are stages of growth and in certain cultures they are marked by certain initiatory rituals. These rituals are often called rites of passage. Initiation in that sense, is an announcement or revelation of what one has attained, or reached.

In schools of esotericism, initiations are given to candidates requesting occult wisdom. In such initiatory ceremonies, mystic instructions are often conveyed to the one being initiated. Often the candidate had to undergo certain tests and trials to prove his worthiness. In the Initiatory schools of Ancient Egypt, for instance, the candidate had to face the challenges of the four elements. These trials would reveal whether the candidate had the necessary qualifications, such as sincerity, courage, determination, perseverance, etc., in order to progress in the occult teachings and to preserve them

from misuse. When these arduous tests had been completed the candidate would be led to a special chamber where he or she would be caused to experience what has been called, "dying while living." Through mystic methods the high priest conducting the initiation would release the ka, the "soul" from the candidate's corporeal form. In these initiations yogic instructions are given to the initiated one to practice. In most initiatory systems, there are three stages of occult advancement--each stage represented by an initiation. In the initiatory systems of ancient Egypt, these three steps are referred to as the initiations of Osiris, Isis, and Serapis.

Planetary initiations are quite different from what we have discussed thus far. Man is in a state of evolution, and every stage of his unfoldment is marked by an initiation. Often these initiations are ritualistically conducted by the members of the Planetary Spiritual Hierarchy. This Spiritual Hierarchy is the unseen government of this planet.

The Spiritual Hierarchy, according to the Ancient Wisdom, was established about 18 million years ago by an interplanetary being from Venus called Sanat Kumara. This exalted entity is the god or president-director of planet earth. It was he who sent many beings to appear on the world scene to instruct humankind on the Path of Truth, Love and Wisdom. These beings are our avatars, saints and prophets. Many of these entities now hold important positions in the spiritual government headed by Sanat Kumara.

The purpose of the Spiritual Hierarchy is to guide and assist humanity's evolutionary struggle towards higher levels, towards the fifth kingdom--the kingdom of the gods and even beyond. Their goal is to release humanity from all of its self-imposed limitations and false beliefs preventing the attainment of god-hood, divinity, and immortality. The members of the Hierarchy teach every person the way out of the cycle of reincarnation, and the elimination of karma.

As mentioned above, the many initiations that the Spiritual Hierarchy conducts relates to the various stages of humanity's evolution. These initiatory ceremonies are either formally or informally given. They usually take place in the higher dimensions, those above the astral planes. The candidates of these initiations experience them in the Out-of-the-Body state, and is normally recalled during the waking state as a "lucid dream."

The consciousness of life begins at the mineral level. It progresses to the plant kingdom, moving on to the animal kingdom, and finally enters the human stage. The human kingdom is marked by various evolutionary phases. Most people have passed the early primitive stage of humanity's collective evolution--and when we say "primitive," we refer to the consciousness aspect and not to form. The Hierarchy's consideration of mankind, therefore begins with the stage of the average person. When the average person begins to awaken spiritually, he is considered an aspirant. This is analogous to the stage of novice in any religious institution. After this stage comes the grade of discipleship.

After many tests, a disciple qualifies for his first initiation. There are 9 initiations associated with this planet. At each stage and initiation there are certain soul qualities that the person has to develop, certain traits and habits that has to be eliminated, and certain tasks carried-out. It is a person's soul-development or expression that gives us a clue as to where he or she stands on the evolutionary scale or spiritual path as reckoned by the Hierarchy. Most saints and prophets are third and fourth degree initiates. The fifth initiation marks the level of the "Perfect Man."

Generally speaking, the initiate of the first degree strives to overcome and balance the physical appetites and instincts. The second degree initiate works upon purifying and harmonizing the emotional nature. The third degree initiate has the onus of purifying, developing, and transcending the mind. The human ego would have to be eliminated or transcended in the fourth initiation. Perfection is

attained in the fifth initiation. What lies above that, the sixth-ninth degree, is beyond the understanding of the lower degree initiates and the average person. Between two initiations there are several minor ones, not all of which are celebrated in a ceremonious manner. The various events in the life of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament represents the planetary initiations. This is a hidden truth not yet understood by orthodox Christianity. The gospel stories are actually narratives of our own soul-journey and development.

Not all of the initiations are attained in one incarnation. It takes many lives to pass through them. Because of this a person may be born as a second or third degree initiate; a first or fourth degree initiate; or even as an average person who has not yet set his foot on the path of spiritual unfoldment. Our children may be more advanced than us, spiritually speaking, just as candidates may be more highly developed than their seniors when they are first accepted or initiated into a spiritual organization.

The Chronological Aging System

Another method of gauging the soul's age is what we personally call the Chronological Aging System. This method has attained some publicity when the manuscript, "The Michael's Handbook" was published; however, this system is not new and have been taught by mystics throughout the ages.

Basically, this system follows the same chronological stages that an organism goes through in its life. An organism begins its life as an infant and progresses in the following stages: baby, youth (young), adult (mature), and the aged (old). Now the soul also undergoes all of the above stages in its development, and even more. Those souls that have passed the stage of "Old-soul" may be said to be Transcendent and Infinite souls. At each stage or age there are seven sub-stages or levels. At every level and every stage, the soul has identifying traits and characteristics, and these have positive and negative aspects. Generally speaking, by knowing the traits of someone we may tell their soul age, and hence, where they stand in their evolution. Below is a table of the soul stages and their basic traits as taken from the book "Michael's Handbook," written by Jose Stevens.

Level	Infant	Baby	Young	Mature	Old
1	Often psychic; attuned to planet but not people; close to instinctive center; no intelligence center; guarded; feral.	Starts to care about what people think of them. Love from others is an issue. How to get it is a mystery.	Expresses anger; cautious but can be domineering.	Uneasy; starting to recognize importance of emotional attachments, but buries it.	Confident, still mature; in no rush to improve.
2	Less scared; uses thought; can pass in society; tests society's rules for limits.	First level issue becomes burning; "I'll hurt myself if you don't love me."	Dogmatic. Fearful, covers it with dogma. Likes being in authority.	Inner conflict between success & relationships. Agonizing.	Hovers between drama and objectivity; internal warfare.
3	Quieter; no sex in first 3 (sub) stages; has decided can make	Gives up first and second (level) behavior, goes	Quiet, often gets away from it all, hermit; not too much	Quiet, intense, probably not too materially successful; very	Quiet, very knowledgeable; quiet daily life. Drawn to teach.

	peace with others so not so often locked up; can live on edge of towns.	inward. Looks to authority (outward) as to how life might work.	conscience; doesn't like people much.	agonizing.	
4	Starts sex animalistically; no conscience; is friendly as it works better.	Solid members of society; wants to belong to religions, clubs, to find out who they should be. Feels attached to others.	Friendly, successful; your average yuppie; often authority, wealth and power.	Friendly, passionate, relationships more important than anything. Soap opera life.	Extroverted; teaching oriented. Authoritative, almost like power-mode.
5	Does nefarious things; wants to be different; tries everything.	Quiet; can be perverse; may have weird fetishes or really bizarre behavior, e.g., water plants with maple syrup.	Wealth and power through unusual means. Still outgoing, friendly.	Emotional drama; unusual dresser; solid roles uncomfortable; being bizarre; loves fluid roles.	Unusual, spiritual looking. Almost not-of-this-planet at times.
6	Paying back massive amounts of karma. May take many lifetimes.	Very karmic; pronounces that people should follow authority.	Busy karmic, competent; this gets them to extreme power; sees something lacking but can't identify it; very set in ways.	Very agonizing; most difficult of any level; most karma, very emotional; expressive roles may go crazy; nervous breakdowns.	Extremely busy; hard worker; spirituality very important, no rest. Heavy teaching. Trust issues.
7	Sly, naturally clever; passes in society, is not in personal relationships; may start to open emotionally and begin caring for someone else, e.g., Mate or parent.	Complacent; discovers about caring, being cared for. Looking at trying to be authority.	Absolute authorities, calm, born to money or gifted for career. Authoritative manner; looking at mature; may do EST as experiment. Wants to do what's popular.	Complacent, emotionally attached; teaching; not too interested in old soul detachment; almost stagnation, it's easy.	Almost only self karma left. Lazy. Teaching-but only one or two people. Acceptance issues.

Generally, Infant souls are more concerned with survival issues than anything else, and they often live far from the complexities of technological societies. It is said that Infant souls tend to congregate in the

equator for survival is much easier and simpler there. Negatively, Infant souls are aggressive, animalistic, fearful, superstitious, and ignorant. Their redeeming qualities are simplicity, child-like, psychical, and instinctive.

Baby souls are those beings that strictly play the rules of society. They are unshakeable in their beliefs and they have a tendency to succumb to fanaticism, whether it be religion or some other. Baby souls are comfortable with formal rites and ceremonies and are strict conformist to the tenets of theological dogmas. The good aspects of Baby souls might include loyalty and obedience, while their negative aspects dogmatism, pettiness, and brutality.

Young souls are struggling to express their innate identity, their divinity; however, they mistakenly do this by asserting their false ego, by misusing power, and by manipulating others. Hence, with such tactics, they are often the conflict-makers. They are possessive in nature and are deeply concerned with power issues. They love to be known and worshipped and are often the success-hunters. Young souls are ambitious and competitive and ever seek to be prominent in their field of expertise. They are great winners but sore losers. They are materialistically and atheistically oriented, and are greatly fearful of death. They love luxury and the many comforts of life. Positive traits of Young souls are productiveness and industriousness. Negatively, they are competitive, self-righteous, manipulative, and given to exploitation.

Mature souls are less materialistic than their younger brethren. Relationships, cultural and intellectual pursuits are of more importance to Mature souls than the lower activities of the personality. This is the stage where the soul commences to search for a meaning in life. The soul begins to feel an emptiness in its heart for all the mundane things that it sought after in the early stages offered no lasting enjoyment. Mentally, it begins to be open-minded, is introspective, and commences its inquiry into the nature of Truth. Mature souls have a sense of caring, they are perceptive, and are open to others-these are their positive traits. Negatively, they can be over-attached, over-emotional, and neurotic.

Old souls are the teachers and guides of the younger souls. Having experienced life and its many facets, spiritually speaking, they are the ones among human souls most qualified to show others the Way. Usually, they possess not mere intellectual knowledge of Universal Truths, but have experienced them personally through soul-perception. Old souls enjoy their freedom and have a sense of inter-relatedness. All things to the Old soul are inseparable from itself, and are but aspects of itself. They see and feel God in everything. From the perspective of Young souls, old timers are sometimes hard to fathom. The Old ones seem to lack any powerful ambition, motivation, and enthusiasm for earthly life. They appear to be detached, reticent, and aloof. Old souls enjoy unorthodox spiritual practices, and alternative forms of healing. They are esoterically inclined--always searching for the inner truths in religion rather than conforming to its formalities; they are more spiritually aware than the soul groups of any other soul stage. Old souls are adept in choosing and expressing any of their past-life personalities according to the situations that they face in life. They might appear authoritative one moment, and at another they may act docile, sweet and innocent. Old souls know that life is a play and that they are merely actors playing roles. From the viewpoint of Baby and Young souls, the Old ones with their spiritual vision and mystical understanding are simply heretical. Old souls have often been persecuted and executed by the ignorant younger souls. The Young ones tend to attack what they fear and do not understand in the Old ones and thus create unnecessary karma. The Old soul is easygoing, eccentric, kind, gentle, loving, insightful, intuitive, and harmless, these are just some of their positive traits; Old souls have very little negative traits and ego left, although there are some "species" that can seemingly be obnoxious for certain karmic reasons. Old souls are at times lazy, weird, and unmotivated.

Basically, Baby, Infant and Young souls do not have as yet coordinated personalities and their souls are often governed by the lower instincts and impulses of their personality. Mature and Old souls are more in control and their personalities are integrated and functioning under the direction of the Higher Self, the Soul. At each stage and level the soul's consciousness level expands. It becomes more spiritually aware. Almost all prophets were Old souls. They gave teachings to the younger ones that eventually was misunderstood by them and created into dogmas. Young souls are incapable of spiritually guiding Old souls. Young souls merely believe that which they feel to be true; Old souls know what they know. Young souls guess, Old souls perceive. It is said that Infant souls learn their karmic lessons through suffering; Baby souls through pain; Young souls through losing; Mature souls through anguish; and Old souls through terror.

There is one principle that ought to be understood, and that is the appropriateness of activity and expression of souls no matter what stage they are on. It is alright for a Baby soul to act as a baby, but for an Adult soul to act as one is inappropriate and is retrogressive. It is possible to draw a correspondence between the three systems discussed above.

The eyes have long been considered as the windows of the soul. This is an occult fact. The soul's age may be intuitively felt by its eye-emanations, by the way it gazes, the force and quality that its eyes radiates. Younger souls are said to have clear energetic eyes while older souls possess a deeper, worn-out, experienced look. Transcendental souls, or those bordering upon perfection, the Old souls, have eyes that radiates power, warmth, love, compassion, and sincerity. They often have a faraway look as though they were looking towards infinity. They have eyes that see through you.

The predominant soul age of the population of any country reflects upon its social life, its social mores, beliefs, and the perpetuation of its cultural and traditional values. A country's soul-age can clearly be seen in how their internal and external diplomatic affairs are conducted, and how their people act in a crisis. A materialistic nation is basically composed of Young souls whereas a mystically-oriented society is comprised fundamentally of Old ones. Indonesia, the country where this writer lives is mainly composed of Infant and Baby souls; with a smaller percentage of Young souls trailing behind. Adult and Old souls are few.

TYPES OF SOULS

There are no two Monads exactly alike, just as there are no two Souls exactly of the same similarity. Each Monad, Soul, or entity are one of a kind, each a distinctive facet of the One Divinity, of the One Reality. Nevertheless, generally speaking, it is possible to broadly classify the psychological aspects of souls. There are many systems of classifying humanity based upon body type and psychological nature. Physically speaking, bodies may be classed as ectomorph, endomorph, and mesomorph; and psychologically as introverted or extroverted, etc. In metaphysics there are also various methods of classification. The astrological method seems to be the most popular one.

It is no coincidence that both the Chinese and Western astrological systems have twelve signs representing twelve types of men. However, esoteric astrology teaches that this sum is erroneous. According to the esoteric teachings there are actually 144 basic types. Exoterically speaking, since the characteristics of each sign, both Western and Chinese have been well-documented in books we will not trouble ourselves explaining them here.

Still related to astrology are the planetary types. This gets its name from the planets of our solar system and the sun and moon, although the latter two are not technically planets. Below we list the positive and negative characteristics of these planetary types of men (excluding the Plutonian, for much is still not yet known of this type) as extracted from Michael's Handbook :

The Moon or Lunar Type

Positive : Calm, methodical, passive, patient, tenacious, maternal, sympathetic, and receptive.

Negative : Moody, introspective, cold-hearted, incommunicative, willfull, stubborn, unforgiving, depressive, and destructive.

The Sun or Solar Type

Positive: Radiant, creative, elegant, dignified, refined, innocent, fun-loving, and childlike.

Negative: Airy, aloof, intolerant, naïve, indiscriminate, greedy, and juvenile.

The Mercurian Type

Positive: Intellectually active, perceptive, witty, clever, versatile, and clarity of expression.

Negative: Inconsistent, impulsive, explosive, nervous, sarcastic, argumentative, and cynical.

The Venusian Type

Positive: Harmonious, socially warm, loving, gentle, non-judgmental, loyal, easy-going, and friendly.

Negative: Lazy, dependent, indecisive, careless, sentimental, and sloppy.

The Martian Type

Positive: Vigorous, energetic, passionate, decisive, brutally honest, heroic nature, and forthright.

Negative: Impulsive, irritable, pugnacious, defensive, quarrelsome, brutal, rude, lacking forethought.

The Jupiterian Type

Positive: Grand, generous, benevolent, compassionate, kind, loyal, caring, affectionate, and philosophical.

Negative: Self-indulgent, extravagant, conceited, wasteful, and craving attention.

The Saturnian Type

Positive: Paternal, calm, secretive, just, moderate, and self-controlled.

Negative: Immutable, inflexible, overly intellectual, despondent, severe, aloof, and feelingless.

The Neptunian Type

Positive: Spiritual, quiet, idealistic, imaginative, sensitive, graceful, and artistically creative.

Negative: Impractical, unworldly, uncertain, and melancholy

The Uranian Type

Positive: Independent, original, strong-willed, loathing restriction, and humanitarian.

Negative: Eccentric, rebellious, and deviant.

7-Ray Types

Aside from the methods of classification above, the 7- Ray types have acquired popularity in recent years with the teachings of the early Theosophical leaders and the writings of Alice Bailey. The study of the Seven Rays is an abstruse subject and there is much concerning it that has not yet been revealed by the Spiritual Masters. Nevertheless, that which has already been given to humanity in the Alice Bailey teachings are substantial and it takes more than mere intellect to apprehend them.

Before briefly explaining the Seven Ray types, it would be appropriate to clarify matters regarding the Rays. We will attempt to present this simply, in accord with our present understanding of the subject.

What are these Rays? Every object, entity, being, and particle radiates energy. The Sun in our solar system radiates tremendous amount of cosmic energies for the purpose of nourishing the planets and all beings therein. The Spiritual Sun, or the Spirit of the Sun, radiates a spiritual energy of a certain quality. This energy has three aspects to it and four attributes, just as the physical light spectrum has three primary colors and four lesser ones. Each aspect and attribute of this primary spiritual energy in turn have specific qualities. These seven differentiations of the primary energy of the Sun are called the Seven Rays. These Seven Rays are much higher in frequency than those detectable by our present scientific instruments.

Every component in the microcosm of man is predominantly imbued by one of the Seven Rays. The physical body, for instance may be ruled by one of the Seven Rays, the emotional or astral body may be ruled by another. When the four lower bodies of the microcosm functions in harmony their ruling Rays are in turn coordinated by one specific Ray. When this occurs there are three ruling Rays in the microcosm of man to consider: the Ray ruling the Monad (the Spirit), the Ray ruling the Soul, and the Ray ruling the Personality. Each microcosm, or each human being as a totality, may not have the same ruling Rays. For instance, one person's personality may be ruled by the second ray, another the third, or fourth, etc.

A study of these Rays help us to understand the Soul's make-up, its potentialities, its weaknesses and strengths, its quirks, and karmic destiny. One's Ray type/s may be considered as the nature of the power assumed in order for one to play one's role in the cosmic scheme of things. The Seven Rays have spiritual, psychological and physical attributes, powers, and virtues. Their characteristics are represented by the seven fields of endeavor:

First Ray	The Ray of Power and Politics
Second Ray	The Ray of Education and Psychology
Third Ray	The Ray of Philosophy
Fourth Ray	The Ray of Beauty and Harmony
Fifth Ray	The Ray of Science or Concrete Knowledge
Sixth Ray	The Ray of Religion and Worship
Seventh Ray	The Ray of Ceremonial Order and Finance

Each Ray may be perfectly or imperfectly expressed, and thus would seem that they have positive and negative qualities. However, the Rays are actually neutral in nature. Some of their attributes are:

First Ray	Will, sacrifice, renunciation, endurance, steadfastness, self-control, humility, truthfulness, mastery, etc.
Second Ray	Compassion, understanding, patience, unselfishness, tolerance, expression, etc.
Third Ray	Reason, intellect, adaptability, discrimination, service, etc.
Fourth Ray	Beauty, harmony, creativity, purity, confidence, inner vision, etc.
Fifth Ray	Intellect, accuracy, justice, perseverance, punctuality, detachment, etc.
Sixth Ray	Devotion, tenderness, love, gratitude, forgiveness, self-discipline, etc.
Seventh Ray	Ceremony, economy, order, beauty, etc.

The Seven Ray types of men are represented by the: King-First Ray, Sage-Second Ray, Server-Third Ray, Artisan-Fourth Ray, Scholar-Fifth Ray, Priest-Sixth Ray, Warrior-Seventh Ray.

We regret that we are not able to elaborate upon the teachings of the Rays and how the raw data given above adds up together. To do so would go beyond the scope of this paper. We advise those who wish to delve further to study the teachings of Alice Bailey and her modern interpreters.

SOUL AND IMMORTALITY

Immortality in a religious sense, is the conception of the survival or continuation of self-identity, self-awareness, and all of the soul's innate qualities and attributes through the "Great Initiation," as death is sometimes called. Some conceive immortality as a potential condition to be attained by the individual through good works and moral living; others believe that immortality is an innate state of the soul. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the German philosopher, defined immortality of the soul thus:

"The immortality of the soul means the infinitely prolonged existence of one and the same rational being."

The above statement implies that Kant believed souls would perceive and rationally understand themselves to be the same as they were in the mortal state.

Among the people of ancient cultures, the Egyptians were perhaps the first to give credence to immortality. For the departed they formulated specific rituals that would guide those souls in the many events of the afterworld, such as the Judgement in the Hall of Osiris. It was believed that their angel of death, the god Anubis, would assist the newly deceased to pass over to the Otherside where in the Judgement Hall it would be weighed on the scales against Maat, or Truth..

The famed "Book of the Dead" was a guide for the Ba, the soul, written in hieroglyphics upon the walls of the tomb so that the soul would know the things awaited it and what it had to do. That immortality was a salient point in Egyptian beliefs may be seen by one of the inscriptions found on a wall of a Fifth-Dynasty tomb:

"They depart not as those who are dead, but they depart as those who are living."

The belief that the soul survived the body and its eventual return was one of the exoteric reasons that the Egyptians mummified their dead thus preserving it from deterioration. However, the real reason why cadavers were mummified is yet undisclosed. That they did not really expect their departed to return to the same body and be resurrected therein can be seen by their practice of the removal of the internal organs and placing them in special urns. If the body was to be reused they certainly would not have evacuated the internal organs. The practice of mummification is analogous to our modern practice of cryogenics in which newly deceased bodies are frozen. There is always a hope among men that future technology would be able to resurrect the dead. What motivates men to preserve the dead body is the instinctive desire for immortality. Men have always believed that a future life is possible, whether in this dimension or in some other realms. Cicero once wrote that,

"There is in the minds of men, I know not how, a certain presage of a future existence; and this takes deepest root in the greatest geniuses and most exalted souls."

Why is the immortality of the soul believed in so emphatically in most religions and philosophical thought? In ancient times man was considered to be a dual creature. He had a physical body that was

tangible and corporeal; however the ancients also recognized the fact that man had feelings and thoughts, and this was related to an intangible factor that they conceived of as spirit or soul. In addition to this, the many supernatural phenomena such as hauntings and psychic contacts convinced man that the soul was indeed immortal and survive the death of the physical body. To the ancients, another factor that gave credence to immortality is that the life-force accompanies the breath when man as a newly-born child makes its first inhalation, and that they also depart simultaneously at the time of death. The soul was conceived of as being released together with the last breath. Since the breath is indestructible, so likewise was the soul. The living body breathes, the dead does not. Many cultures used the same word to mean both breath and soul, or life-essence. The ancient Greeks for instance used the word, "pneuma" to designate the breath and likewise the vital force that animates man. They also used the word psyche to designate the mind and soul.

Another concept of immortality is that the soul was never created and that it had always existed though its consciousness may not be as developed as it is now. What has no beginning has no end. Whatever had an inception is conceived to have a termination. In the Phaedo, Plato has Socrates arguing for the immortality of the soul.

It is said that the belief in immortality is a direct extension of man's instinct of self-preservation. All creatures struggle to survive, to maintain the life-force; all of man's finer instincts imbues within him the sense of the continuity of self-identity notwithstanding the transitory process. It is instinctive in man to believe in a continuation of life rather than its cessation. Subconsciously man knows what the conscious mind only has a faintest realization. In "Ethics" Spinoza affirmed:

"We feel and know that we are eternal."

From the scientific point of view, granted that the soul survives the physical form, it is still no assurance that it will maintain its integrity or structure forever. For instance, why is it that some religious doctrines believe that the soul may experience "the second death"? In what sense? Also, when the soul is considered to be immortal does this refer to its form or its essence? If its essence is considered immortal science would agree, for it knows that matter and energy are interchangeable one for the other and is essentially indestructible. Nothing is ever destroyed only converted or transmuted. However, as to the permanency of form, of structure--the structure of the soul--this is questionable. Another vital scientific inquiry would be, "Is self-identity and consciousness related to the essence, function, or form of the soul?"

The many theological hypotheses and theories regarding the survival of consciousness are without a basis from the scientific standpoint. Orthodox science even look askance towards the findings of parapsychology. Accounts such as Near-Death Experience, spontaneous past life recall, hypnotic regressions, Out-of-the-Body Experience, and psychic phenomena in general seemingly point to the immortality of the soul; however, conventional science still find such occurrences inconclusive. Fundamentally, science, however, does not oppose the notion of the existence of the soul or of its immortality; it is at present researching through empirical methods to prove or disprove it. However, it is realized that the phenomenon of the soul does not readily submit to objective analysis. Science realizes the limitations of its instruments in the detection of the existence of the soul.

There is another aspect to immortality and this concerns the physical form. Physical immortality is an ancient belief and is to be found in many cultures. In legends and in tales we find the theme of physical immortality repeatedly. The possibility of its attainment is well believed in among most metaphysicians. There are many highly spiritually developed yogis who are said to have reached the state of physical immortality. We personally possess the secret teachings that according to our

preceptors in metaphysics, allow one to acquire immortality not only of the soul, but of the physical body as well--at least, it extends man's life-span way beyond the norm.

In Taoism spiritual and physical immortality are both given careful consideration. Regarding physical immortality, there are many alchemical formulas supposed to immortalize the material body. Those who achieve physical immortality are called *hsien*. To the ignorant these alchemical formulas are supposedly made out of mineral or herbal substances; but to the knowledgeable, they refer to the internal processes of chi or energy. The methods for attaining spiritual immortality is associated with the spiritual realization of Tao, the Absolute, the "Mother," the "Source of all things." To Lao Tzu, death does not touch the one who has realized the Tao.

According to certain spiritual teachings immortality is the continuous awareness of Self-existence and being without ever lapsing into an unconscious state no matter what psychological and physical conditions or transformations take place such as sleep, concussions, or death. It is the state of realizing one's divinity and unity with the Source of all. Immortality and the state of being eternal are associated with one's divine Parent. Unless one recognizes and is aware of this unified state between one's identity and the Divine Being, one is not immortal, one merely undergoes various changes and is subjected to the whimsical forces of nature. Immortality from this point of view is not something that we automatically acquire when we pass through transition. It is a state that we may acquire here and now. The realization of one's unity with God is the confirmation of one's perpetual existence. There are many systems that purport to teach the aspirant the methods of acquiring mystical realization and unification with the divine being, they usually belong to the esoteric section of our world-religions; like religion proper, some of these mystical schools believe theirs to be the best. Popular metaphysics as a whole, embraces many of the above concepts regarding immortality.

The desire for immortality have also taken hold on the minds of computer engineers. To these scientists the computer is analogous to the human brain. They hope that one day a super-computer would be created where every function of the brain would be duplicated, and that it would be possible to transfer or download the human mind and consciousness into it thus creating an artificial habitation for the soul-intelligence. This is their strategy for immortalizing the soul-"a ghost in the machine" reality. Related to this is the supposition that computers and micro-chips would be so advanced and sophisticated in the near future that it would probably generate artificial intelligence-that is, thoughts and feelings of their own.

SOUL FACULTIES

The soul has various psychic faculties though most of them are not being used by the average person. The use of these faculties often result in strange paranormal activities or phenomena. Most psychic phenomena associated with the dead are actually caused by the living. For instance, hauntings are often believed to be "dead persons" appearing to the living, while in most cases hauntings are caused by the astral forms of people who are asleep and inadvertently appearing to others.

Some of the various psychic faculties are: Clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, telepathy, psychokinesis, precognition, soul-travel, and bilocation. These psychic faculties may be developed. It is not merely a gift. Those who are born with them usually have acquired them through psychic-training programs in past-lives. The "powers" that we mentioned above are considered to be the lower faculties of the soul. These powers belong to the etheric, astral and lower mental bodies. There are higher spiritual faculties and these are associated with the higher components in the microcosm, such as the Higher Mental, Buddhi, and Atma.

SOUL CULTURE

Spiritual evolution, when left to nature, progresses at a snail's pace. Plant-like consciousness may take millions of years just to reach the animal consciousness stage. Human beings, likewise, in the natural course of evolution would similarly require eons just to attain human perfection or godhood--the next kingdom above humankind. However, there are spiritual practices that assist one to shorten this time tremendously. What would take a million years could all unfold in a single lifetime. This was alchemy's biggest secret discovery--the transformation of lead, which is symbolical of the imperfect human being, into gold, which represents the perfect man. Why wait for nature to transmute lead into gold when it could be done in the laboratory by duplicating and accelerating nature's processes? This was the alchemist's reasoning. Though they exoterically referred to metals as the subject of their transformation, they were actually referring to the human soul.

The acceleration of evolution was referred to by the Master Jesus when he mentioned the "strait and narrow path." According to him only the few would discover this path. These are the teachings that the Master promised to give to his disciples at a time when they were totally prepared for it. These esoteric doctrines and mystical practices are "lost" in the present-day teachings of the Churches. We need not say any more of this.

At present there are many esoteric schools and organizations, both East and West, helping mankind to evolve at a rapid pace. Among the creatures of the four kingdoms, man is the only one able to take his evolution into his own hands. By working with nature, humanity would make much progress. If society en masse reaches the consciousness level attained by the saints there would be no more wars and needless conflicts. This is not an impossibility. Mortal, human thoughts make us believe in our limitations--limitations that actually do not exist.

Soul culture helps us to rapidly evolve and to reach the goal set for us human beings by our Progenitor. In soul-culture there are three basic practices to consider: meditation, energy-work, and soul-refinement.

Meditation

Meditation is the most basic practice in soul-culture. It has been engaged in by saints, prophets, sages, and mystics throughout the ages. There are many meditational methods designed for various purposes. The Hindu yogis have their own methods of meditation, just as the Buddhists and the Taoists have theirs. The Western Tradition also possesses its own forms of meditation.

The basic purpose of meditation is to attune one's conscious mind with one's Higher Self, one's Soul, or one's inner divinity. In prayer we speak and the higher Intelligences listen; in meditation, the higher Intelligences speak and we listen. Hence, meditation helps us to receive spiritual and divine impulses emanating from God and one's highest being. Inspiration and self-empowerment are the result of true meditation.

In the more advanced practices of meditation we are led gradually to higher and higher dimensions or planes of consciousness where we would ultimately unite or become aware of our Spirit--the Monad. This attainment is referred to by Western writers as "Cosmic Consciousness." In an ancient scripture we are taught a method of meditation:

"The Self, the inner spirit, ever dwelleth within the hearts of men. Patiently separate Him thou from the cover of the body in which He liveth, even as thou takest off the

blades of a reed-plant. Him know thou as pure and immortal; know thou, He is pure and immortal." (Kathopanishad, II. 6.17)

Energy-Work

Before the advanced practices of meditation may be successfully carried-out, one's whole force-field and energy-structure would have to be purified, strengthened, refined, awakened, restructured, and empowered. This practice is referred to as energy-work.

The various components of the microcosm that has to be worked upon in energy-work includes the physical body, the chakras, the aura, the etheric channels, the etheric webs, the electronic belt, and the subconscious mind. There are material and psychic toxins accumulated in the vehicles of the Personality that have to be eliminated; and karmic stains that have to be removed. These negative energies causes lots of problems, not only in one's higher spiritual cultivation practices, but also in daily life. Many of our so-called bad-luck stems from these etheric rubbish accumulated upon our system.

Soul-Refinement

Evolution requires soul-refinement. In order to raise one's vibrations and improve the quality of one's force-fields it is also necessary to refine one's soul-nature, one's character. It is a person's low character that generates and attracts negative energies and it would be senseless to constantly perform energy-work when the time could be spent in more beneficial meditational practices. For this reason, aside from energy-work, one has also to work upon spiritualizing one's character--getting to the root of the problem, so to speak. Almost all religions teaches this aspect of mysticism--a moral standard is set for us to follow. However, sometimes we find it difficult to live up to the standard laid out for us. Sometimes we may consciously know a thing to be right, but subconsciously we are impelled to think, feel or do the opposite. We experience an inner conflict. Metaphysics offer certain methods to overcoming this conflict, and to restructure the subconscious mind with positive energy patterns.

CONCLUSION

It is regrettable that this work could not be presented in a more perfect manner, and that it remains much to be desired. What we have written in this paper merely represents the tip of the iceberg. There is much more to be taken into consideration than what we have addressed in this paper. The Ancient Wisdom is a storehouse of metaphysical knowledge and we advise the interested reader in mystical matters to delve into its study. Certain aspects and knowledge concerning the whole immaterial part of man, as well as the destiny of the Soul goes way beyond the understanding and reach of conventional science and psychics. Nevertheless, There are many more things that could be said about the Soul, not only from the metaphysical point of view, but also from the anthropological, psychological, philosophical, and religious perspective. It is for this reason that we appeal to the reader to do some personal research and acquire the necessary information that would lead to a greater understanding of the Soul--not solely in an intellectual way, but also experientially in a mystical manner through spiritual cultivation. In the early stages of this paper we spelled the word Soul with a small first capital-letter; now we end this work using an upper-case. After studying this paper the reason should be obvious. One last advice: Know Thyself!
