The Concept of Spirituality

Rolando Gripaldo

ANNALS of the University of Bucharest
Philosophy Series

Vol. LXVI, no. 1, 2017
pp. 29 – 37.
THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY

ROLANDO M. GRIPALDO

Abstract

This paper attempts to understand the relationships among the various elements of the human person: body, mind, spirit, soul, ego, consciousness, and self as viewed from the Western philosophical tradition. The paper argues that in order to know the soul, one should know the self because it is the self – not the mind or body – that represents the human person. Moreover, it is important to understand the spiritual underpinnings of the self for the purpose of reconciliation.

Keywords: spirituality, mind, body, self, consciousness.

Introduction

The perennial quest for the metaphysical origin of the spirit, especially from the Western philosophical tradition, is a worthy quest. We are enamored with so many metaphysical conceptions and elaborative religious definitions of the spirit (pneuma), soul (psyche), mind (dianoia), consciousness (syneidisi), body (soma), self (eme), and I (ego) that sometimes we become confused with them. The confusion

1 Paper read during the RVP Summer Seminar, “The Role of Spirituality in Promoting Reconciliation” on August 17-23, 2015 in Constanta, Romania. Organized by the Council of Research in Values and Philosophy (Washington, D.C.), the Romanian Academy (Iaqi Branch), and the Bretanion Institute. The research of this paper is funded by the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society.

2 Rolando M. Gripaldo, PhD (University of the Philippines), former Professor of Philosophy at De La Salle University and The Mindanao State University. Email: drgrips@yahoo.com.
arises, specifically, when the soul is identified with the mind and vice versa. There is a long tradition of this identification such that the mind (dianoia) is called psyche (soul) and the attributes of the mind are labeled “psychological attributes,” as in the usage of Peter F. Strawson (1963) and in the usage of the subject Psychology, which literally means the study of the mind or consciousness and not, strictly speaking, the study of the soul.³

It is preferable to identify the mind (dianoia) with consciousness (syneidisi) to identifying it with the soul (psyche).

To try to understand the metaphysical origin of the spirit, it is advisable to bracket all those existing definitions and then try to start anew. In the process, we will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship of the mind and body with respect to the human person?
2. What is the status of the body or mind in relation to the self?
3. In trying to know the self, what is its relationship to the soul?
4. How does the spirit or soul come into being?
5. If spirituality is present in every human person, how can we harness it for the purpose of reconciliation? We hope to answer these questions satisfactorily in the foregoing discussions.

**Mind, Body, and the Human Person (Question 1)**

The human person is a unity. In the main – empirically speaking – it has two major aspects: the physical (body) and the mental (mind). Throughout the long history of philosophy – particularly, in the Western philosophical tradition – the human person, as mind and body, has been reduced, on the one the hand, to the body (the materialists) and the mind became the emanation of the body. On the other hand, there were others who were quick to reverse the observation and reduce the human

³ Psychology should be the study of the soul (psyche) while the study of the mind (dianoia) (or consciousness, syneidisi) will only be its subset.
person to the mind (the mentalists, idealists, and spiritualists) and the body is simply the invention of the mind.

It is argued that when the human person dies, the body disintegrates while the mind – identified as the soul – leaves the body to dwell somewhere else: to heaven, to Hades, or to where it comes from, that is, its metaphysical origin. It is assumed that this “somewhere else” is spiritual in nature. There is no empirical evidence for this, but the fact that it is not physical, then the only logical conclusion is that it is mental or spiritual in essence. Many religions identify this spirituality to dwell in heaven while others simply call this spiritual dwelling – as what Keith Chandler (2001) said – the Cosmic Mind (see Gripaldo 2002, 211-16).

At least, two reactions to this view have come about. The first comes from Bertrand Russell (1962, 141-44; see Gripaldo 1971) who argued that this contest between the lion (materialist) and the unicorn (mentalist) as to who owns the crown is nothing but a “heraldic invention.” The metaphysical origin is something neutral – neither mental nor physical – but from whence springs both mind and body. He (1956) called this metaphysical ground – the ontological ground of being – as “neutral monism.”\(^4\)

The other reaction comes from Strawson (1963, 81-113) who contended that the concept of the person is a primitive concept, that is, more primitive than the concept of mind or the concept of the body. Strawson agreed with Gilbert Ryle’s (1979) view that the mind is not a ghost in a machine (body), but he gave equal treatment to both the body and the mind as aspects of the human person. This is the dual aspect theory of the person. Strawson affirmed that the material predicates (M-predicates) and the psychological predicates (P-predicates) are attributes of the human being and, as such, not one of them can represent the

---

\(^4\) The ground of being is neutral, but how Russell (1956) arrived at this ground was through an analyses of matter and mind from the perspective of the mind and in that sense it has been dubbed as *idealistic* or *mentalistic*. But, in my view, is there any other way by which we can arrive at anything at all except through the mind? Even the materialists on this version who believe that mind is condensed matter or the idealists who believe that matter is condensed mind have to make use of the mind to arrive at their respective *inferential* conclusions. For a discussion on this matter, see Stubenberg (2010, 2014).
human person. It is a mistake to say – in fact, a “category mistake”\(^5\) (Ryle 1979, 17-23) – to argue that the mind thinks or the body runs. This perspective gives us the distorted perception that the mind or the body can represent in itself the human person. The human person is a unity and, therefore, the person thinks and the person runs.

But if the mind or the body does not holistically represent the human person, what entity, then, represents the person?

**Mind, Body, and the Self (Question 2)**

The *self*, the *I*, or the *ego* represents the human person. The ego (“I”), or the subject, is closely associated with the soul, but it is also closely associated with the mind. I will skip the discussion on this matter from the ancient and medieval periods, but I would like to begin with René Descartes, who started an interesting discussion on this issue during the modern period.

**René Descartes**

In using methodical doubt in his philosophy, Descartes (1960, 1-175) doubted everything, including his own existence and the existence of God. He discovered one indubitable fact that he could not doubt that he was thinking because to doubt was still to think. He concluded that for the subject to think was, therefore, for the subject to exist: “I think,

---

\(^5\) I interpret Ryle’s notion of “category mistake” broadly as to include mistaking a *single* category or logical type (the body or mind) to represent a *collective* category of the human person without qualification, and vice versa. Strictly speaking, Ryle talks about not recognizing the whole collective category (the library, colleges, museums, etc.) as representing the single category (university). Broadly speaking, a category mistake occurs when one mistakes one category (mind or body) to represent the other category (human being), or when one does not recognize that one category (collective: buildings, etc.) to represent the other category (single: university).
therefore I am.” Note that, for Descartes, the subject – the “I” – is identical with the “thinking thing,” or the person.

There is an interesting twist in this conclusion. If the subject – the “I” – is identical with the human person, what significant parts of the subject would constitute the person? It was obvious for Descartes that the human person consists of mind and body. Since the body is physical while the mind is nonphysical, it becomes logical to infer that our conception of the soul, which is nonphysical, should be associated with our conception of the mind. It is apparent that a part of the subject – the bodily or somatic part – will perish when the subject dies, while it is also apparent that the other part of the subject – the mental or spiritual part (the soul) – will survive the subject’s death. Notice that although Descartes reduced the human person to two entities, he thought that the mind or the “thinking thing” as conjoined with the body represents the human person. In this sense, while the human person is a unity of two substances, the mind or soul or self was primary, while the body was secondary. This view is, of course, different from the position of Strawson that the person as a unity is only one substance having both M-predicates and P-predicates.

This Cartesian dualism looks tidy and was upheld by British empiricist John Locke.

John Locke

Locke (1961, 7-133) tried to elaborate on the Cartesian substances. He wanted to elaborate on the qualities of the body, or matter in general, and the qualities of the mind. This way, we can understand the basic differences of the two substances. The criterion of the distinction is thru empirical perception. On the one hand, those qualities that can be verified by any perceiver must reside in the material object or physical body. These qualities are shape, size, solidity or weight, motion, place, and number. The object may change through time but these qualities remain in the object. We call these as “objective” or primary qualities. This means that the qualities or properties are in the object regardless as to whoever perceives them.
On the other hand, those qualities, whose existence depends largely on the perceiver, do not reside in the object, but exist only to the perceiver. These qualities are smell, taste, color, sound, and touch. The sea, for instance, may be “green” to one but “blue” to another. The banana may taste sweet to one, but not to the other. The sound one hears may be music to one but noise to the other. And so on. These qualities are not in the object although apparently the object has that power to generate these relative percepts. These qualities are called “subjective” or secondary qualities. Locke affirmed the person as a unity of two substances, but in this case, the soul – like in the case of Descartes – was identified with the mind.

The person who attempted to upset this dual balance was Bishop George Berkeley. He tried to show that the person is only one substance.

**George Berkeley**

The method used by Berkeley (1961, 135-215) in reducing the two substances to one hinges on the perceptibility of what there is. What is there outside oneself will exist only when it is perceived. This process enables the existence of what there is as relative to the perceiver: “To be is to be perceived.” Nothing exists to someone unless it is perceived. When it is not perceived, then it is nonexistent. Locke’s secondary qualities, for example, exist only because they are perceived by the person.

Berkeley’s task, therefore, was to convert Locke’s primary qualities to secondary qualities. Motion is not absolute but relative: the bus moves away from a person but moves towards another person. Motion, therefore, is relative to the perceiver. A coin may look circular from one person, elliptical from another person, or a straight line from a third person. The weight of an object may be light if lifted by a muscular person but heavy when lifted by a skinny one. The place of an object may appear left of the table from one perceiver or right of the table from another perceiver. A shape may be trapezoid for one, a parallelogram for another or a square for third one, depending on the angular position of the person viewing it. The perception of number depends on the accuracy of the computation of someone who perceives it: the volume of
an object may be nineteen square feet for an intelligent person but may appear as twenty square feet for a less intelligent one. One might object, in this case, that there can be an independent measuring stick to verify the speed of the moving object, the accuracy of the volume etc., but apparently this was not important for Berkeley, since those perceptions precisely no longer exist when not perceived by the perceivers.

In other words, if all qualities are secondary, what happens, then, with the “material object” out there? Berkeley is constrained to conclude that only the mind or soul as a substance exists while matter is an invention of the mind.

Puzzled by this conclusion, David Hume decided to analyze the concept of mind.

David Hume

Hume (1961, 307-430) believed that there must be an entity we call mind. If mind is the only substance, then there must be something that we can grapple with. Through introspection, he observed the processes of the mind. He noticed the changing patterns of the mind: from one emotion to another, from one passion to another, from one thought to another, from one feeling to another, from one taste to another, and so on. A person may like somebody, then get angry with her, and finally hate her. Hume’s conclusion was clear and vivid: there is no such entity as mind. What we call mind is just a “collection” or a “bundle” of thoughts, emotions, passions, feelings, and other processes emanating from the body. The body is, therefore, the substance while what we call mind is just a physical emanation or an epiphenomenon of the body. Hume’s conclusion is a graphic picture of reductionism which extinguishes the validity of the mind or soul.

According to Immanuel Kant (1950, 8), this skepticism of Hume “interrupted [his] dogmatic slumber.”
Immanuel Kant

Kant (1966) said that the mind does not passively receive perceptions, but is the originator of these perceptions or of experience in general. Kant thought that Hume was looking for an object which can be observed. But experience consists of two parts: that which can be observed (the *phenomenon*) and that which cannot be observed (the *noumenon*). Every object of experience consists of the *phenomenon* and the *noumenon*. A chair, for example, consists of the observables: size, shape, volume, color, taste, solidity, smell if any, and so on. But underneath these observables is a nonobservable object that binds these properties together in one locality: the *noumenon* (the thing-in-itself).

Kant believed that what Hume was looking for was the *noumenal* mind but was frustrated in his introspective observations, for he could only observe the *phenomenal* mind – the ever-flowing thoughts, passions, feelings etc., which is a process and not an entity. Kant maintained that what Hume observed was the *empirical* ego or *empirical* mind, but not the *transcendental* ego or *transcendental* mind. Underneath the empirical ego, which Hume observed, is the transcendental ego, which Hume did not and could not observe, but which binds all those thoughts, feelings, emotions, and so on, together into the total experience of the person. Notice that there is one important element that Kant introduced: the ego, which he identified with the mind or self\(^6\) (see Gripaldo 2006, 66-78).

Mind, Self, and Soul (Question 3)

We can accept Strawson’s view that the concept of the person is primitive and prior to the concepts of mind and body. But we have to reconstruct Strawson because of the apparent confusion between the

\(^6\) Hegel, G.F.W. (1997, 2010) absolutized the *noumenal* self into the Absolute Spirit which uses individual human beings as instruments for the completion of the Absolute Idea through the historical process of the dialectics. He negates or renders illusory the self-autonomy of the individual soul, and I am not comfortable with that interpretation of the soul.
function of the mind and the functions of the soul. The soul or self, as representing the person, is the active originator of experience.

The main function of the mind or consciousness is to passively receive the mental states that emanated from the physical brain and even some unconscious mental states (not caught with our attention) surrounding an event (see Akintona 2012, 38-44). As originator of experience, the main functions of the soul are thinking, understanding, computing, knowing, evaluating, conceiving, reasoning (cognitions); being angry, joyful, fearing, hating, being jealous, loving (emotions); experiencing pains, itches, aches, throbs, tickles (sensations); smelling, tasting, touching, seeing, hearing (perceptions); acting, intending, trying, wanting (conations); and hallucinating, dreaming, seeing after-images, imagining (quasi-perceptions). It is a *category mistake* to take the functions of the soul as the functions of the mind (cf. Maslin 2001; see Gripaldo 2006, 8). Experience, in general, or the experience of the soul (*psyche*), consists of the physical (P-predicate) and the mental (M-predicate) experiences.

The mind, as a passive receptor of experiences (or psychological processes), does not have its own independent processes. So-called “mental” processes are, in fact, the psychological processes appearing in the mental or conscious receptacle.

If the soul (*psyche*) or the self (*eme*) or the I (*ego*) is the active originator of experience, we immediately notice that the soul is unobservable while the self is observable. How can that be? It is in this aspect that Kant is relevant.

The soul is the transcendental self or ego – the *noumenal* self – which cannot be observed. That self or ego – the “I” – that we observe in experience is the empirical or *phenomenal* self. The soul and the empirical self are one and the same. The soul and the empirical self as a unified entity represent the human person. When the soul actively works with the world, it manifests itself through the mind (the M-predicate) as an empirical self. The mind is the window by which the transcendental soul enters the world of matter as an empirical or a phenomenal self. The empirical self is all that we know about the person’s soul. If, on the one hand, the empirical self is bad, vicious, vindictive, manipulative, and maliciously competitive, so is that person’s soul. When the person is incurably evil, then we say that his or her soul – religiously or
metaphorically speaking\textsuperscript{7} – goes to hell. On the other hand, if the empirical self is good, forgiving, compassionate, loving, understanding, and the like, so is that person’s soul. When the person is invariably good, then we say his or her soul – religiously or metaphorically speaking – goes to heaven.

What is the role of the body? The body (the M-Predicate) is the physical executor of the decisions of the self. But the body also affects the self’s decisions when the body does not receive the proper nutrients to grow, or is sick. The condition of the body can affect \textit{radiantly} or \textit{adversely} the physical and intellectual development and the decisions of the self. Moreover, the self’s activities are generated through the mind via the brain. No mental process of the self – theoretically speaking – can happen without some kind of a corresponding brain process. It is highly probable that in the near or distant future the scientists will be able to identify the corresponding brain process for every mental process (or if not, then there is an element of the soul that escapes the brain-mental processes).

The transcendental self (or soul) is nonmaterial. In that sense, it is spiritual. But the concept of the spirit is all inclusive as it includes – as some would say – all of the entire universe (pantheism), or even more than the universe (panentheism) while the soul is generally limited to human beings or \textit{probably} to some higher forms of animals in varying degrees of formation.\textsuperscript{8}

Why does the transcendental self or soul need the mind? Because it needs a window or venue in the material body by which it can interact with the material world. And that window must be akin – not necessarily the same – in essence with the soul, that is, it partakes of the nature of the soul, which is nonmateriality.

When the transcendental self views events from the outside world, or even within itself (physical self) through introspection, the experiences would be colored by the genetic, bodily, and environmental development

\textsuperscript{7} The qualification “metaphorically speaking” is important to accommodate some nonreligious people who do not believe in a literal “hell” or “heaven,” but used these terms in reference to their bad or good deeds while on earth before passing away.

\textsuperscript{8} At least, it is believed that chimpanzees, bonobos, and orangutans have consciousness for passing the mirror test of self-awareness (see Allen and Trestman 2015).
of the self and, therefore, the soul’s experiences would probably be in many cases different from another soul’s experiences of the same stimulus.

How does the soul come about from the spirit?

The Metaphysical Origin of the Spirit or the Ontological Ground of Being (Question 4)

According to Bertrand Russell, the ground of being is neutral, neither mental nor material, but out of which both mind and matter come into existence. I find this as a good point of departure because it does not immediately attribute spirituality to the ground of being as in identifying it with Cosmic Mind or it does not immediately attribute materiality to this ground as some materialists would say. The most that we can say about this ground of being is that it is a process that we can associate with the Heraclitean flux (see in this connection, Whitehead 1978). Physicist James Jeans (1958, 193) described the world of reality as a “deep-flowing stream.” Its surface is the world of appearances, “below which we cannot see.” Underneath “lie deep waters which we can only know by inference.” Whatever activities are in the “currents below throw up some bubbles and eddies to the surface” which “affect our senses and so activate our minds.”

This scientific description of reality metaphysically allows us to accept an active process underneath the world of appearances, which, in the least, is something life-giving or spiritual. In other words, the neutral ground of being is pregnant with the capacity to bestow life. One significant meaning of the term “spirit” (pneuma) is that it bestows life. It is a life-force. It is in this sense that the metaphor “the breath of air” or the “breath of life” becomes existentially meaningful. Even when we assume that the original beginning of life is through evolution or creation or through “creative synthesis” (see Sia 2007, 213-21) we cannot deny the life-giving force of the ground of being.

---

9 Materialism or physicalism views “that all facts (including facts about the human mind and will and the course of human history) are causally dependent upon physical processes, or even reducible to them” (see Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.).
The breath (spirit, *pneuma*) from the process (the neutral ground of being) bestows life (air) to the self (soul) in its formative stage in a fertilized egg. In other words, in a fertilized egg the transcendental self (soul) is already present but latent. As it is, it is just like a formless seed, that is, a dormant thing without any personality, yet. It grows and develops with the growth and development of the fertilized egg (zygote) from the embryo to the fetus, the child, and the adult person. The transcendental self acquires its shape or form and full identity in its relationship with the type of body (*soma*) it is gestated and with the type of environment it is born into. When the transcendental self becomes conscious\(^{10}\), which is the beginning of the development of the intellect (*nous*), it begins to deal with its body and the external world as an empirical self, that is, as a personality (or a person with a form). It is in this kind of relationship that the empirical self defines itself as to what it wants itself (himself/herself) to become in the empirical world as it carves its niche in the future. As the soul reveals itself to the world, it is significant to mention that the mind and brain do not produce thoughts. It is the noumenal self or soul, which is beyond time and space, that produces thoughts. The brain and mind only occasion the passage of the soul’s thoughts to the external world through the empirical self. The empirical self appears to be within time and space but the transcendental self or soul is beyond time and space. The brain and mind are like a rubber platform by which the soul impinges its face as the empirical self to the world and withdraws from the platform when the brain and mind perish.

It is important to understand the place of the dormant soul in the fertilized egg. Its full development\(^{11}\) depends largely on the condition of the body which embodies it. Firstly, there is a genetic endowment of the fetus from the parents’ genes. Secondly, if the mother’s body is nourished well, then the fetus is nourished as well and the dormant soul will develop normally in parallel with the normal development of the fetus and the child. However, if the mother is malnourished or is taking prohibited drugs, then this condition will affect adversely the

\(^{10}\) “Consciousness” is the state of awareness of items of experience that come into the mind, while the “mind” is the receptacle of the processes of the soul through the physical processes of the brain in the soul’s dealings with itself and with the world.

\(^{11}\) Barry Smith and Berit Brogaard (2003) argued that a human being begins to exist, biologically speaking, at sixteen days upon conception in the stage called “gastrulation”. 
development of the fetus and the dormant soul. The fetus might be aborted naturally. Or the fetus may be born blind as a child or born with distorted limbs, or without legs or arms. The development of the personality of the empirical self in this case, whether gloomy or radiant, depends largely on the loving treatment which the family bestows on the child and the compassionate understanding of the community-at-large. I know of some of this type of people who become successful in life.\textsuperscript{12}

What is the form of the soul? Well, it is unextended in space and beyond time. It is difficult to picture the soul but, I think, it is reasonable to view the soul as imagined by artists as taking the nonmaterial shape of the empirical self or the living person before it goes to heaven or hell, or before it rejoins the ground of being. If we are familiar with the movie \textit{Ghost} (Rubin 1990), then the soul takes the nonmaterial form of the empirical self.

Not all personalities, especially the normal child or adult, will develop radiantly. Some of these personalities are in conflict with family members, with some members of the neighborhood, or with some members of society-at-large. Causes of these conflicts may be racial, political, financial, and/or religious in nature. Since we are all humans, and have a common spiritual origin, we wish and hope to reconcile our conflicts for a better world.

\section*{The Need of Spirituality and Reconciliation (Question 5)}

The presence of a living human being is a living testament of the underpinning spirituality of the transcendental self (soul) in the human person. It is important to understand this spiritual underpinning as the empirical self develops itself in the world of different selves. We are all spiritually living beings, but we differ in temperament, political inclination or ideology, religious conviction, social standing, and economic status in society. The differences we encounter in our experiences with the environment and our genetic endowment develop

\footnote{\textsuperscript{12} Nick Vujivic was born with no legs or arms but swims, surfs, and plays golf and football. Tony Max, born legally blind, became the Canadian Visual Artist in 1957. Geri Jewell, born with cerebral palsy, was a famous actress who was given a National Rehabilitation Hospital Victory Award in 2006. Born with feet without legs, Eli Bowen became a famous tumbler and acrobat, and was called “The Legless Acrobat” in his circus. And many more.}
in us a certain type of personality and, in some cases, our type of personality sets us apart from each other as individuals or as groups. Some of these can easily be reconciled, but there are differences which are difficult to reconcile, especially when hatred or political or religious ideology comes into contact with different members of society. I particularly refer to members of the communist and democratic countries or members of the Islamic, Christian, and Buddhist religions. But these members can coexist and live in harmony and tolerance. According to John Locke (1960), the (empirical) self needs other selves for self-sufficiency and survival. I may also add that groups – if they want to improve and enjoy a comfortable living – need the other groups to be truly fulfilled as social beings. In a manner of speaking, we all come from the same neutral ground of being that is pregnant of spirituality, and if we acknowledge this, then an individual ought to value not only his own spirituality – the principle of preserving the bestowed life (soul) in him or her – but also the spirituality of others.

There are ways by which spirituality may not be able to preserve life. But first we must clearly distinguish the concept of spirit from the concept of spirituality. The spirit (pneuma) is the life force that bestows life (soul, psyche) from the ground of being to animate the fertilized egg and to let it assume a normal growth eventually as a child and an adult. When the child becomes conscious, that is the time that it develops its own personality (as a particular empirical self) and spirituality – or the principle of preserving life – begins to work. But this principle must be recognized and acknowledged by the person, otherwise it may fail in preserving the soul. In a sense, one must be self-conscious of one’s own spirituality and, by extension, of the spirituality of the others.

Reconciliation between a Person and His/Her Situation

The physical body has a lifetime, and the soul is preserved naturally for as long as the body is taken cared of healthily. An abuse of one’s body may lead to sickness or a lingering disease that will shorten the lifetime of the body. One ought to take care of one’s health if one wants to value his life or soul, because life itself is of the greatest value. Arthur Schopenhauer (1909) underestimated the value of the Will to Live for considering it as evil, but it is dictated by the principle of the
spiritual preservation of life or the lengthening of the duration of the soul. Despite adversities of any kind (family problems, frustrated love affairs, and the like), a person may cling to life for as long as there is hope of recovery or improvement of one’s situation. Otherwise, when things become hopeless, then the person may reconcile his or her situation with oneself and assume the stoical attitude of accepting the “Will of the Above” until the end of life (death). When the person cannot and will not reconcile his situation with oneself, then he or she clings to life like a madman and blame others for his or her situation until the last breath. The extreme case of reconciliation is to recognize and accept one’s situation as hopeless and stoically negates his or her spirituality and commits suicide.

### Spirituality and Reconciliation

In general, spirituality can be harnessed in promoting reconciliation between a person or group and another person or another group in a situation of differences when the following conditions obtain: (1) each person or group must recognize that life is of the greatest value and must be preserved not only for oneself but also for others; (2) differences come about because of different temperaments or different cultural outlooks at life and should not serve as a hindrance for cooperating together or living in great tolerance and respect of these personal or cultural differences for a better world; (3) deeper differences involving hatred, vengeance, anger, envy, and the like should be checked by the first condition and forgiveness should be the best course as an enlightened self-interest, that is, for the sake of preserving one’s bodily and mental health (see Gripaldo 2013, 2015); and (4) when all things fail, a person or the group has the right to self-preservation and hopes that others will recognize this right and may reconcile through a dialogue.

---

13 Temperaments may have a genetic beginning and may be tempered or hardened by one’s experiences in the environment: home, church, neighborhood, and the like. Cultural differences are generally accidental in nature: if one is born into a Muslim culture, then most likely he will be a Muslim. The same holds true for Christian and other cultures. There are few cases, however, where one can choose later on one’s culture (although some remnants of the old may still be apparent).
Conclusion

The soul as the noumenal self, in conjunction with the phenomenal self, enables us to identify it as representing the human person and allows us to regard both the mind and the body as aspects of the human person. The noumenal self needs the body and the mind so that it can interact with the physical world. The ground of being exhales, so to speak, the breath (pneuma) of life (soul, psyche) to the fertilized egg to grow into a normal person. Spirituality is the principle that works within the person to preserve his or her life (or soul) despite adversities. In difficult situations, persons and others must be able to recognize this principle and hopefully reconcile their differences through peaceful means.

REFERENCES


---

14 The issue as to what purpose life has in the world should be existentially discussed in another paper.


