

4. PERSONALITY

4.1 THE SOUL: *Differences in soul and personality*

Spiritual psychology makes a distinction between soul and personality. *Soul* is the spiritual essence with spiritual potentials, latent within us but hopefully becoming actualized and manifested in our lives. *Personality* is the composite three parts of our expressing self: mental, emotion, and physical.

Our soul is the spiritual possibility within us. It is the essence in us which has originated from the Spiritual Source, the Central Sun, God. Thus, each soul contains spiritual qualities and intuitive knowing. If we enter into our soul, into soul-consciousness, we then know our self as droplets of Light, Love and Spiritual Will. And we can find all spiritual qualities and spiritual insight right in our own being. So our aim is to be in our soul consciousness, our soul knowing, which is the same as finding our spiritual essence, our spiritual nature, and who we really are.

Our mind, emotions and physical body are the soul's three *vehicles*, or *bodies*, or *functions* for expression, which in total we call the personality. In many esoteric teachings these are called 'the three bodies of man'. But they are also sometimes called '*vehicles of the soul*', because they can carry soul qualities and can be used in the soul's journey of this lifetime. Then they are also sometimes called *functions*, because these are the main functions for our life and self-expression. Yet these could also be appropriately called '*energy fields*', because they are compositions of different types of energy.

Our physical body is made of energy, and this energy works in patterns. These energy patterns are formative in relation to the actual physical body manifestation. So the actual physical body is permeated by more subtle energy patterns, which compose our etheric body or etheric energy field.

Our emotions and emotional energies all combine to form our emotional energy field, (or called emotional body, or astral body). Held in this emotional field are all of our emotional qualities, emotional patterns, and emotional memories.

Next, our mind is also an energy field. In it are our thoughtforms - our ideas and beliefs. They might not be just our own; in fact, most ideas and beliefs are shared, so they are really collective thoughtforms, but it is true that they are being held in our own particular mental sphere, which is a kind of container. Then as well, our mental energy sphere has a few special mental powers, such as intelligence, memory, and thinking. It also has imagination, which can be part of a higher intuition or else could be a lower level of random fantasy.

Personality is how one expresses; it is the vehicle of expression. Personality is the *form* of our expression, which includes our various *forms* of thought and belief, emotions, and physical expression. Personality expression can be good, more or less; that is, expression has a huge range of possible value, from very fine to rather poor. So we cannot say that personality is necessarily a bad thing, nor is it necessarily a good thing. However, the soul is always good, always true, always loving. The soul is our composite of spiritual qualities and potentials. It's the real truth of our being.

The soul is divinely reflective, a reflective microcosm of the One Divine Being. Yet the soul needs to express itself, and it does this through the personality. So the personality is significantly needed by the soul, as its vehicle for expression. The personality, on the other hand, needs the soul in order for it to be spiritually infused.

Soul by itself is a triadic composite of spiritual gnosis, love and will. Yet the qualities of soul need the expressive vehicle of personality. The soul needs the thought-building and thought-process apparatus of the personality mind, in order for understanding-through-language to occur. The soul needs the emotional apparatus to really bodily *feel* its qualities. And the soul needs the physical apparatus to express these qualities in the world. So it is *through* the personality that the soul can understand and feel itself in particular ways and express itself in the manifested world.

Our personality bodies are like *outer* shells, while our spiritual soul is the *inner* kernel. This outer shell deals with the outer world, but it is often unconscious of its existing inner core. Understand that our soul is our innermost self, while our personality is our outer self. In other words, our innermost self is our soul and our outer self is personality.

So if one can find one's innermost reality, truth, beingness; then one is discovering the soul. For our soul is the *inner* reality of who we are; personality is the outer. In our innermost, we can find our deepest and truest qualities of who we are. For in this deepness of our self, we will find the real treasures of our self and the reservoir of our spiritual qualities. The usual personality is not our real truth of self. Truth is deeper. The personality part of self is what we and others are mostly aware of. This is like the clothing of self, the outerness of self. But the inner is often hidden or submerged under ordinary awareness. This inner self is our real truth; which can also be called our soul. We could say that this true self is created by God or is a divine emanation; or that it is the divine and natural self.

In contrast, the personality is created (or patterned) by a social environment, by culture, by parents and by certain unique accidents. It is also created by reactive decisions and strategies in response to one's environment over the course of growing up. The personality is very much like a composition of strategies for dealing with life, a composition developed over the course of early life, and these strategies become our personality patterns. Some of these are useful and good; but some are immature and no longer useful in our life.

Thus, part of any spiritual path must include some self-observation and re-constructive self-critique; in other words, a willingness to honestly look at oneself and change personality patterns if needed. This does not need to be a somber and tedious task, rather it can be thought of as an exciting re-creative process, like being artistic about recreating oneself. One can also train the personality to develop more beautiful and loving patterns.

A major problem, though, is that our personality is usually unaware or unconscious of our soul. In other words, our usual consciousness is very often unconscious of our true spiritual nature, our soul essence. This means that our personality mind is asleep to our soul, the true core of our self. The outward focused personality gets so preoccupied with worldly duties, concerns and problems, that all of our awareness goes into this, while our soul gets no awareness, no attention.

In some systems of modern psychology the soul is a word used synonymously with the human psyche (collectively or individually), referring to the totality of our mental and emotional undercurrents, sort of like the *way* we are, which is then given as explanation for *how* one behaves. In this meaning of 'soul' as synonymous with psyche, one could say that the soul is at least partly created by either one's culture or one's existential circumstances. But that particular psychological meaning will not be used here. The modern psychological meaning is not wrong; rather, it just uses the word somewhat differently than what is usually meant in perennial spiritual teachings.

The meaning of 'soul' (as applied here) is transcendental to the personality and its undercurrent psyche, and so the soul is independent and ontologically prior to the personality, which also means that the soul is not created or conditioned by society and upbringing. The personality does not condition the soul, nor does the world or society. How the soul can express in the world, or in a family, does depend a lot on external circumstances and also on how the personality vehicles are developed; but the soul in itself is unconditioned by all of this.

Yet we accept the fact that personality, including its subconscious (or undercurrent psyche), is at least partly developed by cultural beliefs and patterns; and therefore, much of it reflects its given culture and upbringing. Thus, personality is developed through the situations and patterns of one's life history.

The soul, however, remains free from these cultural and situational influences. It is the essence of an individual, much like a genetic seed or DNA that remains independent of outer circumstances. Our soul could be regarded as our spiritual DNA. It gives us our potentials for a spiritually fulfilling life, and it also gives us some inner programming in the form of some inner spiritual impulses. But the situations and environments of life still have significant effect on our personality behavior and its undercurrent patterns.

Our psyche is the totality of all the undercurrent patterns of personality, including our subconscious and dream world. Yet our soul is deeper than the personality psyche; it is the core or essence of our being. The soul usually has at least some subtle influence on the personality and psyche, but it is quite possible for a person to go through life without ever really being conscious of the inner soul. This is why inner spiritual work is essential.

The personality (mental, emotional, physical) can function *on its own* in the world, without necessarily requiring assistance or guidance from the inner soul. In fact, the soul can possibly remain latent and even unnoticed, while the personality develops its abilities and successfully relates in the world. Although, usually there will be *at least some* soul qualities expressing through the personality, in some degree at least, and these soul qualities often emerge through the personality self during the innocence of childhood. But then later on, these soul qualities may get overpowered and suppressed by the personality working by its own agenda.

There are no negative qualities in any soul. No soul has any proportion of evil or negativity or a will to harm. All souls are essentially and purely spiritually good and uncorrupted. Some individual souls are more developed than others, and some souls are stronger in expression; but even the least developed souls are purely good.

This is an important distinction to be made between soul and personality: every soul has only divine qualities and a will-to-good, whereas a personality can become distortedly conditioned and possess negative qualities that oppose or even

harm life. The personality can become disassociated from the soul and from God. Or, it might be described that the soul gets forgotten. Or it could also be said that the soul can get hijacked by the personality-ego. Thus, most often in each person there needs to be a re-connection with their soul.

Each soul enters into incarnation from a past life incarnation. The soul incarnates through three interconnected, interpenetrating ‘bodies’ – mental, emotional and physical – which we are calling the ‘personality’. This personality has to go through developmental stages; that is, our physical, emotional and mental parts have to develop and mature. Babies cannot do what adults can do. The soul gives life essence to these bodies and to their development. It also gives instructions to the bodies, in order to organize and somewhat direct their process of development. Specifically, the soul produces and emits a subtle electromagnetic pattern that acts as a blueprint for the physical, emotional and mental development and also their health.

However, these personality bodies are also susceptible to energies, patterns and direct manipulations and assaults from the outer world, physically, emotionally and mentally. So the soul is not fully in charge, nor fully directing, because the inner soul cannot control the outer world and how the world affects the personality bodies. The outer world, including physical circumstances and social influences, can be quite helpful to the health and quality development of the personality bodies; OR, conversely, it can be quite cruel and harmful. One’s outer social world can be quite repressive to one’s inner soul direction and potential qualities.

The main idea here is that the physical and social world can be very powerful and influential in the development of our personality. The soul has influence, but it can be overpowered by a dominating outer world. The soul has goodness and wisdom in it, but this may not incarnate fully into the personality, due to outer influences. The outer can cause all sorts of problems in the personality, which is elaborated on

by psychology. Yet the idea to understand here is that the developing personality is susceptible to outer influences – meaning that problems in a group, family or culture can be passed into the children, which then very often linger on as influences in adulthood as well. This makes for a continuation of psychological problems through the medium of social influence. In fact, cultural imbalances and unhealthy patterns can be passed down generation upon generation, by way of the outer world and interactions between personalities.

Soul expression is limited by personality

Soul is independent of the personality and world conditions, yet *limited* by these conditions in its ability to express. The soul in-itself is independent of physical problems and limitations, so in-itself the soul is unaffected by physical and social conditions. Yet those conditions of body and world are limiting to the soul's unfoldment and expression through that particular person (the personality). The soul-body is a substantial energy-form, independent of the three bodies. This means that its present intensity and expansion is unaffected by problems and limitations in the three bodies. The soul is, as it were, free in itself and free in the world of souls.

But limitations arise in relation to expansion in the three bodies and in relation to expansion in the world of souls. In other words, the soul is limited in how much of itself can be expressed and reflected in the bodies. Partly, this limitation is reflective of the soul's limited ability or power-to-express, for every soul is growing or developing creative power.

So, each soul-being is limited in how far it can expand through and pervade the three bodies of a personal life. The conditions of those bodies limit this descending expansion. Rarely can the soul, in its fullness, expand completely through the bodies without being limited to some extent. For example, the mental body may be under-educated or lacking discipline or too confused. The emotional body may be

overly turbulent or too automatic in its reactive habits. The physical body may be too out of balance or overly stressed.

Each soul has its own independent power to be expressive and to manifest its qualities in life. This is called the soul's power, or it can be called creative power. Some souls have more of this power than others; that is, some souls are more advanced or more developed in their aspect of will and creative power. But physical and world circumstances always present real challenges and limitations to any soul.

For example, a soul with an advanced degree of leadership or wisdom would, nonetheless, find an infant's body quite limiting, so that soul's capacity for expression will not appear until the physical body becomes more developed. A mental body needs an adequate degree of ordinary development, mostly accomplished by teachers and books, before the soul can express higher levels of insight through the mental body.

Another possible limitation is disease or neurosis in the bodies. This will often need healing from sources and methods outside of the soul-healer, before the soul itself can actually help heal the limiting conditions. For example, one can rightly say that the soul is a healer, but the soul may have no opportunity to effect a healing if the mental body is over-neurotic, since this person has virtually lost all touch with the soul, or in other words, the neurotic condition does not allow for any soul-connection and thus, no soul healing is possible.

The connection needed for the soul to expand through the three bodies may be weak or blocked. When there is a more open and strengthened connection between the soul and the three vehicles, the conditions of those vehicles improve. Then, health, peace, love, clarity and insight increase. The soul is like a healing energy to the three bodies, but it can be blocked or scattered away. Yet the soul can help heal this blockage and scattering, healing those problems to some degree. But a certain amount of time and effort is needed from the personal ego to heal those conditions which block that very effort of the soul.

Limitations will always be found in the three bodies, but the soul accomplishes what it can to heal those limitations. Thus, the soul works to heal and improve the conditions of the three bodies, which is complimentary to its purpose of manifesting through these bodies. We will speak later on techniques of healing, to allow for greater soul-life circulating through and spiritually patterning the three bodies.

Thus, adequate development, or preparation, is needed as ground-work for soul-work, and much of this ground-work is often done before any conscious connection with the soul is established. Thus, good education and development of mastery in the three bodies are needed as preparation for soul-expression. This preparation of the three-fold personality can be accomplished in *conjunction* with soul-expression, but much can be accomplished by positive social influences and by right effort made by the personality *ego*.

Ideally, the personality shall become aware of the soul within, or become sensitive to it. But it is possible for the personality to neglect or even repress the soul. Ideally, the soul will become conscious and expressive in the personality, but this requires some willingness on the personality. Ideally, the personality becomes soul-conscious and soul-infused, and then soul-expressive. This happens gradually, depending on the quality and commitment of spiritual practice, such that the personality gradually increases its degree of spiritual soulness. So personalities may be soul-infused, more or less.

We seek a process of personal spiritualization, which is a process of the soul infusing and transforming the personality and its ego. The ego is the leader of our personality. It is a combination of personal concern and interest, personal will, and personal self-consciousness. It is the central force that is looking after the survival and successes of each person. For every personal ego, the number one concern is oneself. But the soul's concern and interest is much broader and group-related.

In the beginning of human growth the personal ego develops, which can be partly guided by the soul, but often is mostly guided by social and accidental forces. The ego often develops to become quite large, at least in one's own awareness; while the soul is often hidden, obscured, or even repressed by the ego. So at first the ego is large and the soul is small. The soul may even seem to be like a child, an inner child, though not to be confused with mere repressed personal desires. The soul is more like our deeper inner being, our real sincerity and truth. So the soul might be small and the ego big.

Then, something happens to either greatly shock or greatly interest the ego; whereby the ego begins to take some interest in its more deeper, inner soul of the self. And each moment that the ego gives the soul some attention and recognition, the soul is able to grow a little more in its power. The ego begins to have some interest in the soul, so it allows the soul to emerge, little by little. The ego then begins to fancy the soul, like a strange beauty, though the ego may still be somewhat frightened of this soul, much like someone might be frightened of being taken over by love. All this time, the soul is gaining power, but the ego is somewhat resisting. So there is a play between soul and ego, as the ego sometimes vacillates between infatuation with soul and resistance to the soul.

In a gradual process, the soul begins to grow larger, while the ego becomes smaller; as the ego loses some of its force each time it submits to the soul and allows the soul to be alive. Gradually, then, the soul infuses the ego and swallows it up. Eventually, the ego is assimilated by the soul and the personality functions become serving instruments for the soul. Finally, the two parts of self become one. There is still an inner and outer aspect of self, but they are now one in complete harmony, and self conflict has ceased to be. Note that the ego needs to take some interest in the soul, allow the soul to come forth, and also surrender some to the soul; in order for the soul to grow and eventually consume the ego. Luckily, the soul's inner sense of beauty and truth is attractive to the ego, and the soul brings forth love, even through the ego.