

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*What is usually meant by the term "soul" and how should the term "soul" be used?*

The term is used in many different ways. Those who use it have as a rule vague notions of what they intend to designate thereby. All they have in mind is that it is something not material; that it is something not of gross physical matter. Further, the term is used indiscriminately, as is natural where there are so many degrees in the development of matter, and no accepted system to designate these degrees. The Egyptians spoke of seven souls; Plato of a threefold soul; the Christians speak of soul as something different from spirit and physical body. Hindu philosophy speaks of various kinds of souls, but it is difficult to pin the statements down to a system. Some theosophical writers distinguish between three souls—the divine soul (buddhi), the human soul (manas), and kama, the animal soul. Theosophical writers do not agree to what the term soul should be applied. So there is no clearness, no conciseness, beyond this that the term soul covers in theosophical literature various aspects of invisible nature. Therefore, it is impossible to say what is usually meant by the term soul.

In common speech phrases like "loves with heart and soul," "I'd give my soul for it," "open my soul to him," "feast of soul and flow of reason," "soulful eyes," "animals have souls," "souls of the dead," add to the confusion.

It seems that the one feature in common is that soul means something invisible and intangible, and therefore not of earthly matter, and that each writer uses the term to cover such part or parts of the invisible as he feels pleased.

In the following are given some views as to how the term soul should be used.

Substance manifests at each period of outbreathing, substance is breathed out. When substance breathes itself out, it breathes itself out as entities; that is, independent entities, individual units. Each individual unit has the potentiality, though not the immediate possibility, of becoming the greatest being conceivable. Each

individual unit when breathed out has a dual aspect, namely, one side is changing, the other unchanging. The changing side is the manifested part, the unchanging is the unmanifested or substance part. The manifested part is spirit and soul, force and matter.

This duality of spirit and soul is found through the whole set of changes which succeed each other in a manifestation period.

An individual unit enters into combination with other individual units, yet never loses its individualness, though it has no identity in the beginning.

In the materializing down from the first stages of spirituality into the later stages of concretion, that is, into physical matter, spirit gradually loses its predominance, and matter gains ascendancy in similar degrees. The term force is used in place of spirit, to which it corresponds, while matter is used in place of soul.

One who uses the term matter should not think he has dispensed with the term soul and that he knows what matter is. In point of fact, it may be that he knows as little what matter is as he knows what soul is. He knows of the appearance to the senses of certain qualities and properties of matter, but as to what matter is, aside from these, he does not know, at least not as long as his sensuous perceptions are the channel through which information reaches him.

Spirit and soul and mind should not be used interchangeably as synonyms. In the worlds there are seven orders or classes of souls on four planes. The seven orders of souls are of two kinds: the descending souls and the ascending souls, the involutory and the evolutionary. The descending souls are energized, urged, inspired to action by spirit. The ascending souls are, or if they are not they should be, raised and guided by mind. Four of the seven orders are Nature souls, each order having many degrees in the world to which it belongs. The spirit impels a descending soul along the path of involution from the abstract spiritual into the concrete physical through varieties of lives and forms and phases of nature, until it develops or is brought into the human physical form. The spirit or nature presses the soul onward as long as it involves, but it must by the mind be raised as an ascending soul on the path of evolution, through the various degrees of each of the three orders from the human mortal to the divine immortal. The soul is the expression, essence and entity of the spirit, and life and being of the mind.

To distinguish between the seven orders we may call the descending souls breath-souls, life-souls, form-souls, sex-souls;

and the ascending orders animal-souls, human-souls, and immortal-souls. Concerning the fourth, or order of sex, let it be understood that the soul is not sex. Sex is a characteristic of physical matter, in which all souls must be tempered before they can be raised on the evolutionary path by the mind. Each of the orders develops a new sense in the soul.

The four orders of nature souls are not and cannot become immortal without the aid of the mind. They exist as breaths or lives or forms for long periods, and then they exist in the physical body for a long time. After a while they cease to exist as souls in a body and must pass through a period of change incidental to death. Then from the change there comes a new entity, a new being, in which the education or experience in that order is continued.

When mind connects with the soul to raise it, the mind can not at first succeed. The animal soul is too strong for the mind and refuses to be raised. So it dies; it loses its form; but from its essential being which cannot be lost the mind calls forth another form. The mind succeeds in raising the soul from the animal to the human state. There the soul must choose whether it wants to revert to the animal or to go on to the immortal. It gains its immortality when it knows its identity apart and independently from the mind which helped it. Then that which was soul becomes a mind, and the mind which raised the soul to become a mind may pass beyond the four manifested worlds into the unmanifested, and becomes one with the Divine Soul of all. What that soul is was outlined in the editorial "Soul," February, 1906, Vol. II, *The Word* [see the PDF editorial "Soul"].

There is a soul or soul connected with every particle of matter or nature, visible and invisible; with every body, whether the body be mineral, vegetable, animal or celestial being, or a political, industrial or educational organization. That which changes is the body; that which does not change, while it holds together the changing body connected with it, is the soul.

What man wants to know is not so much about the number and kinds of souls; he wants to know what the human soul is. The human soul is not the mind. The mind is immortal. The human soul is not immortal, though it may become immortal. A portion of the mind connects with the human soul or descends into a human body; and this is called an incarnation or a reincarnation, though the term is not accurate. If the human soul does not offer too much resistance to the mind, and if the mind succeeds in the purpose of its incarnation, it raises the human soul from the state of a mortal soul

to the state of immortal. Then that which was a mortal human soul becomes an immortal—a mind. Christianity, and especially the doctrine of vicarious atonement, is founded on this fact.

In a particular and limited sense the human soul is the ethereal and intangible form, the wraith or ghost of the physical body, which holds the shape and features of the constantly changing physical body together and preserves them intact. But the human soul is more than this; it is the personality. The human soul or personality is a wonderful being, a vast organization, in which are combined for definite purposes, representatives from all the orders of descending souls. The personality or human soul holds together and includes the outer and the inner senses and their organs, and regulates and harmonizes their physical and psychic functions, and pre-serves experience and memory throughout the term of its existence. But if the mortal human soul has not been raised from its mortal human state—if it has not become a mind—then that soul or personality dies. The raising of a soul to be a mind must be done before death. This becoming a mind means that one is conscious of identity independently of and apart from the physical body and the outer and inner senses. With the death of the personality or human soul the representative souls composing it are loosed. They return to their respective orders of descending souls, to enter again into combination of a human soul. When the human soul dies it is not necessarily and not usually lost. There is that in it which does not die when its physical body and its ghostly form are destroyed. That of the human soul which does not die is an invisible intangible germ, the personality germ, from which is called forth a new personality or human soul and around which is built a new physical body. That which calls forth the germ of personality or soul is the mind, when that mind is ready or is preparing to incarnate. The rebuilding of personality of the human soul is the basis on which is founded the resurrection doctrine.

To know of all the varieties of souls one needs an analytical and a comprehensive knowledge of the sciences, among them chemistry, biology and physiology. Then it is necessary to abandon the twistings which we like to call metaphysics. That term should stand for a system of thought as accurate and as dependable as mathematics is. Equipped with such a system and with the facts of science, we would then have a true psychology, a soul science. When man wants it he will get it.



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