

Consciousness and the Soul

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Chris Lyons' article in the December edition of Network Review pertinently raises the question of whether consciousness arises, not in the body, but entirely beyond the physical body. However, although this issue has been aired before, very few seem to want to really grasp and explore the equally thorny question of a potentially associated rationale. Yet such a rationale does exist in the field of 'natural philosophy', the precursor of modern science, and has done since at least Plato's time, some 2500 years ago. It is that the consciousness is contained within the soul, an ethereally cellular organism (like a spheroidally or ovoidally enclosing field) which not only contains the physical body from without and maintains it but also gave rise to it in the first instance. Modern science has to some extent shown us how this three dimensional 'creation' could be achieved through using laser technology to produce holograms. The nexus of this, however, is that it is the soul which is the real person, the physical body being a mere projection and puppet, within the soul's aura.

Unfortunately, so many have written about the soul being contained within the body (particularly in association with the heart and in relation to the blood) that the original description has never been properly explored. Yet that original alternative view holds that it is the soul which – as a cell in the inconceivable body of a celestial Being 'in whom we live and move and have our being' (as St. Paul describes) – also contains our consciousness and merely exports elements of it to the brain, the heart and the remainder of the human organism by a process of systematic emanation. From this point of view, the religious idea of the 'spirit' being contained within the blood (which thus contains the Life element) would be quite accurate because the soul organism is said to be composed of spirit(s), the latter itself being a particular quality of universal energy. Thus, from this viewpoint, the essential life-giving energy and consciousness which human beings enjoy are themselves essentially derivatives of the soul organism, from which they are loaned and to which they must ultimately return.

Regretfully, however, modern science acknowledges no concept of the qualitative nature of energy and matter. Instead it insists upon predicating the bizarre idea that organic life can somehow emerge from 'dead' or fundamentally inert substance. Ancient philosophy held that such an idea was completely absurd, as we ourselves would do by following simple logic. However, once this particular line of reasoning is followed, it inevitably opens up 'a can of worms' pursued by a host of very uncomfortable questions to modern orthodoxy. I note that our own member Professor Brian Josephson FRS. has been quoted as saying: 'There may be elements of intelligence in every atom of matter and, like the world's biological forms, it may undergo evolution toward even higher levels ... Physicists tend to think of matter as something lifeless and mechanical and are conceptually on the wrong track. At the tiniest level, matter seems to behave much more like something biological and living. There may be an underlying life and intelligence below the phenomenon we ordinarily see and even beyond the phenomenon being studied by physics.'¹ Many other scientists have suggested the same.

One other feature of consciousness of which we ought to take more serious note is that, as the ancient Hermetic tradition postulated,² it appears to be concentrically organised.

That is to say, it contains natural fields of limitation, like an ascending and ever-widening ladder, each rung of which has progressively to be surmounted before it becomes possible to attain to increasingly wider perspectives of knowledge and subjective functionality. Hence it is that at least one modern school of thought describes consciousness as existing in 'planes', a progressively refined succession of meta-physical states, the higher ones of which can be accessed only by those who have the necessary subjective (i.e. spiritual) orientation and perceptual sensitivity and are willing to make the associated effort. This same school of thought has it – following the same logic - that the true nature of Man involves a multiple sequence of souls each of which has its own range of knowledge and faculty. Hence, there is an animal soul, which gives him his instinctive bodily senses, plus a spiritual soul, which gives him his creative mind. It thus becomes the more highly evolved spirit temporarily emanating from the latter into the former which provides him with his dualistic faculty of self-consciousness. So there is a provisional rationale for these varying qualities of consciousness being quite capable of simultaneous existence within the same overall organism.

It follows from all this that if consciousness is itself necessarily composed of differentiated qualities of matter with a capacity for coherence, it must have some natural propensity for supra-physical magnetism, hence giving rise to influences or emanations that are attractive or repulsive; and, like matter it seems that psycho-spiritual substance can be transformed into energy – again of a differentiated quality e.g as an 'essence', or even perhaps a 'germ'. On this basis, however, the quality of such matter and energy would be completely different to that currently explored by the physical scientist. The latter is working with purely terrestrial substance but assumes that the omniverse is composed of nothing else. Hence, having discovered the atom and its molecule forming instincts, he feels that he can only venture further down into smaller gradations of that substance in his quest for the ultimate Source, involving the GUT (Grand Universal Theory). In fact, one might suggest, this is equivalent to looking down the wrong end of the telescope. It is the greater which ever gives rise to the lesser, not the other way around. Why then should there not be greater 'atoms' literally containing objective celestial bodies (suns) at their centres, which themselves give rise to the production of qualitative hierarchies of lesser atoms by a process of fusion? Are we not already aware that the very coherence of galaxies involves their being contained within 'fields', even if we are as yet unaware of what those 'fields' themselves might be?

There comes an inevitable point where the discussion as to such 'fields' involves not only consciousness, but also intelligence. It is at this point, I suggest, that we might also find the answer to the natural divergence between Darwinism and Creationism.

References:

1. Interview by B. Rohan, Detroit Free Press, October 25, 1983; quoted in The Eclectic Theosophist, San Diego, California, May-June 1984.
2. B.P. Copenhaver. Hermetica. (Cambridge University Press, 1992) p. 2-3 & 6.

Astrology and Experience

From: Kurt Dressler, dressler@ggaweb.ch, www.kurtdressler.ch

Try to approach philosophy, spirituality, paranormal phenomena, etc ... , in the same way in which I also approach science, i.e. grounded in reliable observation, experiment and experience.

One of my experiences with relevance to the astrological worldview is that my wife and I are parents of twins born within five minutes, thus having identical birth charts.

With respect to every conceivable character trait that should be of interest to astrologers they are as different as imaginable. This as well as other experiences and observations has of course influenced my attitude vis-à-vis birth-chart astrology.

When confronted with this experience the response by astrologers usually goes something like this:

As for the birth charts of twins, it is a very interesting and somewhat intriguing subject. To explain how astrology works I often refer to music; the same tune can be played in any key, and begin on any note. It is not the notes as such that make the melody, it's the intervals between the notes, the relationships between them, and their timing that produce the recognizable melody. And when we talk about human beings we must take into account their souls, who can come in with different experiences. I know that twins can be very different, and from the conventional point of view one first distinguishes between twins from the same egg, who always are very similar, and twins from different eggs, who supposedly are like any brothers or sisters.

From an astrological point of view, five minutes difference in birth time can make an enormous difference for the interpretation of

the chart, if for instance the houses change signs, or the planets change houses, during those five minutes. In order to have an opinion in the case of your twins, I would have to study the charts and be sure of the exact birth times for both. The charts of lots of twins have been carefully studied, and they usually do make sense once you know the exact times and go into sufficient detail.

To this I would say: I have heard the arguments brought forward here from several astrologers, but if birth chart interpretations were that sensitive to minute details, then how could relevant interpretations ever have been derived from the basic data, i.e. from correlations between birth chart details and character traits? Several investigations of such correlations have been published, with disastrous results for the astrological hypothesis. But I have never seen any astrologers present a substantial body of such observational data which would convincingly support the rules used by them in their birth chart interpretations.

Furthermore, I know of not a single ascended master or truly enlightened spiritual teacher who would esteem astrology.

I am sorry, these are unwelcome truths for those who prefer to hold on to preconceived ideas and who in the face of adverse findings refuse to change their views and instead say 'don't disturb me with facts'.

I have taken a thorough interest in these questions and followed the relevant publications for many years. Fortunately our spiritual development does not depend on when and where our body emerged from our mother's womb.

The Placebo Effect

From: Dr. Aubrey Hill, aubreyhill@dsl.dial.pipex.com

Richard Layard (p. 8 Winter 2008) quotes the Penn Resiliency Project and the result with 11 year old children. I suggest that this is too old and the real work should be with nursery age children. If he has, or could borrow a 3-year old and take the child to a nursery he would see a group being supportive of each other and the teacher, sitting quietly listening to a story or five minutes later tearing round the playground. They would be interested in him and happy to take him by the hand to meet the head teacher or show him where the loo is, all without shyness or embarrassment. He would share the excitement of learning. The tragedy, is where does it all go as they approach age 5?

On a different topic I aware that I am fighting a losing battle but may I fire a last salvo?

Before 1935 there was nothing to support us in illness, except our built in resources: how else did we survive demographic and environmental insults? The ability to survive and recover from illness without doctors surely deserves a better name than placebo - 'I seek to please'? This ability is our own personal doctor, present in all of us to ensure that we can cope with disease or trauma and should in fact be called 'doctor', or as it sounds better in Latin - *iatros*. If we can use the word *iatros* as in iatrogenic disease, diseases caused by doctors (we used to call it poisoning), then surely we can use the same word in a positive way, iatrogenic healing, that is healing initiated by our inbuilt, personal physician.

Not until the 1930s was there thought of anything other than our innate ability to see us through whatever disease or trauma affected us: what medicine there was, was purely supportive, there was no thought of attacking the disease itself. For

example before 1939 there was an ongoing discussion on the advisability of giving digitalis in pneumonia to help support the heart, and the importance of good nursing was almost always mentioned in the text books. This extraordinary self healing power deserves better than 'seeking to please.' Furthermore, the term placebo is now used in a derogatory way as 'in ignore this result it is only the effect of the placebo'. This disregards the fact that every result is altered, almost always beneficially, by *iatros*. All therapy must be given in the same way, the same capsule, liquid or injection is used to present the drug under investigation or the inactive substance. The patient cannot know which capsule etc is active or inactive. The benefit of the *iatros* effect, found in the inactive preparation must be added to the active, drug result.

To call such a tremendous force for good 'I seek to please' is to denigrate God's gift of grace. So important is this personal physician, vital enough to have supported our survival since the beginning of life on earth, that some better label is required. So *iatros*-trust me, I'm a doctor.

Christmas 1935 saw the momentous experiment by Domagk in Germany which heralded the discovery, of Prontosil. Twenty mice were injected with blood from a patient dying from septicaemia, ten were given sulphamidochryosidine (later called Prontosil) and survived. Due to the politics of the day little was heard of this in the rest of Europe until 1939 when May and Baker produced M&B 693, the first ever 'cure' for pneumonia. This almost forgotten miracle altered the whole mindset of physicians, all modern chemotherapeutic agents stem from this. Previously unknown chemo-therapeutic agents were now searched for because of this altered mindset.