

The Evolution of Consciousness: Two Merge as One

William Meader

Summary

This article examines the nature of consciousness and its evolution. Its fundamental premise is that human consciousness is dual, consisting of a higher and lower mind. The higher mind is guided by the soul, while the lower is governed by the self-serving interests of the personality. Over the course of many incarnations, the personality learns to yield to the authority of the higher mind, thus becoming a servant to the soul. This is the process of soul-infusion, and is the root principle underlying the evolution of consciousness. In this way, two minds learn to work as one. Because of this process, a variety of psychological anomalies can sometimes arise. These problems are predictable, and indicate the crises of the personality as it slowly learns to yield to the soul's wisdom and guidance.

Introduction

When we consider the nature of human evolution, we typically consider it in physical terms. We usually think about it as it pertains to the changes occurring to the physical form over vast periods of time. According to science, natural selection and adaptation to the environment are the forces that create this change. However, the Esoteric Philosophy views this in a slightly different manner. Instead of seeing it as a physical event, it is understood as a dynamic process occurring within consciousness. It is consciousness that is evolving, and physical form will, over time, reflect these changes. The evolution of the physical body simply represents the adjustments that form naturally makes in response to the gradual changes occurring within the human psyche. This is quite different than the view held by the scientific community. Indeed,

what science considers evolution, Esotericism sees as merely its effect.

It is important to realize that human consciousness is dual in its nature. Within every human being there are two fundamental layers of consciousness—one pertaining to the mind of the personality (ego), and the other is the consciousness of the soul. Sometimes called the lower and higher minds, these two aspects of consciousness are often at odds with each other. The rational lower mind will think one thing, while the wisdom of the higher suggests something different. Yet, spiritual evolution is not based upon the rejection of the lower in favor of the higher. Rather, it is to merge the two together as one. It is the process by which the wisdom of the soul gradually infuses itself into the mind of the personality. In the deepest sense, this is the most fundamental goal underlying human evolution, and its consummation is enlightenment itself.

Soul and Personality Distinctions

In order to grasp the infusion process, we must first understand the difference between the consciousness of the personality and that of the soul. Indeed, discerning this difference is a prerequisite to the infusion process. Comparatively, the consciousness of the soul is gov-

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erned by wisdom, while the personality is directed by knowledge and desire. Unlike the personality, the soul is motivated by selfless love, and is sensitive to the welfare and needs of the larger whole. This sensitivity is based upon the soul's ability to recognize humanity's essential oneness. The personality is not capable of this. Instead, it is separative in its perceptions and is driven by the need to fulfill its own ambitions. When a person consciously steps onto the spiritual path, it suggests that s/he is starting to recognize (to some degree) these differences. This is what eventually propels him/her to live a more spiritually dedicated life, and marks the beginning of the infusion process.

Though the evolution of the mind is based upon the fusion of these two categories of consciousness, it should not be assumed that, by so doing, both will have equal control. The soul needs the personality in order to effectively express itself in the outer world. This is the primary purpose of the infusion process, for

the destiny of the personality is to act as the soul's outer agent. Yet, this can only happen when the personality willingly yields to the soul's authority and direction. Needless to say, this is not an easy thing to achieve, and it usually takes many incarnations to fully accomplish.

By its very nature, the personality tends to be resistant to the soul's higher promptings. For many incarnations it has been the director of life, and as a result, does not easily let go of its control. Because of this, most people who are consciously trying to live a more spiritual life are partially soul-infused. Part of the personal-

ity willingly yields to the soul's direction, while another part continues to assert its own agenda. This is why people sometimes feel frustrated by their lack of spiritual progress. At times we feel very connected to the higher qualities emitted by the soul. Yet, at other times this unexpectedly disappears, leaving us feeling spiritually disconnected. There are actually several reasons for this. One reason is that, at the moment of disconnection, the personality has reasserted its control. Hence we

experience a swinging back and forth between the higher and lower parts of ourselves. This leads to many things, including the tendency to divide life into two departments—one dedicated to the spiritual dimension of life, and the other toward the secular. Indeed, the dual nature of consciousness tends to create a dual life.

Emerging Psychological Problems

In addition to the vacillation occurring between the soul and personality, there are psychological anomalies that can arise because of the infusion process. For example, as

the soul tries to infuse itself into the personality, feelings of depression can emerge. To understand this it must be remembered that the soul represents a higher energy system. When it tries to infuse more of itself into the personality, the lower self can easily feel overwhelmed by the experience. The personality becomes aware (to some degree) of the wisdom of the soul and what it seeks to express. Yet, this heightened stimulation can cause the personality to feel besieged and unable to live up to the soul's higher promptings. In such cases depression can ensue.

Another psychological anomaly that can emerge is ego inflation, but for the opposite

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reason. Instead of the personality feeling unable to cope with the added stimulation, it absorbs it in such a way that the ego becomes amplified. Contrary to what we would normally think, greater soul-infusion may *initially* lead to the amplification of egotistical tendencies. Fortunately, when the new level of infusion has stabilized, ego inflation dies down and greater selflessness emerges.

From this it should not be inferred that when a person is suffering from depression or ego inflation they must be experiencing soul-infusion. Most of the time these types of problems stem from struggles experienced by the personality alone, and are unrelated to the soul. Nonetheless, when a person is consciously walking the path, this alternative understanding of these psychological problems (as well as others) should be considered.

Recognized Effects of Soul Infusion

As the soul gradually infuses itself into the personality, its presence can be recognized in a variety of ways. To begin, an individual will increasingly feel the need to make a positive contribution to the betterment of something beyond him/herself. Because the wisdom of the soul is oriented toward service, it gives impulse to actions that support the larger whole. A soul-infused individual also tends to understand life by using broad and abstract truths to interpret events. In addition, the perception of circumstance will gradually change. Events that may seem random, to the personality, are realized as meaningful when the soul begins to contribute to the shaping of one's perception.

As soul-infusion increases, there is far less emphasis on the personal aspects of life. Rather, the oneness of humanity and its evolutionary needs become the focus of life's attention. Love is also experienced differently. The soul is a carrier of deep and abiding love. When it expresses itself through the soul-infused portion of the personality, the individual becomes less preoccupied with the desire for personal love. Now the love of humanity becomes the primary theme of life. Comparatively speaking, the love of the soul is more

impersonal than the love felt by the personality, though far more inclusive.

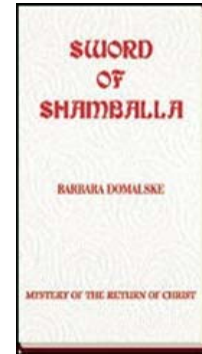
Summation: Two Merge as One

We have seen that the mind (and its gradual development) is the root that gives rise to evolution. The lower aspects of consciousness shape the personality and its perceptions, while the higher contains the wisdom of the soul. When a person finally begins to commit him/herself to living a more soul-filled life, this inner duality becomes more easily recognized. And, from this realization, the journey toward enlightenment begins. It is a journey that moves forward as the soul is able to infuse itself (incrementally) into the personality. In truth, the soul needs the personality. Its role is to be the outer garment through which the soul expresses its wisdom. Yet this can only happen when the personality yields to the soul's guiding light.

When the personality begins to let go, a variety of psychological reactions will often occur. Reactions such as depression, phobic tendencies and/or the rise in egotistical behaviors, are just a few examples. These reactions simply represent the initial challenges felt by the personality as it gradually learns to be guided by the soul. Such is the nature of spiritual evolution. It is to blend the soul and personality together. The two must merge as one. When this is fully achieved, enlightenment is at hand, and one's capacity to demonstrate selfless service is profound.

Sword of Shamballa

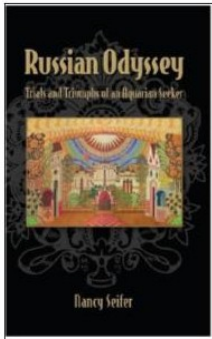
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