

T.F.S.

Three, five, and seven

3 5 7

By Stan Shapiro MD, Grand Lodge Education Officer G.L. of MN

#201

*“Only one who devotes himself to a cause with his whole strength and soul can be a true master. For this reason mastery demands all of a person.”
...Albert Einstein*

The belief in a soul is one of the universal human cultural elements.

As Masons we refer to the soul in our degree work but each of us may have a different idea about what the soul is. The following definitions may help us clarify the concept of the soul.

In the Scottish Rite Manual ^[1] the description of the soul includes: “proceeds from intelligenceThe Intelligence and Soul are the two light giving sources, whereby all blessings are dispensed.... The soul is Devine Sympathy and Affectionthe Universal soul, (is the) Source of emotions, passions and sympathies”.

Webster's Third International Dictionary:

1. The immaterial essence or substance animating principle or actuating cause of life or of the individual life.
2. The psychical or spiritual principle in general shared by or embodied in individual human beings or all beings having a rational and spiritual nature.
3. The immortal part of man having permanent individual existence.
4. A person's total self... sometimes distinguished from spirit.

Encyclopedia Britannica 15th edition:

Soul: an immaterial principle or aspect that, with the body, constitutes the human person. The soul has also been conceived as the very essence of a thing and not a mere aspect or part. Although now closely associated with such terms as mind, spirit, or self, with which it has become almost synonymous, the basic connotation of soul in ancient and primitive societies was life. Soul is the life of the body. ... At death the soul leaves the body, and all bodily processes cease.

Although the terms *soul* and *spirit* are sometimes used interchangeably, *soul* may denote a worldlier and less transcendent aspect of a person.^[2] According to psychologist James Hillman, the soul has an affinity for negative thoughts and images, whereas spirit seeks to rise above the entanglements of life and death. The words *soul* and *psyche* can also be treated synonymously, although *psyche* has more physical connotations, whereas *soul* is connected more closely to spirituality and religion.^[3]

Some interesting facts about the soul.^[4]

The ancients believed the soul originated in the heavens and descended on birth and ascended upon death through the constellation, Scorpio. **The early Greeks believed the soul was a product of the world and a rational soul existed to know the world and to shape it.**

One of the most significant features of present day theology is the emphasis on religious experience as the basis for inquiry into the soul. The soul's eternal destiny and the realization of one's worth are based in the moral values of his society. **Many present day cultures believe the soul is the highest development of the moral side of personality. The soul is seen as a product of God (and not a product of the world).** Some believe the soul and the body are complementary expressions of the personality, and the full personality involves the union of the body and the soul.

In some early cultures the soul was conceived as an entity, which was the cause or vehicle of bodily life and the physical activities of the person. It was conceived as a spiritual substance in contrast to the material body. Thus a spirit was a disembodied soul; idols and doubles were seen as living bodies;

and ghosts or haunters were the spirits or souls of the dead. Blood was conceived as the strength of life (cannibalism); the heart as the seat of life (and later as the seat of love); life was breath and the soul was living breath (“and the Lord God formed man from dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul” -Genesis 2:7); and heat was considered necessary for the soul’s life (because a corpse grows cold). Some early cultures conceived the body’s shadow (visual), and or the persons name (auditory) as the soul.

Today there are some who believe death does not result in a complete separation of the body and soul. Others believe in the transmigration of the soul to other animals or that the soul even during life may journey abroad (prophets and shaman made use of their souls as messengers to seek information in places far away). In cultures that believed in animism, everything had its’ own power and therefore its own soul. Some believe a possessed person has multiple souls.

Some cultures believe the soul has power. For example the power to keep the body in life; power to temporarily separate the body and the soul in sleep or trance; power to have the soul in hell and the body on earth; the power of clairvoyance; curative powers such as in suggestion or hypnotism; and or the power to inflict pain.

It seems it could be worthwhile to discuss your concept of the soul and the immortality of the soul with other brothers and possibly your family members.

(1)The Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide second edition Arturo De Hoyos pp554-555

(2) A blue fire: *Selected writings by James Hillman*. New York, NY, USA: Harper Perennial. pp. 112–129.

(3) *ibid.* P. 20.

(4)The Jewish Encyclopedia Volume 11 pp. 472-476 Varda Books 2001

Words To Live By: *“The soul is dyed the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the full light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you think, and what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny...it is the light that guides your way”Heraclitus.*

If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions, please send them to shapiro.stan@gmail.com

The Education Videos by our education committee can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/glmned>

The latest Masonic Monday Question, and some of the past questions, can be viewed at www.Lodgebuilder.org and at www.mn-masons.org