

The Seven Human Principles – The Deity in Man- Part 5

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The Seven Principles of Man Annie Besant

Theosophical Manual No. I

[http://www.anandgholap.net/Seven Principles Of Man-AB.htm](http://www.anandgholap.net/Seven_Principles_Of_Man-AB.htm)

Introduction

Man is composed of Seven Principles

Man according to the Theosophical teaching is a sevenfold being, or, in the usual phrase, has a septenary constitution. Putting it in another way, man's nature has seven aspects, may be studied from seven different points of view, is composed of seven principles.

Man is a Spark from the Divine Fire

The clearest and best way of all in which to think of man is to regard him as one, the Spirit or True Self; this belongs to the highest region of the universe, and is universal, the same for all; it is a ray of God, a spark from the divine fire. This is to become an individual, reflecting the divine perfection, a son that grows into the likeness of his father.

Man's Principles Enable Him to Interact with Various Regions of the Universe

For this purpose the Spirit, or true Self, is clothed in garment after garment, each garment belonging to a definite region of the universe, and enabling the Self to come into contact with that region, gain knowledge of it, and work in it. It thus gains experience, and all its latent potentialities are gradually drawn out into active powers. These garments, or sheaths, are distinguishable from each other both theoretically and practically. If a man be looked at clairvoyantly each is distinguishable by the eye, and they are separable each from each either during physical life or at death, according to the nature of any particular sheath.

Man is Presently Evolving

Whatever words may be used, the fact remains the same – that he is essentially sevenfold, an evolving being, part of whose nature has already been manifested, part remaining latent at present, so far as the vast majority of humankind is concerned. Man's consciousness is able to function through as many of these aspects as have been already evolved in him into activity. (SPoM)

Man and His Bodies by Annie Besant

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Introduction

Distinguish Between the Man and the Bodies

At the outset of our study it is necessary that the Western reader should change the attitude in which he has been accustomed to regard himself, and that he should clearly distinguish between the man and the bodies in which the man dwells.

Cease to identify ourselves with our Garments

We are too much in the habit of identifying ourselves with the outer garments that we wear, too apt to think of ourselves as though we were our bodies; and it is necessary, if we are to grasp a true conception of our subject, that we shall leave this point of view and shall cease to identify ourselves with casings that we put on for a time and again cast off, to put on fresh ones when we are again in need of such vestures.

It is Foolish to Identify Ourselves with our Bodies

To identify ourselves with these bodies that have only a passing existence is really as foolish and as unreasonable as it would be to identify ourselves with our clothes; we are not dependent on them - their value is in proportion to their utility.

Regard our Self as the owner of his Vehicle

The blunder so constantly made of identifying the consciousness, which is our Self, with the vehicles in which that consciousness is for the moment functioning, can only be excused by the fact that the waking consciousness, and to some extent the dream consciousness also, do live and work in the body and are not known apart from it to the ordinary man; yet an intellectual understanding of the real conditions may be gained, and we may train ourselves to regard our Self as the owner of his vehicle and after a time this will by experience become for a definite fact, when we learn to separate our Self from his bodies, to step out of the vehicle, and to know that we exist in a far fuller consciousness outside it than within it, and that we are in no sense dependent upon it; when that is once achieved, any further identification of our Self with our bodies is of course impossible, and we can never again make the blunder of supposing we are what we wear.

Intellectual Understanding Helps Train Us to Distinguish the Difference

The clear intellectual understanding at least is within the grasp of all of us, and we may train ourselves in the habitual distinguishment between the Self - the man - and his bodies; even to do this is to step out of the illusion in which the majority are wrapped, and changes our whole attitude towards life and towards the world, lifting us into a serener region above "the changes and chances of this mortal life," placing us above the daily petty troubles which loom so largely to embodied consciousness, showing us the true proportion between the ever-changing and the relatively permanent, and making us feel the difference between the drowning man tossed and buffeted by the waves that smother him, and the man whose feet are on a rock while the surges break harmlessly at its base.

Man is the Self Bodies are the Casings

By man I mean the living, conscious, thinking Self, the individual; by bodies, the various casings in which this Self is enclosed, each casing enabling the Self to function in some definite region of the universe.

Man and Bodies - Vehicle Analogy

As a man might use a carriage on the land, a ship on the water, an airplane in the air, to travel from one place to another, and yet in all places remain himself, so does the Self, the real man, remain himself no matter in what body he is functioning; and as carriage, ship and airplane vary in materials and arrangement according to the element in which each is destined to move, so does each body vary according to the environment in which it is to act.

What the Bodies have in Common

One is grosser than another, one shorter-lived than another, one has fewer capacities than another; but all have this in common - that relatively to the man they are transient, his instruments, his servants, wearing out and renewed according to their nature, and adapted to his varying needs, his growing powers.