Soul

In religion, soul, the Old English sawol, "spiritual and emotional part of a person, animate existence: life, living being" (N), from the Gothic saiwała (N), is a postulate, albeit an antiquated one, that there exists an indestructible corporeal essence, with a measurable weight (see: soul weight), in certain animate things, such as human beings, which transcends earthly existence; acting or representing the moral nature or essence of the individual in judgement. A person who theorizes about the soul is a "soul theorist". One who does not believe in the existence of souls is an "asoulist" (see: asoulism).

History

In c.3100BC, the Egyptians invented the concept of the soul in their idea of "ba" or moral part of the human (see: Egyptian human) that is weight on the scale of truth (scale of Maat in the judgment hall in the afterlife.

"Herodotus upon this occasion says, that the whole romance of the soul and its transmigrations was invented by the Egyptians, and propagated in Greece by men, who pretended to be its authors. I know their names, adds he, but shall not mention them (lib. 2). Cicero, however, has positively informed us, that it was Pherecydes, master of Pythagoras, Tuscul. lib. 1, sect. 16. Now admitting that this system was at that period a novelty, it accounts for Solomon's treating it as a fable, who lived 130 years before Pherecydes."

— Constantin Volney (1791), The Ruins (N)

In c.530BC, Pherecydes, according to Cicero, as discussed in his Tusculam Disputat (c.55BC), or another part of his works, as cited by Baron d'Holbach (1770), no doubt via absorption of Egyptian soul theory (see: Egyptian human), was purported to have "invented" the doctrine of either the soul and or the model of the immortality of the soul. [11]

In c.1620, Rene Descartes placed the seat of the soul in the pineal gland.

In 1648, Johann Helmont, in his Ortus Medicinae, situated the "archeus" or soul, part of the world soul, in the upper opening of the stomach (Thomson, 1996). [12]

In 1739, Giovanni Lancisi placed the seat of the soul in the corpus callosum; in 1741, Francois Peyronie argued the same thing (N) and illustrated this opinion with a mass of experiments. [12]

Thermodynamics

See main: Cessation thermodynamics

In 1950, Norbert Wiener gives an example of how the term "soul" can be found intertwined with basic thermodynamic hypotheses, theories, and explanations, as follows:

"Certain analogies of behavior are observed between the machine and the living organism, the problem as to whether the machine is alive or not is, for our purposes, semantic … if we use the word 'life' to cover all phenomena which locally swim upstream against the current of entropy, we are at liberty to do so; however, we shall then include many astronomical phenomena … it is my opinion, therefore, best to avoid all question-begging epithets such as 'life', 'soul', 'vitalism', and the like, and say merely that machines [and] human beings [are] pockets of decreasing entropy in a framework in which the large entropy tends to increase."
The general issue here is that science has, for the most part, eroded the major tenets of the philosophies, mythologies, religions of the past, except the essential ones, such as in explanations of existence, life, love, death, and purpose; yet a modern scientific reconciliation of these key facets remains a taboo topic in hard science subjects and discussions. In 2007, American Hindu researcher Steven Rosen speculated on quantum energy, the soul, and reincarnation. [4]

The concept of "soul" is often found intertwined with various thermodynamic theories, e.g. Ludwig Colding (1843), Gustave Hirn (1869), Pierre Teilhard (1930s), DMR Sekhar (2007), etc., in regards to either what happens when one dies, or what happens during love, Carl Jung (1933), etc., in the context of principles such as the conservation of force, conservation of energy, the first or second laws of thermodynamics, etc. The following, for instance, is noted quote by American chemist Howard Reiss, as found in the opening chapter to American geochemist Gregory Anderson's 1993 textbook Thermodynamics in Geochemistry: [2]

"[It is an] almost certain truth that nobody (authors included) understands thermodynamics completely. The writing of a book therefore becomes a kind of catharsis in which the author exorcises his own demon of incomprehension and prevents it from occupying the soul of another."

Certainly, this may be entirely metaphor in the minds of each author, but it does highlight the ubiquity of the term "soul" in the English-speaking world.

In any event, it is often commented colloquially that the first law of thermodynamics is the good news, as Robert Hazen and James Trefil have written, "a natural law analogous to the immortality of the soul," and that the bad news is the second law, "a natural law that helps clarify why the body grows old." [3]

Beg

See main: Beg on the soul

The following is Mirza Beg's conception of soul in humans and crystals in terms of chemical thermodynamics:

"The living system is energized with a soul comprising free energy and entropy. The soul acts as the driving force for all forward reactions and interactions, while entropy retards the forward reactions. At equilibrium the forward reaction is balanced by the backward reactions. Death occurs in both cases as a result of de-energizing the body or deactivating it of the quantum of energy that was its life form. This is marked by departure of soul and loss of life followed by decomposition of the body. A non-living body is also indoctrinated to follow the eternal laws but it has the driving force contained as internal energy of its system for example in the lattice of a crystal. Destruction of the lattice and release of lattice energy of the crystal constitutes the death of the crystal. Cessation of life processes, according to this hypothesis is a result of the loss of the driving force provided by the energy embodied in the soul or in the lattice of a crystal. It is thus possible to visualize that the same energy quantum which is tagged by the forces of energy infinite [Allah], can be reassembled by the mechanism "be". All the souls will thus be reassembled as and when desired by Allah. Likewise all living and non-living matter would return to their origin i.e. Noorun a'la Noor, and become part of the energy infinite."

— Mirza Beg (2016), "Socio-Physical Theory of Creation of the Universe" (NV), Academia.edu, Jan 26

Quotes

The following are related quotes:

"As soon as the coin in the strongbox rings, a soul from purgatory springs!"
— Anon (c.1520s), noted European saying about bishop bureaucratic decadence [10]

"We must find out what the mind and soul consist of, and how everything on earth proceeds; and if we can do this, we may, of course, dispense with the gods."
— Balfour Stewart and Peter Tait (1875), on Lucretius' atomic theory based aim to dispense with the gods

"No one has ever touched a soul, or seen one in a test tube."
— John Watson (1924), Behaviorism [8]

"In Hollywood a girl's virtue is much less important than her hair-do. You're judged by how you look, not by what you are. Hollywood's a place where they'll pay you a thousand dollars for a kiss, and fifty cents for your soul. I know, because I turned down the first offer often enough and held out for the fifty cents."
— Marilyn Monroe (c.1950), Source: in: My Story (NV), 1974

Q: What is the soul?
A: The soul is a living being [bean] without a body, having reason and free will.
— Roman Catholic catechism (1930)

Definition of the soul taught to Odile Watson (1920-2007), wife of DNA co-discoverer Francis Crick, and 1953 illustrator (NV) of DNA as it appears in Nature, who, as child, the heard term living "being" (see: living being) to her mind as "living bean", which she remained puzzled about, but remained silent on, until her later discussions with Crick, her husband of 55-years, who cites the above quote and anecdote in the opening chapter of his 1995 The Astonishing Hypothesis. [7]
At one point, a minority of some of the more extreme Christians (following Aristotle) doubted whether women had souls, or at least had souls of the same quality as men. — Francis Crick (1995), The Astonishing Hypothesis

“eBay does not allow the auctioning of human souls for the following reasons: If the soul does not exist, eBay could not allow the auctioning of the soul because there would be nothing to sell. However, if the soul does exist then, in accordance with eBay’s policy on human parts and remains, we would not allow the auctioning of human souls.” — eBay (2000), company policy

“No self-respecting professor of philosophy wants to discuss the soul in class. It reeks of old-time theology, or, worse, new age quantum treacle. The soul has been a dead end in philosophy ever since the positivists unmasked its empty referential center. Scientific philosophy has shown us that there's no there there. But make no mistake, our students are very interested in the soul. In fact, that is the main reason many of us won't raise the soul issue in our classes: The bizarre, speculative, spooky metaphysics that pours out of students, once the box has been opened, is truly chaotic and depressing. The class is a tinderbox of weird pet theories—divine vapors, god particles, reincarnation, astral projections, auras, ghosts—and mere mention of the soul is like a spark that sets off dozens of combustions. Trying to put out all these fires with calm, cool rationality is exhausting and unsuccessful.” — Stephen Asma (2010), “Soul Talk” (see: turnover rate)

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“Spoon fed this religion from the slave ship. They used faith to justify bringing slaves here. All the conducts and the rules in the good book. You swear by it, but failed to take a good look. You're completely sold. Just two centuries ago slave owners swore you didn’t even have a soul. Now you blindly defend a faith. That was used plunder pillage and rape a whole entire race.” — Greydon Square (2010), “Myth” (Ѻ), The Kardashev Scale

References

External links
â— Soul – Wikipedia.
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