

# Introduction and other practitioners who may wish



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## **Introduction**

Spirituality refers to religious attitudes, experiential dimensions, existential well-being, mystical beliefs and other practices of religious inclination. This definition seems to be based on the physical phenomena as opposed to the metaphysical one. This is largely due to the use of scientific methods in trying to pursue the goal of the study.

More often than not, spirituality refers to a denominational view, it also refers to tradition of thought that span across cultures and ages which postulates that there is a part of the human person that is eternal, imperishable and that goes beyond the individual realm of consciousness (Walachi 237). Various religions all over the world have a different aspect of spirituality. Of importance is the individual survival of death among the Christians and Islam. The Hindu lay stress on the super individual permanence of the spirit and believes in the one-ness of the human beings.

The issue of spiritualism has forever received opposition with classical materialists arguing that only matter exists and that anything else beyond matter doesn't exist and is only illusion. They (classical materialists) do not believe that spiritualism can exist beyond consciousness. Modern versions of classical materialism don't completely relegate the mind and spiritualism to an illusory realm (Walachi 239).

## **Spirituality in the Islamic Context**

The Muslim embraces spiritualism greatly and will go into greater heights to prove this.

As young Muslim boys grow and mature, they are taught to how to lender a hand to a needy brother and to participate in public service which inspire solidarity. It is believed that individuals have a role in determining their fate. Eternal life is only guaranteed if an individual is able to surpass all the meaninglessness and the absurdity of the life we live here on earth. A young Muslim is taught to be kind and avoid cruelty to fellow Muslims. Islam has strict laws regarding participation in social work which is motivated by spiritualism (Hall 172).

Muslims practice significant elements of life which include making peace, maintaining purity, being obedient and submitting to the will of Allah. These core beliefs are strictly imparted into young Muslim boys as they grow up and help form the spiritual men they become upon maturity. It is only through submission to the will of the Allah, obeying his will and being good to others that a Muslim is guaranteed peace and an everlasting purity. This drives the spirituality with which almost every aspect of a Muslims life is tied with. According to Islam, a spirit means a breadth, courage, vigour or even life itself. Spirit is in close association with life and is defined to mean a vital principle that gives life to the physical organism. Spirituality in respect to this write up refers to the humankind search for a purpose and meaning in life.

However, it should be clear that spiritualism is not synonymous with religion and does not pertain to the presence of a supernatural Being. Numerous definitions for spirituality do exist and it is hard to exhaust all of them (Hall 176).

## Concepts of Spirituality

Spirituality exists outside the scientific domain making it to be mistaken delusional. However, its dimensional characteristics and the influence of culture may affect the way the body functions thus making it considerably important in clinical practice. Because religious beliefs are intimately tied to spirituality, they can avail challenges to psychiatrics and other practitioners who may wish to recognize whether a certain belief is delusional or normal.

Spiritualism may thus be delusional or normal depending on various religious beliefs (Pierre 173). This differing extremes present challenges especially where the religious stances between the patient and the psychiatrics diverge. It becomes difficult to sit with patients whose Religious beliefs have to a large extent been used in handling of patients suffering from schizophrenia and other psychotic symptoms. Certain definitions of psychotic terms tended to brand religious belief as symptomatic of mental disease, these definitions have since been replaced with more neutral terms.

At times, spirituality may become delusional especially when it is based on an incorrect assumption about a given reality. The belief is abnormal in that no other members of the group share in this false perception. However, such behaviour only is regarded delusion if its judgment is so incorrect as to lack credibility. Spirituality sometimes involves philosophical and supernatural aspects that are normally outside scientific view. These supernatural and philosophical aspects of spirituality may aim at examining the nature of God and the extent to which He affects and influences human existent, his soul, the life in the hereafter and codes of behaviour. It is thus clear that such

spiritual or religious beliefs appear delusional because of their supernatural content and being unscientific (Pierre 174).

## **Mind-Body Problem**

The mind-body debate has been there since the Aristotelian time and before. The Aristotelian concept of the soul articulated that both the mind and the soul were all necessary as they acted together to form a functional unit (Walachi 215).

Plato had also sought to understand the soul and defined it as the active intellect that was possible to separate and that was actually separate. In modern times, the mind matter anomalies have presented a new aspect of the problem that need to be reconsidered. The mind-body problem has two different aspects: 1) The first aspect is the traditional mind-body problem which is addressed by questions such as: can the characteristics of our experience of 'mind' be condensed to some tangible aspects like patterned neuronal-discharges? How about our consciousness, is the brain alone responsible for it or there are some additional entities that too influence personal consciousness? These questions and others aim at trying to understand consciousness.

2) Part two of this mind-body problem is the question of transpersonal consciousness which disguises itself as a dualist position. Question arising from this dualist position is whether consciousness is restricted and demoted in the body or it is able to reach further out. Can consciousness represent mental states of other conscious beings meaning that it can go beyond the visible boundaries of its confinement? Can the mind be influenced by other

people's past mental and even physical states other than by the contemporary means of acquiring knowledge through learning, reading or hearing and therefore meaning that the mind can wander into the past or into the future? Could the soul survive in other mind-body combination beyond what we know and could this form of association survive personal death? From the above discussion, I understand the mind-body problem as a problem focusing on how consciousness which is also connected to the brain relates to its body. My understanding of this problem further stretches to the search for the meaning on whether consciousness could go beyond body-brain consciousness attachment. This problem further seeks to address whether a soul-like being can survive the common death while in a certain form (walachi 217).

### **Romance book 'Gone with the wind' by Margret Mitchell**

Scarlet O Hara is represented as a young beautiful girls mooning over a Smart guy called Ashley Wilkes.

Ashley on the other hand has his heart another lady called Melanie whom he married. Melanie is depicted as a sensitive soul that portrays one of the most pure emotions humanity may have. What disturbs scarlet in this novel is how an ordinary looking woman like Melanie could trounce and go with her dream man. In retaliation, scarlet marries Melanie's brother-Charles out of anger and madness. This plan enabled her stay close to her man (Mitchell 7).

In another angle, the book depicted the civil war that led to the freedom of the blacks from their white masters. This brought in a new state of equilibrium in which both the former masters and the slave became equals.

A new order set in with increasing competition for survival (Mitchell 14).

Although many people excelled during this revolution, Captain Rhett Butler was the true hero of the story as he became fabulously rich. Rhett admired and appreciated Scarlet's never die spirit and consequently wanted her for himself (Mitchell 7). In Scarlet, Rhett found a match.

Scarlet looked selfish and light-hearted while Rhett too had hidden agenda as he hated the nobles the likes of Ashley and Melanie who were now becoming extinct. After Rhett convinced and married Scarlet. However the two rivals' families had attachments to the by-gones and each of them worked his or her way to realize their hidden dreams. Scarlet seemed to transverse as she moved with different men in search for satisfaction and wealth.

Ultimately, after Melanie died, she falls for Ashley, her childhood friend. Scarlet is filled with unruly passions and the book portrays an infantilizing model of a feminine in which both the intimacy and trust have been undermined.

## **Intimacy**

Gone with the Wind has very little instances of intimacy but this is a passionate story with Scarlet placing her honour over and above her life. It is a story of unrequited love in which each individual in the novel is driven by emotion in their story of love. Each had a hidden agenda and the stories of love are wonderful. In my understanding, intimacy is much more than sexual connotations. It spans from what is viewed as physical to social, emotional, mental and spiritual factors. I take intimacy to mean total life sharing.

Intimacy goes beyond psychology and is based on deep biological need.

### **Sample case study**

An 11-year-old boy of an African-American origin is brought with a history of drugs and violence. The boy has had a difficult past having been sexually molested by his mother's many boyfriends. His case is that he has become vengeful and won't talk to a soul. This case would present a problem to me in that the boy refuses to talk to anyone and convincing him to open up may also prove difficult.

### **Relevance Identification**

Spirituality and psychotherapy are intertwined.

Psychotherapy is able to offer support to both a person's spiritual and psychological nourishment. Spirituality plays a very major role in psychotherapy. This is because a person's spiritual coupled with therapeutic process allow the practitioner to have a different view of the client in a different and even deeper manner. This approach may also enable and allow reciprocal process (Damon 16). The most interesting thing about psychotherapy course is the realization that at the end of the course, I will be able to gain a lot of experience and effective therapeutic skills that will enable me help people regain their normal quality life swiftly. I have also given me skill to empower people maintain emotional health now and in the future.

To make myself a better professional practitioner, I will undertake internships or voluntary work to further develop my skills.



## Part Two

### Book review ‘ Care of the soul’ by Thomas Moore

Moore’s book ‘ care of the soul’ adds a lot of confusion to the already existing confusion of certain words in the American society. Such words as heart, love, truth, mind, soul and even emotion have always presented a lot of confusion in their definition. ‘ Care of the soul’ definition of the term soul is an additional headache to this confusion (Moore xi).

Moore contends that the definition of the term soul is a difficult one and that it does not depend on the intellect alone but on imagination and that it lies between comprehending and oblivion (Moore 5). It is an aspect of imagination neither of the mind nor the body. According to Moore, the soul refers to a quality of experiencing our own life (5).

He sites that the soul means depth, value and the personal substance. Moore further makes use of this approach to other aspects of daily living such as creativity, money, power and love. He correctly uses stories to lay his arguments clear e. g. Homer’s Odyssey becomes handy while when he talks about fathers. In this section, Moore’s suggestion is that we as humans should take life to be a long and tedious passage. Moore also suggests that good knowledge in history and literature is destined to make people good fathers (35).

On mothers, Moore uses a Greek myth in which he advises that mothers should allow their children to get involved in risky matters so that they may get experiences of death (Moore 37). Moore seems to have gone too far in the analysis of parenthood in the definition of soul. This in depth analysis is

in the attempt to differentiate between soul and mind and intellect and imagination. In the 'Care of the soul', Moore uses Plato's work, poets and works of other psychologists to espouse on this book. Spirituality is discussed in depth in Moore's book; he advises that an intellectual will only require summary reading to understand the nature of the human mind.

According to him, he says that the soul alone calls for a deep rooted reflection, meanings and references meaning that this is largely anti-intellectual. His description accepts the false notion that shallow elucidation of dreams and stories lacks the in depth reflection (Moore 34). Moore argues that any sacred story must contain its mystery; otherwise, the exclusion of such makes it an empty shell (239). He cites that fundamentalism only idealize and romanticize stories while in the process excluding those darker elements that portray doubt, desperation and void. Moore however wonders why Christians won't turn to the bible for all of these needs. The writer cites the bible where Apostle Paul asserts " By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit, That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel" (Eph. 3: 4-6). But because it is apparent that Moore is a mystery man, he seems to have a dislike for this passage, why would he want to keep mysteries? Is it for the sake of the human soul? The answer is ' No', Moore only wants to avoid difficult critical thinking.

## **Recommended Readers**

I would recommend this book to psychotherapists, theologians, troubled patients and psychologists who would want to get an insight into the real meaning of the soul, love, emotion, family, life money and creativity. In addition, Moore's work would be a great read for anyone interested in the mystery of the soul and to all those who care about spirituality and would be willing to make it part of their everyday living.

## **Book analysis**

This book quite good in its principle as it is an explorative meditation based on the sacred art of soul living. Major points emerge early in the book and include: 1) The in depth definition of the otherwise confusing term ' soul'. He (Moore) states that the soul rather than being a thing is a quality of experiencing life in fullness.

He goes ahead to describe the soul as having depth and value and that it is related to both the heart and personal substance (Fredrick & Brussat 5). He defines the soul as the seat of the emotions we experience in our daily living. He explores how the soul may be lost through restlessness, addiction, insecurity and frustration. 2) Moore discusses ways in which the soul may be nourished for those whose life is lacking in meaning and purpose. Under this part, he provides a recipe for a soulful living when our lives are in turmoil. The books gives details on how those whose lives are troubled may learn from the personal troubles, misfortunes and stupidity.

In his view, Moore says that it is difficult to give the distinction between the soul and the body. According to this great psychotherapist, separating the

soul from the body, family, work love or even power may prove a bit more of a challenge. 3) ' Care of the soul' also presents means of actually taking care of our souls. This is where the title of the book is derived from. Moore uses spirituality as a source of soul nourishment. He ends his book by challenging the reader to true vocation involving the care for the world's souls and for the celebration of a sacred life.

## **Caution**

This write up reaches a little too deep in its endeavour to get to the soul; in many a times, people live without ever caring for the soul within. This is the major point that Moore stresses in the larger part of the book.

He is urging the American society to give a chance to the spiritual living. However, from the beginning to some considerable length in this book, Moore only uses the word ' soul' maybe in a bid to sell more copies without necessarily considering or even addressing the apparent need that seems to arise. This is not to mean that Moore is not addressing what he purposed to do. But what I mean is that although Moore uses various case studies and redress to his patients with an aim of reaching into the patients' soul and extracting what is causing the pain is valid, this validity is lost when he goes into extra miles in his focus on the soul and assigns souls to both the animate and the inanimate objects. How could anyone assign soul to the kidneys within and to the coffee tables and stones? This is where Moore losses focus!

## Comparison with Other Pre- Readings

Moore's book is to a larger extent similar to the other pre-readings in that all of them are dealing with an aspect of spirituality and the mind. However, whereas some of the other readings are real life stories, Moore's ' care of the soul' is a well researched work.

## Conclusion

Moore book is a great for anyone interested in understanding the soul. Major points presented in this book include a recipe for soul nourishment and factors they may cause a loss of soul.

The book however has a few short coming just like any other piece of academic work. Just like other pre-readings, this book too sheds light on the issue of spirituality.

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