



The Anthroposophical Understanding of the Soul

F. W. Van Emmichoven, F. W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven

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Use of the word *soul* to denote the inner world of human experience has not been fashionable in recent psychology. In this ground-breaking study, however, the author stresses that our inner life is always active as a whole entity, which calls for recognition of the human soul as a being. Drawing on ideas of Goethe, Brentano, Husserl, Scheler, and Rudolf Steiner, Zeylmans van Emmichoven uses the soul's own self-perception as his method of clarifying the mysteries of the inner life.

What does he find? "The soul as an inner world participates in two worlds: an external world and...a still deeper, interior world." The soul is revealed as a mediator between the outer physical world (including the body) and the inner core of the human being, the "I." Through its intentional relationship to these two worlds, an ever-shifting stream of dynamic polarities continually courses through the soul: love-hate, joy-sorrow, pleasure-displeasure, desire-satisfaction, laughing-weeping, life-consciousness.

In a compact and lively style, other soul processes are similarly examined, including doubt, volition, mental images, perceiving, judgment and decision, spatial-temporal experience, and sexual identity. The language of dreams is discussed and ordered into four types. The expressive capacity of the soul in speech, posture, temperament, and character is treated with subtlety.

The author also proposes another dimension to psychology in the notion of the soul's drive for development, which unfolds through the Goethean laws of polarity, enhancement, and metamorphosis. He paints a profound picture of the higher goal of human life: the soul's gradual liberation from physical bonds to become an organ for the Self, always balanced by the soul's inclination to become an organ for the body. Along this unfinished journey, toward a full human existence, the author depicts the roles of love, wisdom, and inner death and resurrection. As the author points out, there is an area where psychology and philosophy of life overlap and cannot be entirely separated.

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