

The Spiritual Scientist

An ezine for those who think!

Why know the soul?

Question: Is there any practical use of knowing about the soul?

Answer: Yes, there is immense and immediate use. Let's see how.

Knowledge about the soul is not like knowledge about some abstract theoretical concept like a quark that has no bearing on our practical lives. Knowledge about the soul being knowledge about our own selves has immediate bearing on our lives. The answer to the seemingly abstract question "who am I?" also determines the answer to the eminently practical question "how should I live?"

Aldous Huxley puts it well: "It is because we do not know who we are ... that we behave in the generally silly, the often insane and the sometimes criminal ways that are so characteristically human."

- Suppose a group of children identify themselves with a humorous cartoon character and spend their time imitating the antics of that character. We would call that silly.
- Suppose a group of teenagers identify themselves with a movie hero and spend their time imitating the dangerous stunts of that hero. We would call that insane.
- Suppose a group of youths identify themselves with a villainous character portrayed as a hero in a movie depicting perverse values and spend their time imitating the sadistic, murderous ways of that villain. We would call that criminal.



In all these cases, the individuals by misidentifying themselves at best miss out on the potentials of real life and at worst harm themselves and others.

The same holds true when we forget our spiritual identity as souls and misidentify ourselves with our material bodies. At best, we miss out on the spiritual potential of life: the opportunity to experience everlasting divine happiness that is our eternal birthright. At worst, by seeking pleasure in self-defeating indulgences like smoking and drinking, we injure our bodies, or by seeking pleasure in exploitative or abusive indulgences, we harm others and our ecosystem.

Children misidentify with an entertainment character because that character's life seems more exciting and adventurous than theirs. Similarly, we identify with our material bodies because material enjoyment available through the body seems promising. Sadly, however this promise turns out to be treacherous. Material pleasures – even the most glamorized among them – turn out to be disappointingly brief. Our material bodies far from being sources of pleasure turn out to be vulnerable to injury, disease and destruction. Misidentifying with these fragile and doomed bodies turns out to be a painful illusion.

When we become aware of our identity as souls and when we accordingly modify our lifestyle, then we become liberated from the painful illusion of bodily misidentification and reinstated in our true glory as indestructible, blissful souls – not only in the next world, but also in this world. ☪

