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*Lélekenciklopédia [Encyclopedia Of The Soul]*

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L'Harmattan Publisher's and Károli Gáspár University's joint edition of *Lélekenciklopédia* ("Encyclopedia of the Soul") allows insight into the great religions, myths and philosophies of the world, as well as into (natural) scientific conceptions of the soul. Because of its very special content the volume is to an extent unique in the Hungarian and international academic and encyclopaedic literature. This means that all the notions of the soul, and also the concepts closely related to that of the soul (such as spirit, breath, psyche, self-awareness, consciousness, unconsciousness, subconscious mind, body, heart, life, death, rebirth, immortality, ghost, demon, devil, afterlife, heavenly world, underworld etc.) are described from an interdisciplinary, or, in fact, multidisciplinary perspective including ethnography, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, theology, anthropology and other disciplines. The encyclopaedia is a happy combination of a collection of studies and of a reference book, which is designed not only for experts, but also for lay people.

The first volume discusses the ideas about soul and spirit in the five world religions. The authors and reviewers are, without exception, excellent experts, who, on the one hand, faithfully represent the vision of their respective churches, and, on the other hand, do not refrain from presenting alternative viewpoints as well, as they draw on the latest research. In this sense the studies reflect not only the mainstream views but they also manage to present the theoretical difficulties of the several different concepts of soul and spirit.

## CHRISTIANITY

After the editor-in-chief's preface and Prof. Dr. Emőke Bagdy's foreword, Prof. Dr. István Perczel (CEU) introduces the early Christian theories on the soul from the time of gospels up to the heyday of Byzantine mysticism. He emphasizes that the Christian theory of the soul is essentially related to the Greek New Testament and to the Jewish tradition. As most authors, Perczel draws attention to the philological

and semantic problems of term *soul*. The source of the problem is the fact that both *pneuma* and *psyche* have several meanings in Ancient Greek, while the authors of New Testament used these words mainly according to their respective Aramaic meanings. *Pneuma* in the Gospels is simply the soul of man, while *psyche*, in its Aramaic sense, means *life*. The Acts of the Apostles most often refers to the Holy Spirit with the word *pneuma*. In the beginning, expressions were closely connected to the Aramaic cultural environment, but in the 2nd and 3rd century Platonism influenced Christianity. On this new route a milestone was Origen's Platonism and the Cappadocian Fathers' concept of the soul that they formulated in the context of the resurrection. Finally, after Christological disputes and schisms, a positive development was the appearance of the notion of *person*, which has become an elementary part of our culture.

In the next chapter Prof. Dr. Liviu Jitianu expounds the Roman Catholic interpretation of the soul. (Unfortunately, the book does not say anything specific about the author.) In accordance with the general structure of the chapters, the author begins with an introduction into the history of the church. Especially in the context of pneumatology, the terms *soul* and *spirit* occur with reference to the third divine person of the Trinity. Although the Trinity is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and though, according to the author, the Spirit of God cannot be identified with the Holy Spirit, a lot of people believe that the theophany, the *pluralis maiestatis* and the *trisagion* refer to the Trinity. In the New Testament, the Trinity and the Holy Spirit are displayed in Jesus's life. This special orientation towards Christology and pneumatology is the dividing line between the Old and the New Testament. However, the Catholic Church has a teaching concerning the ecclesiological dimension of pneumatology as well. The Church is the workhouse of the Spirit and the source of Christian life is the Spirit. This Spirit teaches in the church and works in the councils of bishops and also manifests itself in Pope's *ex cathedra* utterances. Finally, besides the anthropological aspects of the human soul the author discusses the question of afterlife. Concerning conceptions of life after death the author surprisingly turns to the Protestant Rudolf Bultmann's concept of "existential provocation," with reference to the resurrection.

Dr. Gergely András Nacsinák, an orthodox priest, investigates the question from the viewpoint of Orthodox Christianity, which, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, is not unanimous in the interpretation of this concept. Orthodox theology seeks after a balance in its Christology and Trinitology, accepting the Nicene Creed on the co-essential divinity of the Son, applying to Him the term "consubstantial." Therefore its theology is often labelled mystical or antinomic. Respect for tradition is not pure formalism, but a necessary part of spiritual practice. Thus, the Orthodox Church also acknowledges that by the Fall of Adam and Eve, the "divine icon" was impaired in man, but it has been restored by the salvation of Jesus. In fact,

man can be divinized, according to Orthodox Christian theology. This is called *theosis*. For this church, the important part of religion is ascetic, mystical practice, whereas according to the Fathers, purely speculative philosophy is the demons' theology. The demons offer images and thoughts (*logismoi*) to ascetics, that is why such images and thoughts should be banished, and the *nous* should be withdrawn to protect the heart from external influences.

In the next chapter, Tamás Juhász deals with the interpretation of the soul within the Reformed Churches. "Reformed" is a general term and in the colloquial sense, it refers to the Protestant Churches that are members of the World Community of Reformed Churches, like the Reformed, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches are, respectively. The Protestant teaching lays stress on the four *solas*, namely *sola Scriptura*, *solus Christus*, *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. In respect of the Scripture, grace and faith, the respective Protestant and Catholic positions are much closer to each other, so today *solus Christus* is the only true distinguishing mark between them. According to the author, the Reformed Churches disclaim all religious hierarchies, stand up for the idea of universal priesthood, they are champions of human rights, and call for solidarity with the poor. While they emphasize the relative autonomy of the Holy Spirit, they refuse the possibility of a direct experience of God. There is no doubt that in many respects Tamás Juhász's original approach does not reveal the established Protestant ideas but introduces alternative ones. For the author, God can only be defined in terms of a personal relationship with humans. Further, quoting Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism, he demythologizes hell, which he no longer considers to be a real place, but as suffering itself. Similarly, Juhász states that the concept of Satan as a real person is a residue of the medieval world view, which most Protestants do not believe in.

Next, Prof. Dr. Tamás Béres as a Lutheran professor of theology explains the Evangelical Lutheran theology of the soul. The autonomous regional churches are members of the Lutheran World Federation. This organization includes 68 million people from 80 countries and 140 member churches. Their faith is based on the idea that salvation is reached by grace alone and that salvation saves people in the form of the Word and the sacraments. Therefore it can be stated that the centre of the Evangelical Lutheran preaching is the Gospel. The Holy Spirit is present in the preaching and the sacraments. God cannot be merely known in theoretical and rational way. Thus, instead of theoretical understanding we should talk about soteriological knowledge. The Devil who wants to steal man's faith, hope and love, is the cause of sin. Against evil, prayer and the Word of God can take up the fight successfully. Jesus Christ has overcome hell and all the negative spiritual powers. Due to the incomprehensibility of the soul, it is almost impossible to reach a clear delineation of concepts. In any event, apart from the Spirit of God and the human soul, there are other souls too. The special gifts of the Holy Spirit are the "theological

charismas” such as wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, teaching, *glossolalia*. However, the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit is faith, hope and love.

After this chapter Csilla Lakatos, an unitarian minister and psychologist, opens her essay with the description of the position of the Unitarian Church. The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century saw a more or less serious spreading of anti-Trinitarian opinions in many European countries. Doubts were raised about the Reformers’ commitment to previous beliefs, including previous Christology. Thus the Unitarian Church of Transylvania was founded as a branch of the radical Reformation movement. Then the author focuses on the history and theology of the Transylvanian Church. She describes its foundation and explains the importance of the Diet of Torda (1568) from an Unitarian perspective. For Unitarians, the essence of religion is the agapeic relationship between God and man, and the moral life that is based on this connection. Thus the life and teachings of Jesus Christ constitute the exemplary model for living one’s own life. Unitarians maintain that Jesus of Nazareth is in some sense the “son” of God (as all humans are the children of the Creator), but he is not the one God himself. They believe that mainline Christianity does not adhere to strict monotheism while they, i.e., the Unitarians, do, by maintaining that Jesus was a great man and a prophet of God, perhaps even a supernatural being, but not God himself. The Unitarian Church does not only have a specific Christology, but it also has a specific pneumatology. For them, the Holy Spirit is not a person, but the power of God. Reason, rational thought, science, and philosophy coexist with the faith in God.

In the next chapter, a leading Hungarian theologian of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Jenő Szigeti wrote about the faith of his Church. This denomination emphasizes the imminent Second Coming (advent) of Jesus Christ. The denomination grew out of the Millerite movement during the mid-19th century and was formally established in 1863. Miller predicted on the basis of Daniel 8:14–16, that Jesus Christ would return to the Earth in the autumn of 1844. When it did not happen, most of his followers disbanded. The official teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are expressed in its 28 Fundamental Articles of Faith, of which 25 were developed by Uriah Smith in the journal *Review and Herald*. These theses deal with the problem of body and soul too. According to Smith, humans do not possess an immortal soul and there is no consciousness after death. Immortality can be obtained only through Christ in the resurrection. Adventists think that talking about the immortality of the soul and about resurrection at the same time is a contradiction. Adventists believe in a double resurrection and a renewed Earth, where the spiritual dimension completely penetrates the material world.

Next Dr. Kornél Győri, a baptist theologian and professor begins his chapter by presenting the history of the Baptist Church. The early seventeenth-century

Baptists were influenced by continental Anabaptists. The Anabaptists appeared in our country in 1546, but during the reign of Maria Theresia their communities were under great pressure and then dissolved. Baptism in its current form was born as a part of modern history. In Hungary Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth played a major role in spreading Baptist teachings. Baptists were often persecuted, but today they can peacefully cooperate with the state within the *Baptist World Alliance*. The tenets of Baptist churches include the freedom of will, salvation through faith alone, Scripture alone as the rule of faith and practice, and the autonomy of the local congregation. Baptists do not practise infant baptism and generally believe in the literal Second Coming of Christ. Because of the congregation's individual freedom, the individual opinions of members may differ in many details. Faith is a matter between God and the individual. To them, faith means the advocacy of an absolute liberty of conscience. As far as anthropology is concerned, they think that the structure of the human soul is a secret. The important question, for them, is whether man moves toward God or away from Him.

Methodist pastor Gábor T. Szuhánszky clarifies, in the following chapter, that the movement which led to the foundation of the United Methodist Church had begun in the mid-18th century within the Church of England. Methodists trace their roots back to the revival movement of John and Charles Wesley, which changed the moral image of England. Apart from them, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the pietist Ludwig Zinzendorf influenced the movement to a considerable extent. Based on Wesley's teaching, they focused on the study of the Bible, the methodical study of the Scripture and also on leading a holy life. Their goal was to spread the Biblical holiness in the world. In terms of Wesley's critique of the Anglican Church, justification is not the same as sanctification. According to their faith, all humans are sinners. Sin estranges people from God and corrupts human nature in a way that we cannot heal or save ourselves. Salvation can only be reached through Jesus Christ. The Methodists are waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus and believe that heaven and hell are real, therefore there is real evil and real resurrection.

Next Lajos Simonfalvi and Mátyás Komesz introduce the Pentecostal and the Charismatic movements. Pentecostalism is a Christian renewal movement which places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God and baptism in the Holy Spirit. By a baptism in the Holy Spirit a Christian believer is enabled to live a Holy Spirit-filled and -empowered life. This belief system includes the use of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing – two other defining characteristics of Pentecostalism. In addition, for Pentecostals, “every moment is eschatological,” since Christ may return at any time. The Second Coming for Pentecostals is the motivation for practical Christian lifestyle. Spontaneity is a characteristic element of Pentecostal worship, with singing and loud shouts of

praise, jubilation, dancing and also glossolalic praying. Pentecostals believe that all of the spiritual gifts, including miraculous gifts continue to operate within the Church even in our present time. The faith in divine healing reflects the Pentecostals' holistic approach, insofar as they say that the whole Gospel is for the whole person – for the spirit, the soul, and the body. Sickness is a consequence of the Fall of Man and salvation will ultimately bring about the restoration of the fallen world.

## JUDAISM

Dr. Tamás Visi undertook the presentation of the Jewish religion. Visi depicts in detail the history of the Jewish religion from Abraham until the 19th century. He only briefly mentions the new reform movements, stating that these, as yet, cannot be evaluated in terms of religious history. The ambitious study shows that Judaism is a malleable and flexible religious tradition, while it certainly keeps some fundamental characteristics. The Jewish community is the representative of a religious truth and of an ethnic identity at the same time. Judaism is not an explicitly dogmatic religion. The numerous different theories about the soul also reflect this fact. Although the phrase “the Spirit of God was moving on the face of the waters” has been identified, by most Christian authors, as a reference to the Holy Spirit, Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Spinoza and others still clearly understood the text in a very different sense in which the expression *ruach elohim* simply refers to a *strong wind*. Since then, extensive philosophical, theological and mystical literature has discussed the issue. A Hellenistic influence is felt when the soul becomes the antithesis of the body as early as the time of Philon. Otherwise, Philon attributes physical substance to the soul. Further discussions treat the question of the preexistence of the soul, its place of residence, and the question of resurrection and demonology. In conclusion, the author states that the ever-changing Jewish religion has remained faithful to its intellectual roots.

## ISLAM

The chapter on Islam is an essay written by Klára Kondi Anwar and Mohamed Eisa Subail. At the beginning of the text, the authors present a detailed description of the history of Islam from its beginnings. In the first chapter, the great civilizations of the 6th and 7th centuries and the Arabian clans before Islam are described. This introduction helps us to understand the importance of Mohamed's life and his work. The Prophet's biography is followed by a short description of the Sunnite–

Shiite sects and their arguments concerning the election of caliphs. The second chapter is dedicated to the explanation of the word *islam*, which interprets Islam as a general law that rules the whole world. According to the Quran, all people are born, in a bodily sense, to be Muslims, but all have free will too. Thus there are two types of humans: one of them does not accept Allah as a Lord and Maker, whilst the other does. The acceptance of the true faith is the first step towards the growth of the soul. In the next part, we can read about two types of the soul. In the Quran and the Arabic languages two words can be found with the meaning of *soul*: *ruh* and *Nafs*. The difference between the two terms can be understood with the help of quotes from the Quran. The authors describe how Allah created the first human, what the purpose of human life is. Then the Arabic word *Fitrah* is explained. *Fitrah* is an innate belief in God. Allah gives humanity an ability to recognize good and bad, but it is up to our free will what our choice will be. It is believed to be the origin of evil when body and desires take control of the soul. This is the reason why Allah gives instructions to mankind to find the right way. The next chapter is about the several conditions of the human soul. These conditions are: the soul which gives bad orders, the soul which reproaches itself, and the calm soul. In the next parts of the text, the authors specify the five types of connection between the body and the soul. The first is when the human is just an embryo. In this condition, Allah sends an angel to breathe the soul into the embryo, and then the angel implants four words into the human being. These words anticipate the person's life, which implies divine predestination, and we humans need to believe in this. Yet our predestination can change because Allah also gives us free will.

When a human dies, Allah sends the Angels of Death to get her or his soul. If the deceased was a believer and lived an honest life, the angels take the soul to the seventh heaven. If the person was faithless or a sinner, the angels do not let him or her go to the first heaven.

The fourth type of connection between the soul and the body is the one that obtains in the grave, where the souls dwell till Judgement Day comes. This condition of the soul is called the *Barzakh*, which can be similar to a temporary paradise or hell. When Judgement Day comes, people will be resuscitated and Allah will judge them. The authors provide us with an exhaustive description of what will happen to the good and bad. Finally they conclude that Islam is fundamentally different from the other religions, insofar as it does not expect detachment from the world and it does not prefer the ascetic way of life. In Islam the soul can grow in a non-monastic environment.

## HINDUISM

The chapter on Hinduism consists of the essay entitled “The spiritual universe of Hinduism, Brahmanism and the Vedas,” written by László Tóth-Soma, a philosopher and theologian, and Krisztina Danka, a theologian. The text starts with the terminology and the history of Hinduism, including an account of the origin of the word *Hindu* and the history of Hinduism according to the tradition and to scientific research. Then the fundamental Hindu scriptures are described, of which the most important are the Vedas. These texts are classified into two types, *Shruti* and *Smriti*. *Shruti* is the knowledge which is heard and this refers to the Vedas. According to tradition the Vedas are revelations which then were memorized and transmitted verbatim. They were put down in writing at a relatively late point of time. *Smriti* is memorized knowledge. It contains comments from great teachers, explaining the revelations. After explaining this, the authors describe the common characteristics of the schools of Hinduism. These are *Vaishnavism*, *Shaivism*, *Shaktism*. The following text part deals with the scholastic philosophical schools of Hinduism. In the last part the Hindu spiritual terminology is detailed. In this terminology, there is, first, the personal soul called the *Atman*. All schools accept that every person needs to find and define itself in order to live a complete life. The Hindu scriptures give instructions about the nature of the *self*. The self is an indestructible, divine, eternal soul, which wears the body like a cloth. The *Atman* keeps the body live, and it causes personal conscience. The body can change, but the soul remains the same. So long as the soul does not quit the illusion of the fake, bodily world, it is always reborn in a new body. Second, there is the supreme soul, *Brahman*. It is the infinite, eternal, blissful truth which does not change. The world is full of it, it is the origin of everything and everything will return into it. The schools have different opinions about the relationship of *Atman* and *Brahman*. The reason for this may be in the scriptures, which do not develop a clear position concerning this point. Humans have to understand the *Atman* and to get experience about *Brahman*, this is the way to get out of the bodily world and the *samsara*, the cycle of rebirths. If released from *samsara*, the soul achieves the state of *moksha*. There are four ways to attain *moksha*: Karma-yoga, Jnana-yoga, Ashtanga-yoga and Bhakti-yoga.

## BUDDHISM

The part on Buddhism contains five essays. The first, entitled “The soul, the conscience and the person in Buddhism” has been written by Tibor Porosz, a philosopher. He begins his essay with the problem of identifying the meaning of

the Sanscrit word *Atman*. Numerous meanings are close to it: soul, self, person, mind, spirit. This is the reason why it is difficult to understand the *non-Self* view and Buddha's teaching. In the first part of Porosz's essay the Buddha's life, and his ideas about *non-Self* are described. Buddha does not mention *being* in his speeches because reality only consists of a cycle of coming-into-being and passing away. As you can learn from the third section, the Buddha's logic is not about being but dynamic coming-into-being. Porosz proceeds with the description of the link between the body and the soul, the body and the mind, the different levels of the mind and being. The next section concerns the psychology of personality. Most people think that man consists of the body and the soul, but according to Buddha, the good student sees the five *Khandha*, the five sets of the things. If one recognizes and experiences these, it will liberate his or her personality. The sixth section is on the personality in Nirvana and on the personality of the enlightened ones. The fake idea of personality leads to the suffering that we experience in our life. The second part of Porosz's essay analyses the early schools of Buddhism: *Theravada*, *Sthaviravada*, *Sautrantika* and *Pudgalavada*, and their respective teachings about selflessness.

The second essay in this part is "The belief in the soul in Tibetan Buddhism" written by Dr. Tamás Agócs, a tibetologist and buddhologist. This paper summarizes the peculiarities of Tibetan Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism arrived in Tibet from North-India and its teaching was highly influenced by the general sentiment against Theravada Buddhism, which prefers the idea of personal release. The followers of Mahayana believe in the existence of *Bodhisattvas*, who have already attained enlightenment, but have not entered Nirvana yet. Instead, they stay in this world to help others. The *Bodhisattva* became an ideal for the believers. In this article we can also read about the fascinating *Bardo Thodol*, the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The book describes the path of the soul from death to rebirth. When someone has died, the Tibetan religious master, the *Lama* reads him or her the book to help his or her soul get free from *Samsara*.

The next essay entitled "Chinese Buddhist conceptions of the soul" has been written by sinologist Gabriella Gergely. Buddhism arrived in China through Central Asia. It had to adapt to the extant religious and philosophical systems, and hence Chinese Buddhism has put on specifically Chinese character traits. The Buddhist masters found connections with Taoism, so early Buddhism applied Taoist terminology. When Buddhism became popular, they needed to translate the original Buddhist texts into Chinese. It reformed Chinese Buddhism and led to the foundation of new schools. Chinese Buddhists studied the *Buddha-nature*, this indestructible substance which is reborn time after time.

The fourth essay in this part carries the title "Conceptions of the soul in conventional Korean civilization" and is the work of Attila Földi. The author opens

his paper with a short description of Korean religions. Shamanism, for instance, had a huge pantheon. Földi then describes the most important texts of Korean mythology: the *Samguk sagi* and the *Samguk yusa*. In this historical presentation the description of Korean religions continues with Taoism and Buddhism. Földi also lists and introduces some famous monks. At the end of the essay you can find an interesting Korean vocabulary.

The last essay entitled “Zen Buddhism,” has been written by theologian James L. Fredericks and translated into Hungarian by Júlia Lázár. The text begins with a historical summary. Chan Buddhism arrived from India into China by virtue of a monk named Bodhidharma. He was the main character of Chan Buddhism and his legend grew with the Chan school in the 7–8th century. His followers left the itinerant way of life and became members of a monastery located in Central China. Then the Chinese Chan spread to Japan, where it was called Zen. After the history of Zen we can read about the meaning of *Atman*. In the next section, it is asserted that Chan Buddhism does not wish for a saviour *ab extra*, and does not follow ideals. Chan Buddhism does not need a mediator, it speaks directly to the human heart. The next section describes Dogen Zenji, who created a Zen school in Japan. His best-known text is the *Shobogenzo*, which had considerable effect on the Zen movement. In the *Shobogenzo* Zenji wrote that everything has a Buddha-nature, including the grass and the trees because everything is non-constant, even the enlightenment of the mind itself. Every phenomenon is empty, there is no constant substance. According to Dogen, the original personality is not the subject without body and mind, it is not the ego, it is the pure action of the Buddha-nature in concrete time and space. In the last part of the essay the author presents a dialogue between Zen Buddhism and Christianity.

In sum, the volume explains the conceptions of the soul in the different religious traditions. Still, it is unfortunate that some authors put more emphasis on the historic background and do not expound the concepts of the soul in more detail. Apparently, not all churches have developed the concept of the soul, so the question is often discussed in the context of pneumatology, soteriology and eschatology, instead of anthropology. The studies are true representation of the diversity of the several different perceptions of soul. However, editorial work still needs to be better, insofar as the authors’ bio-notes are often left out, and the page header occasionally does not correspond to the content of the page.

