

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Relationship between the Spirit and the Intellect

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نَحْنُ مَدْعُورُونَ إِلَى أَنْ نَقُودَ حَيَاةَ رُوحِيَّةٍ مَقَدَّمَةً وَمُنَامِيَّةً، مُسْتَعِينِينَ بِوَسَائِلٍ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ تَشْمَلُ الْكُتَابَ الْمُقَدَّسَ، وَتَعَالِيمَ الْكَنِيسَةِ، وَالْكُتُبَ الرُّوحِيَّةَ. وَالسُّؤَالُ الْجَوْهَرِيُّ هُوَ: كَيْفَ يُمَكِّنُ تَحْقِيقَ هَذَا النُّمُوِّ الرُّوحِيِّ بِصُورَةٍ عَمَلِيَّةٍ وَمُثَلِّيٍّ؟ وَمَا نَعْلَمُهُ يَقِينًا هُوَ أَنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ، عَلَى مَدَى سَنَوَاتِ حَيَاتِهِ، يَتَعَلَّمُ وَيَطْوِّرُ مَهَارَاتِهِ وَيَنْضِجُ فِكْرِيًّا. وَبِفَضْلِ الْخَيْرَاتِ الْحَيَاتِيَّةِ الْمُتَعَدِّدَةِ، يَتَعَلَّمُ الْأُدْوَارَ وَالْأَتْمَاتِ وَأَفْضَلَ السُّبُلِ لِلتَّعَامُلِ مَعَ مُخْتَلِفِ الظُّرُوفِ.

وَإِنَّ رُوحَ الْإِنْسَانِ هِيَ عَظِيمَةٌ مِنْ وَاهِبِهَا، اللَّهُ (تَكْوِين ٧:٢). وَمِنْ الْمُتَوَقَّعِ أَنْ تَتَّبِعَ رُوحُنَا نَفْسَ مَسَارِ النُّمُوِّ وَالتَّطَوُّرِ الَّذِي يَتَّبِعُهُ الْعَقْلُ، مَا دُمْنَا نَدْرِكُ وَجُودَهَا وَاحْتِيَاجَاتِهَا لِلنُّمُوِّ. وَبِمَا أَنَّ الرُّوحَ جُزْءٌ مِنْ كِيَانِ الْإِنْسَانِ، فَلَا يُمَكِّنُ تَصَوُّرُ أَنَّ النُّضْجَ الرُّوحِيَّ مُنْفَصِلٌ عَنِ نَضْجِ الْجَسَدِ. وَنَحْنُ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الرُّوحَ يَقُودُ الْجَسَدَ إِلَى الْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ، الْمُوصُوفَةِ بِتَمَرِّ الرُّوحِ (غَلَاظِيَّة ٥:٢٢). وَهَذِهِ الثَّمَارُ لَيْسَتْ نَاتِجَةً عَنِ الْجَسَدِ وَحْدَهُ، بَلْ هِيَ ثَمَرَةٌ تَفَاعَلِ سِرِّيٍّ عَمِيقٍ بَيْنَ الرُّوحِ وَالْجَسَدِ.

وَيُثِيرُ التَّسْأُلُ عَمَّا إِذَا كَانَتْ هَذِهِ الْعَلَاقَةُ الْمُتَبَادَلَةَ تَشْمَلُ أَيْضًا دَوْرَ الْعَقْلِ الْبَشَرِيِّ وَالْعَقْلَ فِي دَفْعِ بَعْضِ جَوَانِبِ النُّمُوِّ الرُّوحِيِّ. وَنُنَاقِشُ هَذِهِ الْمَقَالَةَ هَذَا السُّؤَالِ

Dutch: Wij zijn geroepen een progressief en groeiend spiritueel leven te leiden met behulp van verscheidene middelen zoals de Heilige Bijbel, kerkelijke leringen en spirituele boeken. De openstaande vraag is hoe deze spirituele groei optimaal en praktisch bereikt kan worden. Waar wij zeker van zijn is dat men over de jaren leert, vaardigheden ontwikkelt en intellectueel groeien. Wegens de vele levenservaringen leren zij rollen, patronen en de beste manieren om met verscheidene omstandigheden om te gaan. De geest van de mens is een geschenk van diens Gever, God, Genesis 2:7. Onze geest verwacht dezelfde groeipatroon en ontwikkeling te volgen als ons intellect zolang wij de aanwezigheid en groei behoeftes ervan waarderen. Men kan geen spirituele groei voorstellen die onafhankelijk is van het lichaam, wetende dat de geest deel is van de mens. Wij weten dat de geest het lichaam tot goede daden begeleidt, dat beschreven wordt als de vruchten van de geest, Galaten 5:22. Zelfs deze vruchten zijn niet geheel gedreven door het vlees, maar door een resultaat van een hechte mystieke interactie tussen de geest en het lichaam. Men vraagt zich af of deze wederkerige relatie ook bestaat, waarbij het menselijk brein en intellect de spirituele ontwikkeling deels drijft. Dit artikel bespreekt deze vraag.

English: We are called to lead a progressing and growing spiritual life helped by various means including the Holy Bible, church teachings and spiritual books. The outstanding question is how this spiritual growth can practically and optimally be achieved? What we are sure about is that over years of one's life people learn, develop skills and mature intellectually. Because of the many life experiences, they learn roles, patterns and best ways of dealing with various circumstances. Man's spirit is a gift from its Giver, God, *Genesis 2:7*. Our spirit is expected to follow the same pattern of growth and development as our intellect as long as we appreciate its presence and its need for growth. Knowing that the spirit is part of the human being, one cannot

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imagine that spiritual maturity is independent from that of the body. We know that the spirit leads the body to good deeds, described as the fruits of the spirit, *Galatians 5:22*. Even those fruits are not completely flesh-driven, but the result of a close mystical interaction between the spirit and the body. One wonders if this reciprocal relationship, with the human brain and intellect driving some of the spiritual development, also exists. This article discusses this question.

French: Nous sommes appelés à mener une vie spirituelle en constante progression, soutenue par divers moyens, notamment la Sainte Bible, les enseignements de l'Église et les ouvrages spirituels. La question essentielle est de savoir comment atteindre cette croissance spirituelle de manière pratique et optimale. Ce dont nous sommes certains, c'est qu'au fil des années, les individus apprennent, développent des compétences et mûrissent intellectuellement. Grâce à leurs nombreuses expériences de vie, ils apprennent des rôles, des modèles et des meilleures façons d'appréhender les différentes situations. L'esprit de l'homme est un don de son Créateur, Dieu, (Genèse 2:7). Notre esprit est appelé à suivre le même schéma de croissance et de développement que notre intellect, pourvu que nous prenions conscience de sa présence et de son besoin de croissance. Sachant que l'esprit fait partie intégrante de l'être humain, on ne peut concevoir que la maturité spirituelle soit indépendante de celle du corps. Nous savons que l'esprit conduit le corps aux bonnes œuvres, décrites comme les fruits de l'Esprit (Galates 5:22). Même ces fruits ne sont pas uniquement le fruit de la chair, mais le résultat d'une interaction mystique profonde entre l'esprit et le corps. On peut se demander si cette relation réciproque, où le cerveau et l'intellect humains contribuent au développement spirituel, existe également. Cet article aborde cette question.

German: Wir sind dazu berufen, ein fortschreitendes und wachsendes geistliches Leben zu führen, unterstützt durch verschiedene Mittel, darunter die Heilige Bibel, die Lehren der Kirche und geistliche Bücher. Die entscheidende Frage ist, wie dieses geistliche Wachstum praktisch und optimal erreicht werden kann. Fest steht, dass Menschen im Laufe ihres Lebens lernen, Fähigkeiten entwickeln und intellektuell reifen. Aufgrund vieler Lebenserfahrungen erlernen sie Rollen, Muster und die besten Wege, mit verschiedenen Umständen umzugehen. Der Geist des Menschen ist ein Geschenk seines Gebers, Gottes, Genesis 2,7. Unser Geist soll demselben Muster von Wachstum und Entwicklung folgen wie unser Intellekt, sofern wir seine Gegenwart und seine Bedürfnisse nach Wachstum wertschätzen.

In dem Wissen, dass der Geist Teil des Menschen ist, kann man sich nicht vorstellen, dass geistliche Reife unabhängig von der des Körpers ist. Wir wissen, dass der Geist den Körper zu guten Taten führt, die als die Früchte des Geistes beschrieben werden, Galater 5,22. Auch diese Früchte sind nicht ausschließlich fleischlich bedingt, sondern das Ergebnis einer engen mystischen Wechselwirkung zwischen Geist und Körper. Es stellt sich die Frage, ob diese wechselseitige Beziehung—bei der das menschliche Gehirn und der Intellekt einen Teil der geistlichen Entwicklung steuern—ebenfalls existiert. Dieser Artikel behandelt diese Frage.

Greek: Καλούμαστε να πορευόμαστε μια ζωή πνευματικά προοδευτική και αναπτυσσόμενη, με τη βοήθεια ποικίλων μέσων, όπως η Αγία Γραφή, η διδασκαλία της Εκκλησίας και τα πνευματικά βιβλία. Το κείμενο ερώτημα είναι πώς αυτή η πνευματική ανάπτυξη μπορεί να επιτευχθεί πρακτικά και με τον καλύτερο δυνατό τρόπο. Αυτό που γνωρίζουμε με βεβαιότητα είναι ότι, με τα χρόνια, ο άνθρωπος μαθαίνει, καλλιεργεί δεξιότητες και ωριμάζει διανοητικά. Μέσα από τις πολλαπλές εμπειρίες της ζωής, μαθαίνει ρόλους, μοτίβα και τον καταλληλότερο τρόπο αντιμετώπισης των διαφορετικών περιστάσεων.

Το πνεύμα του ανθρώπου είναι δώρο από τον Δότη του, τον Θεό, Γένεση 2:7. Το πνεύμα μας αναμένεται να ακολουθεί την ίδια πορεία ανάπτυξης και καλλιέργειας όπως και ο νους μας, εφόσον αναγνωρίζουμε την ύπαρξή του και τις ανάγκες του για πρόοδο. Γνωρίζοντας ότι το πνεύμα αποτελεί μέρος της ανθρώπινης ύπαρξης, δεν μπορεί κανείς να φανταστεί ότι η πνευματική ωριμότητα είναι ανεξάρτητη από τη σωματική. Ξέρουμε πως το πνεύμα οδηγεί το σώμα σε αγαθές πράξεις, τις οποίες η Γραφή περιγράφει ως «καρπούς του Πνεύματος» *Γαλάτες 5:22*. Ακόμη κι αυτοί οι καρποί δεν είναι προϊόν αποκλειστικά της σάρκας, αλλά αποτέλεσμα μιας στενής, μυστικής αλληλεπίδρασης ανάμεσα στο πνεύμα και το σώμα.

Γεννάται λοιπόν το ερώτημα: άραγε αυτή η αμοιβαία σχέση, όπου ο άνθρωπος εγκέφαλος και η διανοητική καλλιέργεια συμβάλλουν σε μέρος της πνευματικής ανάπτυξης, υφίσταται πραγματικά; Το άρθρο αυτό εξετάζει αυτό ακριβώς το ζήτημα.

Italian: Siamo chiamati a guidare una vita spirituale in progresso e crescita, aiutati da vari mezzi tra cui la Sacra Bibbia, gli insegnamenti della Chiesa e i libri spirituali. La domanda fondamentale è come questa crescita spirituale possa essere raggiunta in modo pratico e ottimale. Ciò di cui siamo certi è che, nel corso degli anni, le persone apprendono, sviluppano abilità e maturano intellettualmente. Grazie alle molte esperienze di vita, imparano ruoli, schemi e i modi migliori di affrontare diverse circostanze.

Lo spirito dell'uomo è un dono del suo Donatore, Dio, (Genesi 2:7). Il nostro spirito è chiamato a seguire lo stesso modello di crescita e sviluppo del nostro intelletto, purché ne riconosciamo la presenza e i bisogni di crescita. Sapendo che lo spirito è parte dell'essere umano, non si può immaginare che la maturità spirituale sia indipendente da quella del corpo.

Sappiamo che lo spirito guida il corpo alle buone opere, descritte come i frutti dello spirito (Galati 5:22). Anche quei frutti non sono completamente generati dalla carne, ma sono il risultato di un'interazione mistica e profonda tra spirito e corpo. Ci si chiede se esista anche questa relazione reciproca, in cui il cervello umano e l'intelletto guidano parte dello sviluppo spirituale. Questo articolo affronta questa domanda.

Swedish: Vi är kallade att föra ett fortskridande och expanderande andligt liv, understött av en rad olika medel, däribland den Heliga Bibeln, kyrkans doktriner och andlig litteratur. Den centrala frågeställningen gäller hur denna andliga tillväxt i praktiken och på ett optimalt sätt kan realiseras. Det som med säkerhet kan konstateras är att människor, över livets tidsförlopp, tillägnar sig kunskap, utvecklar färdigheter och uppnår intellektuell mognad. Genom ett stort antal livserfarenheter internaliserar de roller, handlingsmönster och de mest effektiva strategierna för att hantera varierande omständigheter.

Människans ande är en gåva från dess Givare, Gud (Första Moseboken 2:7). Vår ande förväntas följa ett motsvarande mönster av tillväxt och utveckling som vårt intellekt, förutsatt att vi erkänner dess existens och dess behov av kontinuerlig utveckling. Eftersom anden utgör en integrerad del av människans väsen är det inte rimligt att anta att andlig mognad skulle vara oberoende av kroppslig mognad. Det är känt att anden leder kroppen till goda handlingar, vilka beskrivs som Andens frukter (Galaterbrevet 5:22). Dessa frukter är inte enbart betingade av det kroppsliga, utan är resultatet av en nära och mysteriös interaktion mellan ande och kropp.

Frågan uppstår huruvida denna reciproka relation även innefattar att den mänskliga hjärnan och intellektet bidrar till vissa aspekter av den andliga utvecklingen. Denna artikel behandlar denna frågeställning.

Maturity of Human Body

Humans are born carrying basic natural attributes, some of which are shared with other members of the animal kingdom including the need to eat and drink, to sleep and to feel warm. Hence, when babies feel hungry, cold or not comfortable they cry, as a manifestation of seeking attention, to get what their body needs. When a few weeks old, a baby starts identifying the mother's face and voice, they become attached to her, feel secure in her arms, in particular after been fed. A one-year-old child starts to learn how to stand and walk and to connect the limb function with the brain. When they start to walk independently, they explore other aspects of life, e.g. sensation. Years later, the child makes decisions about little things, for example, a desire to play. A teenager or an adolescent normally pays attention to the physical changes occurring in the body and develops some sensitivity towards the other sex. Becoming a young person,

they will be occupied by the thought of a potential relationship with a partner and of starting a family. St Paul himself described various stages of human development in a nutshell when he said ‘when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things’, *1 Corinthians 13:11*. Learning and personality development do not stop there, but a clever full grown person continues to learn from their mistakes, from friends, from the media...etc. Throughout the journey of life as we learn about the ideal and exemplified behaviour in different circumstances we realise that they are, in essence, fruits of the spirit, love, gentleness, joy... *Galatians 5:22*. Thus, careful analysis of the maturity of human body and mind demonstrates a spiritual impact, particularly in individuals who explore the functions of the spirit and their impact on their deeds.

Maturity of the Human Spirit

The spirit is a gift from God and it carries various unique qualities which make humans special, including selfishness love, forgiveness, humility...etc. As we are all, to a great extent anatomically and physiologically similar, we all share having a given spirit. Likewise, as humans we have different personalities, the characteristics and features of individual’s spirit differ between us. While one is very humble, another is generous in love to others, for example neighbours and even enemies. Furthermore, as we are born with limited physical skills, the activity of our spirit and its impact on our life is also expected to be limited, although not much on this subject has been previously explored. With the passing of years and as we receive spiritual teaching and we pursue spiritual readings we learn and practice but with limited understanding, exactly as we behave physically and intellectually. At the age of adolescence, we continue practicing what we were taught and perhaps copy our leaders without clear spiritual maturity. Later on, in life as we grow wiser and develop the need for clear understanding of everything we do, this makes us accountable. We take spiritual matters in hand and pay serious attention to them with a strong desire for clear comprehension of everything we aim to do before practicing it. This stage could be described as spiritual maturity, which again may differ in its shape, form and quality between individuals. An example of such a level of spiritual growth is one’s keenness to feel the depth of the words uttered in prayer, including the Lord’s prayer, every time we recite it. Indeed, we feel comfortable about the concept of spiritual maturity when we hear St Paul saying ‘for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed’, *Romans 13:11*. Adopting this pattern of spiritual seriousness leads us to grow deeper in our spiritual life, seeking unceasing enrichment from the fountain of God’s Spirit.

The Impact of Human Intellect on Spiritual Maturity

As mentioned above it is conceptually acceptable that the spirit can direct the human body towards good deeds which are considered fruits of the spirit. The remaining question here is the following, can the human intellect impact the spirit during the journey of its maturity? The analytical logical answer is ‘Yes’ for the following reasons. Many of the essential spiritual commandments we learn in our lives are difficult to be fully understood in order to be obeyed and practiced, since the substrate for it is not physically measurable compared to any other human intellectual feature. An example for this is ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind’ *Matt 22:37*. Likewise, ‘You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself’ *Mark 12:31* and also ‘If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also’ *Matt 5:40*.

For these commandments to be properly and faithfully practiced they need clear intellectual understanding of their real depth, without which practices will be dry and meaningless. The Lord Jesus was the perfect example who fulfilled these commandments in His life on earth. He made His love to God the Father clear, He loved His enemies and prayed for their forgiveness. Also, the church history is rich with examples of those who were spiritually and intellectually mature in different ways and shapes. Virgin Mary was spiritually mature as was demonstrated by her love to people around her and the few well-selected words of intercession she uttered in different events. St Paul was spiritually mature with his philosophical and intellectual understanding of the gospel he received from the Lord. St Athanasius of Alexandria was spiritually mature as shown by his deep understanding and preaching of Christ's theology.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, is the giver of the human spirit, 'through whom all things were made' *John 1:2*. Thus, being the source of the spirit, the Lord Jesus becomes the accurate measure for a mature spirit that one looks up to. This is supported by the amazing wisdom the Good Lord had very early on in His life on earth, in the eyes of people around Him 'and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men', *Luke 2:52*. This does not mean that His spirit was incomplete, but His spiritual wisdom was far beyond anyone of His age and of any religious leader around Him. Perhaps the word 'stature' here means His spiritual words and behaviour. St Paul confirms this notion further when he said 'till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; *Ephes 4:13*. Two thousand years after the Lord's teachings were uttered on our earth, they still remain carrying the same spiritual power and no one could compete with their perfect meaning and depth.

In conclusion: As the human body and intellect grow and mature the spirit follows the same pattern. While the mature human spirit influences the body to adopt good deeds and virtues, the intellect also impacts the spirit. Thus, the close interaction between the spirit and the intellect urges us to pay serious attention to every spiritual teaching we learn or practice we undertake. Following St Paul 'I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding', *1 Corinth 14:15*. Failing to do this we will be sadly considered as ignorant reciters.