

**PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY ON THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN PERSON**

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Class 10: The Nature of the Human Soul

I. Introductory Notes

A. *Powers* of the soul are distinguished from the *nature* of the soul

1. Powers – what the soul can *do*
2. Nature – what the soul *is*

B. Nature is constant.

C. Nature does not include existence.

II. Nature of the Spiritual Soul – *Pro Memoria*: the rational soul is the *substantial form* of man. The rational soul is a *spiritual soul*.

A. **Simple** – has no parts; single, unmixed; undivided; absolutely one. It is a form!

B. Immaterial

1. Forms are immaterial by definition; forms are *united* to matter, but are not matter.
2. Only the *rational* soul, as opposed to the vegetative or sensitive soul, is immaterial.
3. Vegetative and sensitive souls are material souls. While they are immaterial in themselves, they are completely dependent upon matter for their functioning.
4. Rational souls have powers that are able to operate independent of matter, namely, intellect and will.

C. Subsistent

1. “Having being and operation in or through itself, not in and through union with another principle or part; existent in itself” (Wuellner, *A Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy*, 294).
2. It can operate in an independent way.
3. “The rational soul is subsistent” means that “the rational soul is a substance.”
4. A human person, by definition, is a rational animal, a body-soul composite. When the soul exists by itself, apart from the body, we say that it exists, it subsists, but in an unnatural state; for the human soul is not simply a pure spirit, like an angel. Rather, it is a spiritual soul, that is, a substantial form which is meant to *inform* matter, that is, the body.

D. Immortal

1. The soul cannot be destroyed; it cannot die.
2. Nice little proof:
 - a. That substance is immortal which cannot be corrupted of itself or by reason of something else on which it depends.
 - b. The rational soul cannot be corrupted
 - i. Of itself (because it is simple – it has no parts)
 - ii. Nor because of something else on which it depends (because it is subsistent and spiritual; it does not depend on anything)
 - c. Therefore, the rational soul is immortal

E. Directly Created by God

1. An effect cannot be greater than a cause.
2. Spirit is greater than matter.
3. The rational soul is spiritual, and thus, it had to be created by something spiritual.

III. Personhood

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- A. *Person* is an individual substance of a rational nature (Boethius). More explicitly, every intellectual substance which is complete in itself, individual, incommunicable, and existing for itself is a person.
 - 1. Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - 2. Angelic Persons
 - 3. Human Persons
- B. Incommunicability of the Human Person
 - 1. *Individuum ineffabile est*. “There is something about the human person which is...quite inexplicable and therefore inexpressible” (McInerny, *Philosophical Psychology*, 265).