

Chapter 1

The Question and an Answer

Everybody is talking about spirituality. In a former generation, when modern science was to save the world, religion was very much a private affair. And spirituality, in contrast to organized religion, was hardly even considered. Now, many belong to no religion but openly insist they are deeply spiritual.

At the present moment in history in the United States of America, all the mainline Christian churches are declining in membership—except the Roman Catholic, because of the influx of Hispanic Catholics. Yet people are clamoring for inspiration and spiritual insight. Interest in Eastern meditation techniques, curiosity about Native American rituals, the emergence of New Age Religion, fascination with crystals and channeling, the popularity of movies like *Resurrection*, *Ghost*, *Flatliners*, *Dying Again*, and *Heart and Souls*, popular articles like *Newsweek's* December 27, 1993, “Angels” and November 28, 1994, “The Search for the Sacred” all attest to contemporary spiritual sensitivity. The insistence is that there must be a further dimension to life, and people more and more want to experience it.

It is now okay to talk of such things in the midst of secular culture—over business breakfasts and lunches, at the gym or spa, in

the bar and disco, at the supermarket checkout line. TV shows and sitcoms are built around spiritual themes, and interview and talk shows repeatedly discuss spiritual questions. Even on university campuses spirituality is an acceptable topic. Of course, proselytizing fundamentalist religion among students has contributed mightily to this phenomenon. But even in academic courses spirituality components are being built in. Schools of medicine (Hiatt, 1986), nursing (Shelly and Fish, 1988; Rogers, 1970), and health education realize that humans are more than living bodies, so meeting the health needs of a person means being open to spiritual issues. This is especially so in the case of terminal illness like cancer and AIDS and other long-term and tragic diseases. Psychology courses on human development cannot avoid spirituality when late adolescence, adulthood, or aging is the topic. Indeed, explicit treatment of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981)—and now faith development (Fowler, 1981) and even spiritual development (Bee, 1987)—is becoming a regular part of the curriculum. Likewise, training in psychotherapy (Butler, 1990; Chandler, Holden, and Kolander, 1992; Dan, 1990; Patterson, 1992; Shafranske and Gorsuch, 1984; Shafranske and Malony, 1990) and social work (Canda, 1988a, 1988b; Weick, 1983) no longer shuns questions about the meaning of life and the values worth living for. And educators at large, concerned about the increasing decadence of late-twentieth-century civilization, are again attempting to make room in the curriculum for those same big questions (Martz, 1991; Orr, 1991; Woodward, 1991). No one may be quite sure what spirituality means, but it is increasingly becoming part of the picture.

So people talk of attention to the “heart” or the “soul” as well as attention to the “mind.” Not just understanding but also “love” and “commitment” are seen as critical. Now “intuition” and “broader awareness” stand alongside scientific explanation.

But what are those things? What do those words really mean?

Rabbi Neil Gillman of Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City acknowledged the current state of affairs in these words: “Here, at an institution that always prided itself on its intellectual rigor and steered clear of the mystical side of religion, we can now talk of what everybody calls ‘spirituality.’ I don’t know what the word means, but to students today it means they don’t want to be Jews and rabbis just for the rituals, just for the symbolism, but in order to come closer to God” (Wilkes, 1990, p. 71).

In the minds of many—certainly most in the Judeo-Christian Western world—God is an essential of spirituality. So we hear, “That we are spiritual beings means a relationship with God is basic to our

total functioning" (Shelly and Fish, 1988, p. 29. Cf. Bergin, 1980, 1991; Bergin, Masters, and Richards, 1987; Chandler, Holden, and Kolander, 1992; Ellison and Smith, 1991; Kass et al., 1991; Moberg, 1984; Moberg and Brused, 1978; Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982). Yet Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and much Western humanism have obvious spiritual intent without any reference to God (Assagioli, 1965/1976; Chandler, Holden, and Kolander, 1992; Ellis, 1980; Hiatt, 1986; Manaster, 1990; Maslow, 1971; McFadden, 1991; Miller, 1990). The haunting matter really is complex, and it can be confusing.

The Promise of an Answer

This book addresses the matter head on. More than that, it claims actually to answer the questions at stake. That there could even be firm answers in this realm or in any other, is itself up for debate. So the reader should not expect a glib, popularized statement in the chapters that follow. Anyone serious about these issues will find his or her seriousness taken seriously here. The reader will be led step by step into the profound heart of the matter. The treatment below is rigorous. It even claims to be scientific. If this treatment is not facile nor piously inspirational, as much spiritual writing tends to be, this book does sort out with precision many of the issues surrounding spirituality. It says what "spirit" is and how spirit relates to God and how spirit also relates to psychological health.

Spirituality is supposed to relate to the deepest meaning of humanity. So what you think of spirituality actually depends on how you answer this question: What is a human being? The title of this book suggests its answer to this question: there is a core of spirituality that is common to all people just because they are human. Spirituality is part and parcel of being a human being. Why? Because human mind is double, and one dimension of human mind is actually spirit. Humans are spiritual by nature. Of course, we humans are not merely mental but also bodily or organic. This goes without saying. So the proposed answer to the question, What is a human being? is this: a complex of organism, psyche, and spirit. (See figure 1.1.)

But explanations of the human are numerous, and they are all different. They come from various religious and philosophical traditions and from an array of sciences and academic disciplines, and these all have their own points of view. The task is to come up with the one explanation that will hold.

Models of the Human

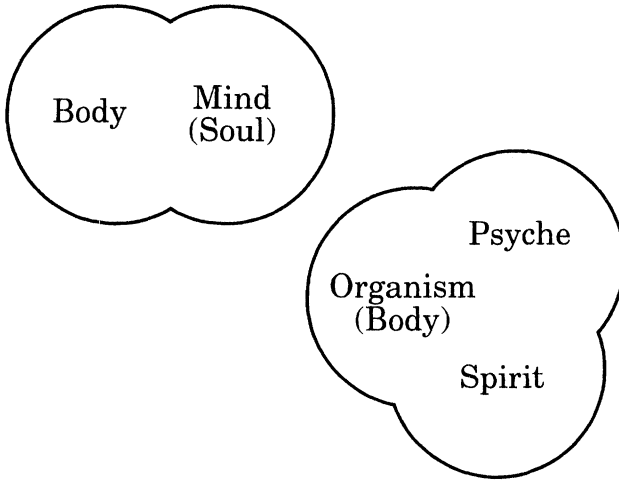


Figure 1.1. The traditional Western model of the human is bipartite: body and mind or body and soul. In the proposed alternative, mind is double and comprises psyche and spirit, and the resultant overall model is tripartite.

The suggestion here is that human mind entails spirit, so human beings are spiritual by nature. If this is actually the case, spirituality is not a concern proper to religious studies, and it certainly does not depend on belief in God. Spirituality is not a specifically theological topic. Much more basically, it must be a psychological topic. Of course, this is not to say that belief in God is not or should not be a part of the picture. Most people nurture their spirituality through some kind of religion and, in the West, religion usually includes belief in God—theism. So for most people God is a central part of their spirituality. Still, if spirituality is first and foremost a basic human thing, the various religions must be different ways of expressing human spirituality. And to some extent talk of God is a kind of shorthand way of talking about very elusive spiritual but human matters. In any case, this is the approach presented in this book. The goal is to explain the human core of spirituality apart from talk of God or use of the spiritual vocabulary that comes from the different religions. That is, the goal is to say what spirituality actually is on its own terms.

The present chapter introduces the matter and summarizes my understanding of it. At the same time, this chapter also outlines this book to provide a preview for you, the reader.

The Confusion and the Need for Clarity

Traditional Two-Part Models of the Human

One's understanding of the human being is central to the matter of spirituality. So, what is a human being? The traditional answer in the Christian West is that we are body and soul. Psychology and the human sciences in general give a parallel answer: we are body and mind.

This two-part understanding of the human being is one of the oldest notions in Western history (Choron, 1973; Petrement, 1973). The pre-Socratic philosophers Pythagoras and Empedocles are the earliest known representatives of this idea. From Pythagoras comes the suggestion that the body is a tomb in which the soul is imprisoned.

Plato elaborated that idea as part of his conception of the Idea World. There the soul, like every idea of everything else, supposedly existed before entrance into this world, free from the inadequacies of physical matter and independent of the body. According to Plato, things in this world are but imperfect copies or expressions of the realities in the world of ideas. How did Plato develop such a notion? The experience of insight and universal concepts (more on this in chapter 5) so awed Plato, it seems, that he deemed ideas to be the really real and demeaned this world of the senses. A similar understanding characterizes Eastern philosophies and, as a result, much of contemporary spirituality.

In contrast, the Hebrew mind behind the Bible has a firm grasp of the psychosomatic unity of the human being (Badham, 1983; Miles, 1983). So much so is this the case—except, for example, in the book of Wisdom, where Greek influence has entered—that the Hebrew Scriptures can hardly conceive of life after death, for life apart from a human body is not human life at all. Christian belief in resurrection of the body is an attempt to meet this same issue. So Saint Paul's contrasts between "flesh" and "spirit," for example, are grossly misunderstood when taken as parallels to our "body and soul." For Paul, flesh simply means the whole human being insofar as one is sinful, and spirit means the whole human being insofar as one is open to God.

In the same vein, Aristotle's doctrine of matter and form insisted on the unity of the human being and of every earthly reality. Thus, to a large extent, Aristotle overcame Plato's splitting body and soul. Even more so must this be said of Thomas Aquinas at the high point of medieval thinking. And a similar understanding of the unity of the human runs throughout this book and is treated in detail in part 4.

However, Platonic influence, especially through Saint Augustine in the late classical era and Descartes during the Renaissance, carried the bipartite understanding of the human being into the mainstream of Western thinking. Descartes insisted that in its nature the soul is entirely independent of the body. He posited two basic kinds of reality, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, thinking stuff and spatial stuff, minds and physical realities. This understanding of things is related to Descartes's famous argument, *Cogito ergo sum*: I am thinking therefore I exist. Descartes could think of himself as not having a body, but he could not think of himself as not having a mind, for his very thinking required a mind. So he concluded that his being as a thinker—his mind—must be independent of his being as a physical body. Mind and body must be separate realities. Of course, there is a flaw in Descartes's argument. He might well have been able to think of himself as having no body, but his very thinking process was nonetheless dependent on his body. He was using his brain when he came to his notorious conclusion. Be that as it may, Descartes's influential position, at the beginning of the modern era, is the immediate source of the now pervasive understanding of the human as body and mind or body and soul.

Recently people have become dissatisfied with those two-part explanations of the human. People find the modern understanding of mind too narrow. Mind has been taken to be a thinking machine. It deduces and concludes and derives answers. Its prime work is logical. If that is all the mind is, no wonder there is serious talk about computers actually being able to think (Gardner, 1985). But our experience shows that our inner working is much richer than that. Not deduction nor conclusion nor logical reasoning but insight, intuition, leaps of understanding, creativity, wonder, marvel, contemplation—these are the significant stuff of the human mind. So the body-mind model appears to have lost something essential.

Likewise, the body-soul model has its problems. It carries the seal of religious approval, but it does not stand up to questioning, and it suggests unacceptable notions. It suggests that we are really souls somehow encased in bodies. Then the body seems inferior, and the goal of life seems to be somehow to free ourselves from the body and from this world. Supposedly, when we die, our bodies go into the grave and our souls go to another life. But if this is the case, where do I go when I die? For, supposedly, I am both body and soul.

And why should my body be an inferior element only to be used here but then surrendered once I die? As far as I can determine, I live in my body. I certainly know no life apart from my body. Indeed, in some sense I *am* my body. Moreover, recent biological and neurolog-

ical knowledge shows that without a healthy body, my mind—my soul?—cannot function. Injure the brain, drug the bloodstream, and my inner working, my soul, is clouded or even obliterated. My body is precious to me. If I am not at home with my body, I suffer mental distress, and my very soul is not at peace.

And as for the world, the cosmos—it is mystifying, it is fascinating. It is filled with wonder and magic as well as with challenge and heartache. The world can inspire me to heroic, intimate, godlike things. Why should I believe it good to get away from the world?

The body-soul model may be useful to suggest that somehow I survive my biological death, but the model is not very useful for explaining that eventuality nor even for understanding my present life. Today many people are willing simply to admit we do not really know what happens after death (Hick, 1983; Klinger, 1970). They are willing to live with a question, to live in the face of mystery. Those who are believers are willing to trust God and their religious faith and to stop speculating about this question.

Still, an understanding of the human being ought at least to be able to help us deal with the present life. Future life must flow out of the present one. To explain the present life is the minimal requirement. So like the body-mind model, the body-soul model is also found wanting.

Multipart Models of the Human

Many new models of the human have appeared recently, models that were either created anew or imported in whole or in part from other cultures or other eras. These models were to improve on the old bipartite models of religion and psychology. So it is now said that the human is body, mind, and spirit. Or the human is body, mind, soul, and spirit; or body, mind, soul, spirit, and consciousness; or body, psyche, soul, and spirit; and so on.

This multiplication of models suggests that little precision is available on the question. Fervent proponents of each model will argue that theirs is certainly correct. An air of sectarian religion surrounds the discussion. But explanation of anything beyond body tends to be fuzzy. What is the difference between soul and spirit and consciousness and psyche and mind? Cogent answers are not usually forthcoming.

Even Western philosophy had long proposed multifactor understandings of the human, but these have generally been forgotten or dismissed. In a chapter called “The Intellect and the Senses,” Mor-

timer Adler (1985) summarizes this matter. The classical and medieval world often understood the inner or mental aspect of the human being to be double. The debate centered around the possibility of humans having abstract (or universal) concepts. The senses and the imagination, it was argued, could only apply to concrete individuals; but the intellect could grasp abstract universals. At stake is the difference between “Fido” as a particular instance and “dog” as a general notion. If human mind really does grasp universals as well as know individual instances, then human mind is dual, it entails a number of different aspects. In early modernity philosophers like Locke, Hobbes, Berkeley, and Hume somehow convincingly argued that all mental content is sensible, that concepts are made up of images and percepts. The lamentable result is the “mistaken view of the human mind as constituted by sense and imagination and devoid of intellect” (Adler, 1985, p. 50). This very view is at the roots of modern psychology (Keller, 1973). It explains why psychology now speaks of the human simply as body and mind. It also explains why psychology has for so long focused research on sensation, perception, and other such physiological phenomena. And it also explains why this “mind” implies nothing that could be called spiritual. In contrast, Adler and a long line of premodern Western philosophers talk of mind as sense/imagination *and* intellect. This talk is a close parallel to my notion of mind as psyche and spirit throughout this book.

Some people attempt to settle this discussion by appeal to some ultimate authority. They look to the Bible for the final word on what a human being is. But the Bible also offers a variety of models. For example, the human is body, soul, and spirit, for 1 Thessalonians 5:23 reads, “may your spirit [*pneuma*] and soul [*psyche*] and body [*soma*] be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But 2 Corinthians 7:1 speaks of defilement “of body [*sarx*] and spirit [*pneuma*].” 1 Corinthians 7:34 also speaks of being holy “in body [*soma*] and spirit [*pneuma*],” but the original Greek terms differ. And Ephesians 4:23 enjoins the believers to “be renewed in the spirit [*pneuma*] of your minds [*nous*].”

In the Greek, those passages from the Pauline tradition list five different supposed components of the human, and no two of those passages offer the same combination. So how could simple citation of a biblical text answer the question, What is a human being? Apparently, the concern in those texts was practical, not theoretical or scientific; the mentality of the Bible was functional, not ontological (Helminiak, 1986d, pp. 47–55, 87–90, 284 n. 21). That is to say, each text was written to address a particular situation, and an appropriate formulation was used to make the point that was needed in each case, but there

was no overall concern for rigorous explanation. So, despite the protestations of biblical fundamentalists, the Bible evidently intended no answer to the technical question our age poses.

The Need for a Scientific Answer

The question here is a technical one. It expects a scientific answer. It calls for explanation, not simply for description or intimation or inspiration. It calls for a listing of all that is both necessary and sufficient to account for human experience—necessary in the sense that omission of any factor would leave something unexplained, and sufficient in the sense that nothing more needs to be said to have complete explanation. The further requirement is that each of the proposed factors be distinct; none should overlap the others.

Why require so precise an answer? Because only coherent explanation will meet the present need—and this, because only coherent explanation is ultimately worthy of the human mind.

On the one hand, it is already clear that a multiplicity of accounts, as listed above, lends itself to sectarian dispute and merely adds to the confusion. Supposedly good-willed attempts to lead people to true human fulfillment bring proselytizing, demagoguery, and more division. The times are difficult. The scaffolding of Western civilization seems to be giving way. A new era, sometimes called post-modern, is emerging. As people scramble to find new meaning in life, the current legitimacy granted to the spiritual lends credibility to bizarre, weird, silly, misguided, and even downright dangerous notions. And established religions, apart from the fundamentalist, seem to have decreasing impact; their message is not being received. The late medieval period in European history, when a similar breakdown and restructuring of civilization was taking place, saw the same phenomena. Today, although good will and openness are abundant, society continues to grope for a coherent, sane, and widely accepted understanding of things. In all this, the central question is about the meaning of life. The issue is clearly spiritual or religious.

On the other hand, with the emergence of the human sciences in the past two centuries, the issue falls within another realm, too. The issue is also scientific. Two different approaches seem to vie for control—the scientific and the religious. Any appealing voice in the current chaos tries to combine the two. But how do religion and science relate? How do they combine to give one coherent and accurate presentation of things?

Those questions need to be answered, and no merely suggestive response will do. When for centuries the Judeo-Christian tradition informed Western civilization, everybody held the same basic values, everybody believed more or less the same about how things were and why. Then merely suggestive and inspirational answers could easily enough carry the day. Now the situation is changed. The world has become much smaller. Not one tradition but many propose different understandings and different sets of values. And unless a religious opinion can be bolstered with sound argument, one opinion is as good as another, and all are equally shallow.

The fact is that science, and no longer religion, sets the standard of acceptable explanation. In the face of quantum mechanics, faith in the certainty of science itself may be shaken. Atomic and environmental irresponsibility may have exposed science to ill repute. Clever preachers may use the current scientific crisis to further that "old time religion" and, in the process, augment their following and their bankroll. Nonetheless, the valid fruits of science are well established, and the scientific mentality is widely diffused. What does not stand up to rigorous criticism and square with "the best available opinion of the day" is not given real credence and cannot long stand. Just "taking it on faith" is no longer acceptable. Granted, no religious position is thoroughly rationalizable and provable. But then, again, what is? Yet any position that seeks acceptance must at least be rigorous and reasonable (Helminiak, 1986d, ch. 2). If religious and scientific issues are to form one coherent explanation, that explanation must be systematically formulated. That is, it must meet the criteria of scientific thinking.

Confusion of the Spiritual with the Divine

There is another complication in the matter of spirituality. In the West *religion* means theism, it entails belief in God. The same is not true for the bulk of humanity, but our Western tradition continues to color our thinking and our use of the term *religion*. So spirituality, a "religious" matter, is not conceived apart from explicit commerce with God. Now, Judaism and Christianity clearly insist that the human is created and so cannot possibly be divine. But Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, and Hinduism suggest that part of being human is to be somehow divine. This latter idea, its origin and implications unbeknown to many fervent but unschooled spiritualists, becomes part of contemporary New Age Religion and colors supposedly Christian religions (Helminiak, 1986d, pp. 41–46, 97–123, 132–133). And the notion

of spirit currently in vogue is sufficiently fuzzy to accept and bear such an idea. Then, if to be human is to have spirit, to be human is also somehow to be divine. The religious question, which in fact is primarily a human question, becomes inextricably entangled with the God question. And since the nature of God is surely beyond even the broadest empirical methodology, the possibility of an adequate scientific explanation of things human appears utterly doomed.

The human sciences dismiss the spiritual because it is supposedly theological and so they neglect what is essential to the human being. The religions denounce the sciences for being irreligious and so reject whatever science does not square with their "revealed" creeds. This sad state of affairs is not unrelated to the clumsy separation of church and state that reigns in the United States and keeps all profound questions of meaning and value from affecting public life. Nor is this state of affairs unrelated to a narrowly empirical "scientism" that would make the human sciences "hard" like physics and chemistry by limiting consideration to what is publicly observable and numerically measurable. On all fronts, the deep things of human life get overlooked. This is most unfortunate. Spirituality was wrongly deemed a theological rather than a human issue and, as such, it has been understandably neglected by science. For their part the religions have maintained a claim to special insight about the meaning of life and so have often ignored challenging information produced by the sciences.

The Explanation Proposed Here

Granted the complexity of the issues and the rigor an answer must preserve, is an objective account of spirituality even possible? Obviously, I believe it is possible, and this book even dares to say how. From where does such optimism come? From the work of Bernard Lonergan.

Lonergan dedicated most of his life to an analysis of human consciousness. What Lonergan (1957, p. 519; 1972, pp. 13, 302) calls "human consciousness," he sometimes also calls "spirit." By consciousness he does not mean, as most psychologists do, the whole array of inner human experience but rather the peculiar awareness that conditions and constitutes the highest functioning of the human mind. His major work, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, presents that analysis. His subsequent major contribution, *Method in Theology*, applies that analysis and expands it in the case of theological scholarship and the human sciences. Lonergan's work appears to be a breakthrough.

As methodical physics emerged with the formulation of the Newtonian synthesis and modern chemistry began with the discovery of the periodic table of elements and explanatory biology had a beginning in the idea of evolution, so theology—and all the human sciences—may find a breakthrough and take-off in an understanding of human consciousness or spirit. For it is consciousness that distinguishes the human sciences from all the others. Human consciousness and its products—meanings and values—determine both the objects of human science and the workings of the human researchers. That is, consciousness pertains on both sides of the enterprise of human science, on the objective side and on the subjective. Understand consciousness and you achieve a pivotal point from which to approach all the human issues.

Working in the classical philosophical tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, responding to the thorny epistemological questions raised by Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, and addressing the scientific issues at stake in Einstein, Planck, Heisenberg, and Gödel, Lonergan claims to have understood human consciousness. Whether he is right or wrong (and I believe he is right), he presents a position that is unique, one that deserves a hearing. That position is the substance of the answer proposed in this book, the answer to the double question before us: What is a human being? and What is spirituality?

Human Science and Religion

Religion and spirituality are not the same thing, but they do get mixed together—for two reasons. The first is that religion is generally taken to involve God, and the second is that in some vague way the human spirit is taken to be divine. So spirituality gets identified with (theist) religion.

In that familiar approach, the human spirit is said to be a “spark of divinity” within us. Supposedly, humanity’s innermost core is divine. So it becomes impossible to talk of spirituality without talking of God. Spirituality and theology become inseparable.

Sorting Out the Issues

The identity of human spirit and divinity is a basic Hindu belief. The two well-known maxims of Hinduism make this very point: “That thou art” and “Atman is Brahman.” That is, as a human being, you

are the Ultimate Reality of the Universe; and your innermost self, Atman, is the Ultimate Reality, Brahman. Relying on this tradition, Ken Wilber, the well-known spokesperson for the transpersonal psychology movement, states the matter unabashedly: "The core insight of the *psychologia perennis* is that man's 'innermost' consciousness is identical to the absolute and ultimate reality of the universe, known variously as Brahman, Tao, Dharmakaya, Allah, the God-head" (Wilber, 1980, pp. 75–76). The Judeo-Christian tradition also notes a relationship between the self and God. According to Genesis 1:26–27, God created the man in God's own "image and likeness." The Western spiritual traditions make much of this key biblical teaching.

Nonetheless, the Judeo-Christian understanding differs significantly from the Hindu. Image and likeness of God is not the same as identity with God. Philosophical speculation about this matter clarified the point in terms of creation. The human is a creature, brought into existence by God; therefore, the human cannot be God, the Creator. For creature and Creator are defined in contrast to one another. Unless a human being has existed eternally—and to make this point one would have to ignore the obvious this-worldly facts of the matter—a human being simply is not divine, not even in his or her "innermost self," whatever this phrase means. Understood in these terms, the matter is not merely one of different religious traditions. The matter is one of reason and logic.

For that reason and with good logic, it is taken for granted here that the human spirit is not divine. So spirituality will be discussed apart from discussion of God. (See figure 1.2.)

This is not to oust God from all consideration. It is merely to place the question of God in its appropriate place. If God is understood as Creator, what can discussion of God add to an understanding of human spirituality? Granted that God created us human beings and granted that God gave us the human nature we have and granted that part of being human is to have a human spirit, what more can appeal to the Creator-God of the Universe add to the discussion? To understand human spirituality, one would have to look to this created human reality and examine it in itself. Noting that God created it helps not one bit in understanding its nature. The nature was, indeed, given by God, but to understand the nature one must look to it, not to God. Just as an astronomer must look to the sky and not to God, in order to understand the universe, though the sky and the universe are created by God, so we must attend to human spirit itself and not to God, in order to understand spiritual-

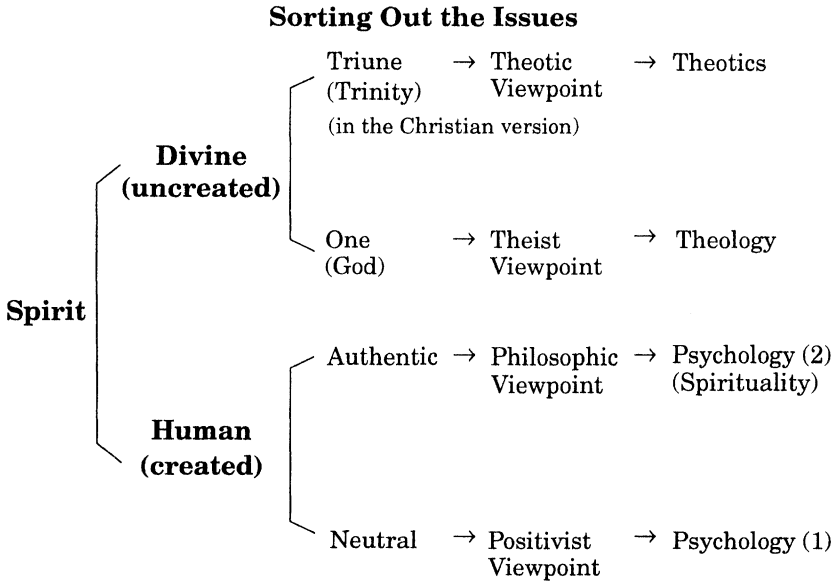


Figure 1.2. Distinctions regarding spirit lead to a system of four analytic viewpoints. These imply two kinds of psychology, one of which is spirituality, and two kinds of theology. As well as differentiating different disciplines, the originating distinctions also interrelate them by referring them to one another.

ity. Once this state of affairs is clear, treatment of human spirituality must proceed apart from discussion of God.

The human is not the divine, so spirituality and theology are two different things. This distinction between the human and the divine is an important beginning point for sorting out the issues surrounding spirituality. Once this distinction is made, other issues start to become clear. This distinction suggests the need for further distinctions—now on two fronts, the divine and the human.

On the divine side of the matter, there is the further question about human deification or divinization. The question is this: Granted that the Creator-God of the Universe does exist and did create human beings with a spiritual nature, what is the possibility that humans could in some way become divine? Could the human image and likeness of God allow humans to become very God-like, indeed? Certainly, as created, human beings could never become God, uncreated. But could humans somehow share in at least some aspects of divinity? This question is important because it sets a common topic in spiritual circles.

The term for deification, coined by the Greek Fathers of the Christian Church, is *theosis*.¹ So I call discussion about the possibility of human deification “theotics,” the study of deification. This special term points out that discussion of human deification is not the same thing as simple discussion of God the Creator. Judaism and Islam, for example, believe in God, but they pursue no discussion about human participation in divinity. They present a theology without a theotics. Human deification is a question different from the God question. Theotics is another specialized discipline in comparison to theology.

What has already been said about Hinduism might suggest that it is a theotic religion. Hinduism may seem to propose an explanation of how humans can share in divinity. That explanation turns on the supposition that at their core human beings really are divine. Then, to achieve perfect deification, people need only free themselves from involvement with this material world. According to this understanding, the spiritual path is a pursuit of ever more subtle experiences of one’s spiritual (and divine) nature. Such an understanding is also familiar in the West, where an other-worldly spirituality has reigned for centuries.

However, as also already indicated, there is a flaw in that line of thinking. It would explain human deification by denying the distinction between the human and the divine in the first place. If Atman is Brahman, if the human is really the divine, talk of deification is out of place. The question of becoming somehow divine or of sharing in divinity makes no sense, for one already is divine from the start. So Hinduism does not really propose a theotics; rather, it sidesteps the question. By obscuring any precise distinction between humanity and divinity, Hinduism can avoid the question.

Classic orthodox Christianity is the only true theotics I know. So much is this the case that I used to speak of concern for deification simply as “the Christian viewpoint” rather than “the theotic viewpoint.” But my personal knowledge is limited. I have done some investigation into the matter, but I could not have turned over every possible stone. It may well be that other religions, understood on

1. I am grateful to Richard Woods of Loyola University and Bishop Maximos of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh for clarifying this terminology for me. In order to accord with the Orthodox usage and in contrast to my former terminology, herewith I begin using the term *deification* instead of *divinization*.

their own terms, do indeed propose an account of how humanity, distinct from divinity, can nonetheless attain deification. The generic term *theotic* leaves room for that possibility. Still, in what follows, my treatment of deification will always rely on the Christian (I do not mean Fundamentalist) account. It is the only coherent theotic account that I know.

To deal with human deification, Christianity adds significant complexities to theology. It speaks not just of God but of a Trinity. And it accounts for human deification by appealing to the action among humankind of different Members of the Trinity (Helminiak, 1986d, 1987d).

According to Christian belief, One of the Trinity took flesh and lived among us as Jesus Christ. Faithful even unto death, he was raised from the dead in divine glory; his humanity was transformed. That is, in his humanity he was deified. His human mind came to know with the knowledge of God and his human heart to love with the love of God. Even as human, he shared in qualities proper to God alone. This is as it should be since he was God from the start. Then, through the mission of Another of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5), other human beings are able to attain to deification just as Jesus did. In Christian belief, the risen Jesus is the cause and model of human perfection even unto sharing in divinity. In Jesus deification or glorification occurred because Jesus is the Only Begotten of God. In other humans deification can occur because of the work of the Holy Spirit among humankind. Through the Holy Spirit, people become members of Jesus Christ, share in his life, and are destined for divine glory.

The distinctive doctrines of Christianity—Trinity (God), Incarnation and Resurrection (Christ), and Indwelling of the Trinity through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Grace)—account for the possibility of human deification. More than a theology, Christianity represents a true theotics. Now, these doctrines of Christianity may be difficult to accept. They certainly move in a realm of sophisticated religious subtlety. All that aside, what should be noted here is that the intent of these doctrines is to explain the possibility of human deification. Whether or not one accepts the explanation, Christianity has proposed a complex and coherent theotics.

On the divine side of the matter, there is the necessary distinction between theology and theotics. This distinction makes clear that there are very different issues at stake in the doctrines of the different religions. These issues cannot all be lumped together as “religion.” Especially if a scientific account is the goal, as it is here, these issues have to be sorted out.

On the human side of the matter, there is also need for sorting out further issues. There is need for the distinction between the authentically human and the neutral or noncommittally human.

Spirit is an intrinsic part of humanity, so *all* truly human activity is somehow spiritual (Helminiak, 1989a). Yet, people are good and bad; they can be correct or mistaken. These are important differences. What kind of person one is and what one believes have a lot to say about how one's life will unfold. Evil and falsehood eventually self-destruct; this is their nature. Evil and falsehood preclude full human growth. So a person invested in wrongdoing and given over to deceit is not on a path of open-ended fulfillment. Even if the evil and falsehood are not deliberate, the eventual outcome is unfortunately the same. People may be sincere in their beliefs and ethics but still be mistaken. They may be doing "what people do" and acting "as is expected" and following "what was taught." But at the same time, they and their kind may also be wrong. If they are wrong, culpably or not, their spiritual growth will eventually come to a dead end. Yet all the time they will have been exercising their spiritual capacities, the distinctively human capacities to be aware, to understand, and to decide. All the while they will have been constructing and living in a world of meaning and value.

The religious traditions have always understood spirituality to deal with open-ended human unfolding. Spirituality has to do with the farther realms of human advance. Yet, if spirit is inherent in humanity, every human activity is in some way spiritual. So there is need for another distinction to sort out concern for what is really right and good from concern that takes no stand on the matter. There is need to sort out spirituality from other kinds of human (and so, spiritual) activity.

What is an example of concern for human, and even spiritual, things that takes no stand on issues of good or evil, truth or falsehood? The human sciences offer the most obvious example. They claim to be "value free" (Myrdal, 1958; Richardson & Guignon, 1991; Weber, 1949). As science, they study human beings and human society; they determine accurately what people believe and how they live. In doing this, they are actually dealing with spiritual things, people's beliefs and values. But the human sciences tend to make no judgment about the validity of people's beliefs and values. In their attempt to be "scientific" and "objective," the sciences take a neutral stance.

I speak of that approach as "positivist" (Abbagnano, 1967). This term is common in philosophical circles but not well known otherwise. The term suggests limitation of concern to "actual experiences"

and “real things”; it implies “empirical” and “practical” matters. The contrast would be the “speculative” or “theoretical.” In other words, positivism is concerned about hard-nosed science dealing with down-to-earth things. Issues like truth and falsehood, good and evil, are supposedly too airy-fairy to fit in here. These more subtle human issues are thought not to be really real. Positivism describes a kind of science that avoids asking about these matters.

In contrast, I call the approach that would be concerned about truth and goodness “philosophic.” Etymologically the term *philosopher* means “lover of wisdom,” and this is the meaning intended here. The philosopher is the seeker of wisdom, committed to the true, the good, and the beautiful. So concern for things human in terms of whether they are true or false and good or evil is called “philosophic.”

Another way of speaking about philosophic concern is to speak of *authenticity*. I use this term in the sense defined by Bernard Lonergan, and it will be explained in detail in chapter 7. Though related, this is not the same sense as that among the existential philosophers (Heidegger, 1927/1962). There authenticity might mean things like speaking one’s mind or acting on one’s feelings, but whether doing so would be good or evil may hardly come into question. Authenticity in the existential sense has no explicit reference to objective truth and goodness. Similar qualifications apply to Charles Taylor’s (1991) use of the term in *The Ethics of Authenticity*. However, Taylor very insightfully insists that the “culture of authenticity” actually embodies a positive “moral ideal,” and highlighting this ideal moves one beyond ethical relativism and narrow individualism. Lonergan’s usage is precise on this very matter. For Lonergan, authenticity implies ongoing personal commitment to openness, questioning, honesty, and good will across the board. In this sense, commitment to authenticity is exactly what characterizes the philosophic viewpoint.

So, on the human side of the matter of attention to the spiritual, there are two basic approaches. One is concerned to understand accurately how things actually happen to be. The other is concerned, over and above that, to understand how things ought to be and to measure them against that ideal. That is, one approach is within the positivist viewpoint, and the other is within the philosophic viewpoint. The human sciences, as generally conceived today, work within the positivist viewpoint. Though they do treat of spiritual things—human beliefs and ethics—the human sciences are not doing spirituality. However, if the sciences were to shift to working within the philosophic viewpoint, they would then be actual instances of the scientific discipline, *spirituality*. For then they would be concerned about human beings in light of the open-ended impli-

cations of the human spirit. Then the human sciences would be studying people in light of authenticity.

These statements are made in summary fashion here. Their full implication will unfold as this book develops. Especially chapter 7 will explain in detail what authenticity is and how it relates to spiritual growth.

Four Viewpoints on the Human

Sorting out the issues has resulted in four different approaches to studying the human. Study might focus on the human as sharing in divinity, the human as created, the human as authentic, or the human as it happens to be in this or that instance. Each of these approaches is actually quite different. Each depends on a different focus of concern, so each will rely on a different set of presuppositions, and each will attend to different aspects of the human data. That is, each approach will have its own appropriate methodology. Moreover, if each of these approaches is actually an attempt to explain some real aspect of the human data, to the extent that each does achieve explanation, each is a kind of human science. And interlocking with one another, together the four provide a comprehensive explanation of human reality.

Science concerned about the human as it happens to be in particular instances would be human science as generally conceived today—psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics. Science concerned about authentic humanity would be spirituality, an explanatory account of human unfolding along the lines of the spirit inherent in humankind. Science concerned about the human as created would be theology, focused wholly and solely on questions of God and God's relationship to the created universe. Finally, science concerned about human participation in divinity would be theotics, as exemplified in the specifically Christian treatises on Trinity, Christology, and Grace.

Said in more technical terms, human science can operate within four different viewpoints. Pursuit of systematic explanation that takes into account only the status quo is science within the positivist viewpoint. Pursuit of systematic explanation whose focus is authenticity is science within the philosophic viewpoint. Pursuit of systematic explanation whose focus is the Creator-God of the Universe is science within the theist viewpoint. And pursuit of systematic explanation whose focus is human deification is science within the theotic viewpoint. (See figure 1.3.)

Four Viewpoints on the Human

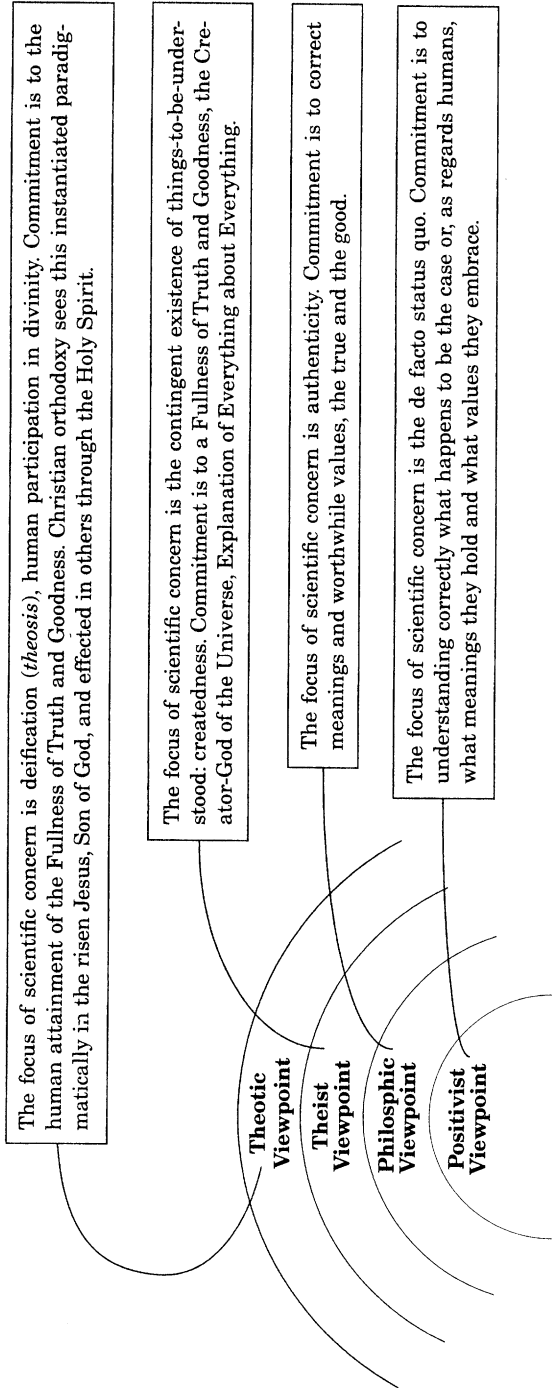


Figure 1.3. This system of higher viewpoints entails a series of interlocking analytic perspectives on one and the same phenomenon. The questions inherent in each viewpoint—not a change in phenomena nor a change in the data available on one phenomenon—determine different academic disciplines or sciences. At the same time, the interrelatedness of the questions interrelates the same independent disciplines. Valid conclusions within the lower viewpoints constrain, and are retained within, the higher viewpoints. The presuppositions of the higher viewpoints confirm the validity of the presuppositions of the lower. The independent disciplines in interrelationship constitute a comprehensive human science.

I speak of these four approaches as “four viewpoints on the human.” *Viewpoint* is a technical term (Lonergan, 1957, pp. 13–19), as is this whole conception, though here it has been presented in rather popular style. Elsewhere I have presented this material in detailed and technical form (Helminiak, 1986a, 1987b, 1987d). Another book, a companion to this one, *Religion and Human Science: Another Approach*, will also discuss this material in all its ramifications and in contrast to the two reigning positions on relating religion and psychology—the Hindu/transpersonal-psychology approach represented in Ken Wilber’s (1990) *Eye to Eye* and the Weber/Dilthey approach represented in Don Browning’s (1987) *Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies*. Anyone seeking further treatment of this matter will find it in these sources. What has been presented here, supplemented by the discussion of spirit and authenticity below, is sufficient to support the argument of this book.

This book is about spirituality. It is about human science within the philosophic viewpoint. It treats of the human with an eye to authenticity. It explores the possibilities of human becoming in light of the spiritual potential that is inherent in humanity. In examining this human spiritual potential and its unfolding, this book will actually be dealing with human spirituality as a lived reality. It will be explaining what it is that makes a person spiritual and how this spiritual component unfolds in a person’s life. At the same time, insofar as this book will be a treatment of this lived reality, this book will also be an example of spirituality as a science, the explanatory account of the lived reality. The account will proceed with virtually no reference to God. The topic is the human core of spirituality, not spirituality in its many religious expressions or spirituality as explicit relationship with God. Still, nothing is being lost in so limiting this study, for this study is presented within a comprehensive account of how the human sciences—now including spirituality—and theology relate. What is presented here is fully open to expansion within the theist and, then again, the theotic viewpoints (Helminiak, 1987d). The overall framework is the system of four viewpoints on the human. With all the issues sorted out, this study will focus on the central one and present an elaborate scientific account of the human core of all spirituality.

Overview of This Book

Many complexities surround the topic of spirituality. But sorting out the God issues from the human ones exposes the heart of the matter.

Thus, this book finds a wholly human basis for spirituality by discerning two dimensions in the human mind. Treatment of these in turn, plus attention to a third dimension of humanity, the physiological organism, determines the structure of this book.

Part 2 treats spirit, part 3 treats psyche, and part 4 treats human integration. Together they detail a tripartite model of the human. (See figure 1.1.) This model expresses the proposed answer to the double question that began this chapter: What is a human being? and What is spirituality? By explaining that a human being is an integration of organism, psyche, and spirit, this book simultaneously explains what spirituality is. For if spirit is an essential dimension of humanity, just to live authentically is to grow spiritually.

Mind as Spirit and Psyche

The starting point of this presentation is Lonergan's analysis of human consciousness. When consciousness or spirit stands out in full relief, it is obvious that human mind is more than this one thing. The bipartite model of the human as body and mind, or body and soul, must give way to a more complex model. Mind entails spirit and something else besides. "Psyche" will name that something else.

Part 2 treats spirit and is basically an exposition of Lonergan's analysis of human consciousness or spirit.

Part 3 treats psyche. It presupposes Lonergan's distinction between consciousness and psyche and relies heavily on Robert Doran's elaboration of psyche within a Lonerganian context. Other generally available psychological knowledge plus insight from my psychotherapy practice and from my LSD experiences as a subject at Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, Spring Grove State Hospital, help fill out the treatment of psyche. A discussion of Carl Jung's theory of the archetypes and a review of Stanislov Grof's research with LSD are included in part 3. The contributions of these major psychological theorists stand in their own right. Here, however, their ideas are borrowed to help explain what psyche, as distinguished from spirit, is like. In addition, discussion of these other theorists also helps to clarify what is unique about the argument of this book.

At this point spirit and psyche may be characterized briefly. Spirit entails self-awareness and so marvel, question, and awe. Human spiritual capacity expresses itself in awareness, insight, understanding, judgment, decision, and self-determination. Insight provides the easiest example. On the other hand, psyche entails

images and other mental representations, emotion, memory, and personality structure. Its most obvious expression is in dreaming.

Though one may never have an insight apart from some image, simply to have an image is not to understand; image and insight are not the same thing. And though one may hardly have an insight without emotional reaction—remember Archimedes running naked from the baths, having discovered the principle of specific gravity, shouting “Eureka! Eureka! I found it! I found it!”—to feel is not the same thing as to understand; emotion is not insight.

Two different yet interrelated capacities appear to constitute human mind: psyche and spirit. Why only two, when the lists of both spiritual and psychic issues above are long, requires explanation. Whether psyche and spirit are sufficient and necessary to account for human mental experience is debatable. The reader will have to draw his or her own conclusion after considering the fuller presentation.

Questions of Terminology

Both *psyche* and *spirit* are problematic terms. This matter deserves brief comment.

Psyche is a Greek term. It is generally known to have something to do with the mind and psychology, and different psychological theorists use the term in different senses. But the term is neither well defined nor widely used. In the present case, the disadvantage of obscure foreign terminology may turn out to be an advantage. Except for possible reference to parapsychological or psi phenomena, especially in its adjectival form “psychic,” this term is more likely to be taken as it is defined and used here.

On the other hand, the term *spirit* is too well known, and its popular usage entails problems on all fronts. Psychologists may be inclined to dismiss the present discussion because it deals with “religious” issues. Religious believers are likely to misunderstand, or be offended by, the present discussion because they confound the spiritual and the divine.

At times I have used the Greek term *nous* as a substitute for *spirit*. The Greek term refers quite precisely to the highest aspect of human mind (Voegelin, 1974), but the impact of the Greek term is lost on a contemporary audience. Moreover, the corresponding adjective, *noetic*, though better known than the noun, generally has a restricted English reference to the intellectual, the cognitive, while spirit includes reference also to decision making and self-

determination, the volitional. Those for whom the terms *spirit* and *spiritual* carry too many distracting connotations might usefully read *nous* and *noetic* in their place.

Indeed, under the influence of Viktor Frankl (1962, pp. 100–103), the school of logotherapy uses the terms *noetic* or *noological* in that very way (Institute of Logotherapy, 1979; Lukas, 1981). Frankl's understanding of the human, though conceived and presented in more imageful terms, is a striking parallel to the one presented here. He speaks of the somatic, the psychic, and the noetic or noological, and the Institute of Logotherapy (1979) freely rephrases the matter as "the biological, the psychological, and the spiritual." There is no doubt that the noetic dimension refers to human spirit. Frankl (1969/1988, p. 17) writes, "It is that dimension in which the uniquely human phenomena are located. It could be defined as the spiritual dimension as well. However, since in English *spiritual* has a religious connotation, this term must be avoided as much as possible. For what we understand by the noological dimension is the anthropological rather than the theological dimension." Frankl (1969/1988, p. 22) points to Nicolai Hartmann and Max Scheler as both also proposing this same understanding.

Despite Frankl's caution, I risk using the term *spirit* because it does invoke issues that are perennial and that now are burningly current. It gives rise to the term, *spirituality*, which is the topic of this book. But the reader is warned to be careful, to take the term as it is defined, for the meaning of *spirit* in this book most likely differs from what most imagine.

In the end, of course, no terms will be perfect, and terminology is not even the issue. What is meant, not the terms used to express it, is the important matter. And if what is meant here were generally understood and if there already were well-defined terms to express it, there would be no need for this book.

Finally, the terms *soul* and *heart* also require comment. *Soul* is a commonplace in spiritual discussion, but its meaning is wholly nebulous. The only certainty about the term is that it refers to some intangible and inner aspect of the human being.

Depending on the context, soul could be used to replace any of the key terms in this study: mind, spirit, and psyche. Thus, in the formula *body and soul*, soul functions as a synonym for mind and refers globally to the locus of inner human experience. In religious circles, soul generally refers to some immaterial and enduring aspect of the human being, the part that survives biological death (or even predates biological birth). To this extent, the term most closely parallels spirit as understood here. Indeed, presuming a synonym

for soul, current religious usage often opines that one's *spirit* lives on after death. In contrast, in psychological circles (e.g., Moore, 1992), for the most part soul congers up matters of imagination, emotion, and passionate living and thus overlaps what I call "psyche." However, as exemplified in the discussion of Jungian psychology in chapter 12, the psychological usage of soul (or psyche) usually also implicates matters of spirit—like insightfulness and creativity or openness toward experience or meaning and purpose in living. More than all that, soul may also imply the whole human being—organism, psyche, and spirit—as when a pastor refers not to the people but to the souls in the congregation.

This matter of soul is a can of worms. Consideration of the long and varied history of the term merely adds further complication (Badham, 1983; Klinger, 1970; Reese, 1980). Happily, as should already be apparent, delineation of the tripartite model of the human does allow some sorting out of the issues.

Because of its ambiguity, the term *soul* is not useful for technical discussion, but it is very useful in poetic, suggestive, and evocative contexts. The same must be said about the term *heart*. Accordingly, I seldom use these terms in this study of spirituality except when an inspirational turn of phrase is apropos.

Integration of the Human

Part 4 treats the integration of the human. There in chapter 15, the third human factor, easiest to grasp, will be presented: body. It should be noted that *body* refers to a living reality, so the term *organism* is more accurate. Thus, the complete tripartite model emerges: organism, psyche, and spirit. (See figure 1.4.)

The remaining chapters in Part 4 discuss the harmonious functioning of the human as an organism-psyche-spirit unity. This harmonious functioning, ongoing human integration, is understood to be nothing other than spiritual integration. This understanding of the human, the person, the "self," entails a defense of humanistic psychology's concern for self-actualization, noted in chapter 16. Comparison with Freud's tripartite model in chapter 17 elucidates the present account and, by acknowledging dynamic human spirit, answers Freud's question about the energy behind repression. Once again, comparison with major psychological theories, humanistic and psychoanalytic, clarifies the present position and highlights its unique contribution to psychology.

A Tripartite Model of the Human

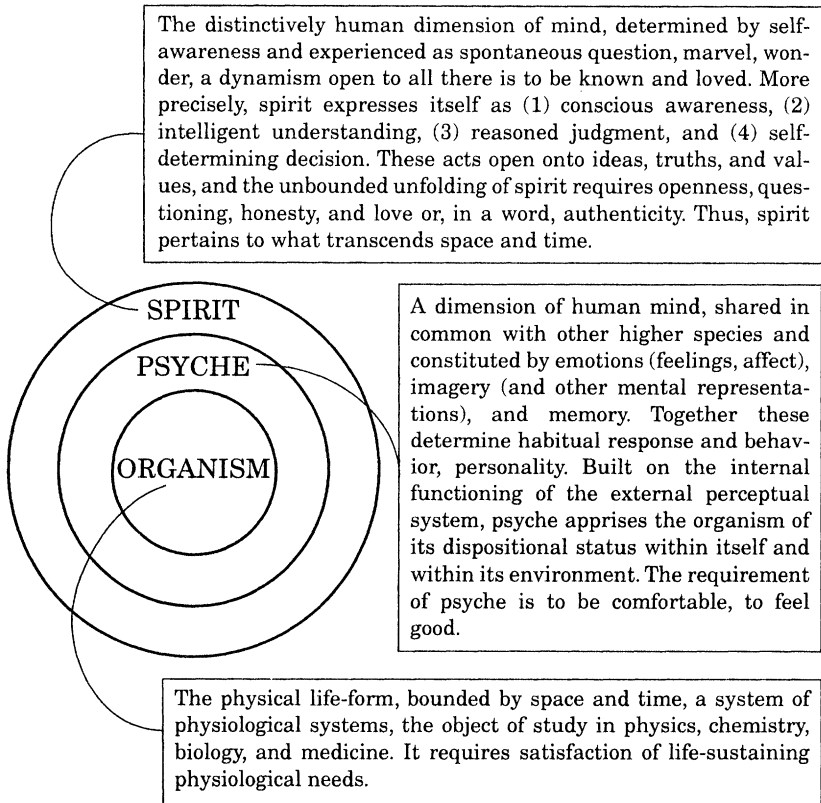


Figure 1.4. Refining the standard model, body and mind (or body and soul), the tripartite model distinguishes psyche and spirit within mind. Three factors name the necessary and sufficient to account for human reality and functioning. The factors are distinct: each entails a different intelligibility, so the one cannot be the other. Their distinction does not imply separation. Neither does their depiction here, in perceptible and imaginable representation, suggest contiguity of parts or priority of order.

Part 4 concludes with a long discussion on sexuality and spirituality, chapter 18, a case-in-point study of human spiritual integration. Part 4 is really a study in systematic spirituality. By presenting a detailed analysis of the lived reality, sexual and spiritual integration, chapter 18 offers a specific example of nontheist spirituality as a technical study.

Summary

Spirituality has become a growing concern in the contemporary world, yet the precise meaning of spirituality has remained elusive. Relying heavily on the work of Bernard Lonergan, this book attempts to bring some clarification to the matter.

The basic argument is that spirituality is a human thing, grounded in the very makeup of the human being. To be sure, most spirituality expresses itself through religious belief and pious practice. Still, in its most essential form, spirituality can be treated apart from religion and theology—and it ought to be, if a coherent and accurate understanding (a scientific account) of spirituality is the goal. And this is the goal here. This is also what our contemporary world needs. As will be shown, spirituality can be considered a psychological specialization—if only human science would open itself to the real human issues of normative meaning and purpose in life. Then, apart from differing religious traditions, there can emerge an accurate understanding of the spiritual dimension of human living. Such an understanding can guide a world order newly emerging.

Such an approach calls the religions to open their eyes to what they all share in common and to stop contributing through interdenominational bickering to the fragmentation of the human family. Such an approach calls human science to take seriously the universal human realities that it has for too long ignored as “religious.” And such an approach calls contemporary communities and nations to attend to the spiritual issues that undergird any human society, whether religious or fully secular.

In fact, spirituality is an aspect of every human life. But life goes on whether we think about it or not. We humans may go on living our reality without being able to say what we are living. Yet if we are honest, the lived reality will not leave us at ease with statements that do not accurately match it. So it is that people today are increasingly aware of spirituality, yet there is little agreement over what spirituality is.

This book proposes an answer to that question. This book addresses that issue of major personal, social, religious, and scientific importance. By stating what is a human being and what, then, spirituality, this book offers a new vision to a multireligious and scientific and secular world.