

The Centrality of the Soul

By Jacob Palicka

Of all the themes which might have been chosen for a newsletter, few have less tendency to pique my interest and excite my imagination. How many times have I found myself under the dismal lighting of a clothing store growing languid of movement and vacuous of mind till I was inclined to believe that my soul had rejected its body, until at last, shopping was past and life could once more become tolerable. However, since it is not within the confines of courtesy to continue on about unsolicited quibbles, I will restrict all further remarks to whatever it is that can be said of clothing.

Insofar as clothing conceals our deformities and by decoration can impart some degree of magnificence, it is to mankind a signal aspect of our sublunary existence. Likewise, the soul receives its own covering: that of the body. So we find that all observations are made from within; howsoever altruistic one may be, the center of one's life is never from the perspective of another (Proverbs 14:10).

At once it becomes apparent that this would be devastating to the authenticity of empathy if affection necessitated shared experience and was therefore worth no more than circumstance would allow, becoming merely a byproduct of proximity. As the design of God would never be sustained under such a fundamental flaw, which deprives empathy of merit and secludes the heart from ever being entirely or perfectly understood, this partition obviously is not an insurmountable division (Psalm 34:10, 84:11).

Although it is not clear why this obstacle can be circumvented, we find that those who effectively sympathize do so simply by fervid concern, steadfast friendship, and discrete deportment. Consequent to the application of the above measures, we may have a basis from which to demonstrate charity to one another, albeit that bodily ailments constrain the soul to the humblest expression. For if our bodies are the only conduit through which we bless others, it follows that any corruption to the former will be a hindrance on the latter. Therefore, let us not vigilantly guard the heart to the neglect of the body which is the vessel entrusted to us for the duration of life to be used in the service of our neighbor for the honor of God.