

## Venom: Doctrine of Emotion: Essence of the Human Soul, Genesis 1:26a

### V. Venom

#### Preface

Our next increment in the study of the Israelite Jornada will take up the problem of emotions. Emotion is a part of the human makeup and may be expressed in a number of ways. For example, when we encounter circumstances which are pleasing, compatible, or advantageous then we respond with good emotions. When we encounter circumstances, which are viewed as displeasing, incompatible, or not to our advantage, we react with negative or bad emotions. The challenge as we move through the Jornada is to be able to look into the mirror of our souls and quickly identify the problem of bad emotion and then neutralize it before it enslaves the soul.

The Bible is replete with mention of many emotions. Some are impulsive while others become chronic. Efficient utilization of the problem-solving devices will stop impulsive emotions in their tracks. However, failure to deal with impulsive sins allows them to become chronic. An impulsive emotion or sin is the reaction of the moment. One may quickly recover from this type of sinning with rebound and the filling of the Holy Spirit where recall of doctrine conquers the problem.

However, if the impulsive emotion is not dealt with immediately through rebound, then it hangs around and begins to dictate policy to the soul which in turn orders the brain to develop wheel-tracks which support the new system of thinking. From these chronic sins develop, such as bitterness, hatred, malice, judging, revenge, and implacability.

This was the failure of the first-generation Jews. Likewise, it is our failure today as we encounter the challenges, the tests, and the goads of our own personal *Jornadas*.

It will be the purpose of this segment of our study to examine the thought process of these Jews in order to develop an understanding of how we as believers in Jesus Christ can poison our own souls with the venom of anger, bitterness, and hatred for the God who saved us, the Word which convicts us, and our fellowman who tests us. We will call this paragraph simply “*Venom*,” and we begin with a brief examination of the Doctrine of Emotion.

### 1. The Doctrine of Emotion

#### A. Essence of the Human Soul

We learn in Genesis that the Trinity agreed in eternity past to create man in Their own image.

**Genesis 1:26a** - Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image according to Our likeness.”

Modern Hebrew’s use of this word for image [*be tselem*] is, according to Israeli scholars, the same as was used by the ancients. The word refers to a spiritual rather than a literal replication.

The idea is a shadow image. The human soul is not a duplication of God’s soul essence but it does have attributes which give man the ability to know God and to acquire His thinking.

Just as God's essence is real but invisible, so also our soul's essence is real but invisible. These invisible characteristics include:

- a. **Self-consciousness:** awareness of oneself as an individual. You are able to make the statement, "*I am.*"
- b. **Self-perception:** ability to enter into cognitive learning, rational thought, and make logical conclusions. You are able to make the statement, "*I think.*"

NOTE: It is interesting to insert here the philosophy of René Descartes who sought to develop a method to verify the objective truth.

**Kohl, Herbert. From Archetype to Zeitgeist. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1992, p. 100:**

The method he developed depended solely upon physical experiments using the senses, as opposed to truths established by religious authority or logic.

Descartes' method consisted of systematically doubting everything that could not be firmly established by logic or the immediate evidence of the senses. Memory, for example, was questioned whenever it claimed to establish truths about the past.

Descartes' method refused all appeals to higher authority, whether it is the will of God, or the general consensus of the ruling class. Descartes' doubts democratized knowledge, as everyone's senses were equally valuable in the establishment of [truth].

Descartes' theories reduced the area of absolutely certain knowledge to the simple awareness of oneself as a thinking being. His statement "*I think, therefore I am*" represents the conclusion that results in depending solely upon logic and immediate conscious awareness.

It is obvious from his philosophy that Descartes was French yet his writings were done in Latin. His most famous work is Discourse on the Method in which is found the quotation that is most often identified with him: cogito, ergo sum: "*I think, therefore I am.*" This is called the Cartesian Principle which may appear odd until you learn that Descartes' name in Latin is Renatus Cartesius.

His rationalistic and empirical philosophy suffers from its exclusion of faith and the obvious elimination of the existence of the immaterial but real soul. It is left to Dr. Russell Kirk to put things in perspective.

**Kirk, Russell. The Sword of Imagination. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995; pp. 13-15:**

[Note: Dr. Kirk writes his memoirs in third person.]

*Now and again he [speaking of himself] would stand between two tall mirrors, glimpsing the terror of infinity—diminished image reflecting dwindled image, until the optic nerve could not suffice to detect what presumably continued ad infinitum. "We see through a glass, darkly"—or, as a recent translation has it, "Now we are looking into the riddle of a mirror." What was infinity? What was eternity?*

*Or he could stare puzzled at his mirrored face asking himself silently who or what he was. Cogito ergo sum? ["I think, therefore I am?"] Of course the seven-year-old-boy never had heard of Descartes; nevertheless he rejected the Cartesian hypothesis. He knew that he possessed an organic thinking contrivance called a brain; yet he knew, or rather was mysteriously aware, that he was more than brain.*

*Confronting the mirror, he received the intuition that he had a soul; no, that he was a soul. No one had told him so, yet he knew it.*

*The doctrine of the soul ... is denied by many today—especially by those styling themselves intellectuals—and uneasily neglected by many more. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century dictionaries are vague about that word “soul.” The Christian dogmas of the soul and of the resurrection of the flesh, preached early in three continents, created a new order of mankind. Men and women are made for eternity: such was the first premise of that order. How so?*

*Because they are souls.*

*For expression and action, the soul requires a corporeal envelope (a body). That premise is far more readily apprehended today than in St. Paul’s age; for physicists instruct us that we of this seemingly too-solid flesh actually are collections of electrical particles, held in an ephemeral suspension and arrangement by some “laws” that we do not understand in the least. We are energy ... which we can neither create nor destroy .... What survives this present existence is the animating soul transcending mind and body.*

Naturally, seven-year-old Russell knew nothing of atomic theory or of Christian insights .... Nevertheless, the precocious boy, possibly through a perception beyond the five senses, found in the riddle of a mirror the answer to his inquiry, “*What am I?*” He became aware that he was more than a person ... he was a soul; if a soul in a fleshly prison, still a soul.

That conviction sweeps away the “*identity crisis*” so much written about in recent years. Few philosophical intellects remain that venture to discuss the soul; it is daring enough nowadays to try to analyze “*consciousness*.” But if the reality of the soul is admitted, mere consciousness ceases to be a problem. A soul is conscious of its own existence—unless blinkered by twentieth-century scientism. The axiom is not “*I think, therefore I am*,” but “*I am, therefore I think*.” With recognition of one’s soul, identity is established.

Establishment of identity is the characteristic of the soul we just defined as self-consciousness: awareness of oneself as an individual—“*I am*.”

The next soul attribute is the one we have just examined from the viewpoints of René Descartes and Russell Kirk, self-perception: the ability to enter into cognitive learning, rational thought, and reach logical conclusions—“*I think*.”

Thus, the logical conclusion an individual reaches when he encounters self-consciousness is, “*I am, therefore I think*.” It turns out that Solomon agrees with Dr. Kirk, not the French philosopher René Descartes.

**Proverbs 23:7** - As a man [*sha-ar*: to reckon, calculate, or think] thinks in his own [*nepesh*] soul, so is he!

Thus, we see the progression: Thinking takes place in the soul. The soul must therefore exist in order for thinking to take place. The content of your thinking determines the kind of person you are. Consequently, the “*Kirkian*” Principle stands: “*I am, therefore I think*,” to which we may now add a third consideration from Solomon, “*therefore, I decide*,”—the third characteristic of the soul now comes into view:

- c. **Volition:** The decider of the soul which makes choices based on information available in the mentality or influences from the sinful nature, its lust patterns, and its inventory of emotions. With your volition you are able to make the statements of either “*I ought*,” or “*I ought not*.”

Counselor of the volition is the conscience which contains a person's inventory of norms and standards and scale of values which classify one's beliefs related to right and wrong and good and evil.

Closely related to the volition is the fourth characteristic:

- d. **Self-determination:** In order for a person to be held responsible for his own decisions then his decision-making process must take place in an environment of freedom. Volition plus self-determination equals "*free will*." Self-determination is the free choice of one's own acts without outside compulsion. You have been given by God the freedom to exercise the liberty of decision making. Good decisions broaden future options; poor decisions limit future options. Whichever way you choose determines your future history. Thus, with freedom, you are responsible for your own decisions and you must live with the consequences if they are bad. Often problems arise from poor decisions and denial results. This is refusal to take the responsibility for one's own decisions. It is a reaction against reality and thus you enter into self-deception. Self-absorption leads to bitterness, an emotion which paralyzes the soul with its venom. When good decisions produce prosperity and tranquility of soul the proper response is humility and gratitude, not arrogance and self-aggrandizement. Self-determination allows a person to say either, "*I will*," or "*I will not*."

NOTE: From this review of the characteristics of the soul, we can begin to see what is meant by the Lord when he says in Genesis 1:26, "*Let Us make man in Our image ... be tselem*." This term is best translated "*shadow image*," shadow because God has never had to discover His self-existence. This is why He refers to Himself as the "*I AM*" in so many passages. Nevertheless, He has eternally possessed Self-consciousness.

God has always possessed ultimate cognizance of all that is knowable. This is His omniscience. God doesn't have to learn, rationalize, or reach conclusions. He knows the beginning from the end and has established all truth and verified all reality with regard to human history by means of His divine decree.

The decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be—in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations—and determining their certain futuration.

It is important that we remember that the several contents of this one eternal purpose are necessarily perceived by us in partial aspects. For this reason, we often use the plural, "*decrees*" to express the many facts of God's plan.

Actually, it is all one decree, given billions of years ago in less than a second and covering everything in all of what to us is past, present, and future history. At the time of the decree, all history was yet future.

God has eternally known all that is knowable. We may learn, but must do so incrementally. Nevertheless, we have a mentality by which we may acquire a cognitive ability called thought. Possession of all knowledge is called "*divine omniscience*." Analysis of acquired knowledge is called "*human thought*." God is the absolute Decider of the universe. His decisions are based on complete cognizance of all that is knowable and thus He is immutable in all that he says and does. We have volition and have the liberty to make choices but we are not immutable.

God's self-determination is based on His perfect righteousness. His righteousness establishes the absolute standards of right and wrong which the ancient scholars sought. His omniscience supplies His sovereignty with information on our compliance or noncompliance with the divine standard. Justice administers blessing or cursing accordingly. Thus, there are certain things God will do: bless compliance, and not do: bless noncompliance. We make choices, but with a flawed conscience, under the assault of an aggressive sinful nature, and with limited knowledge. God's decisions are infinitely perfect.

There is yet still one more attribute that makes up the human soul. It is something that mankind needs that God does not need and which He has never possessed.

Principle: God has no emotion whereas we do.