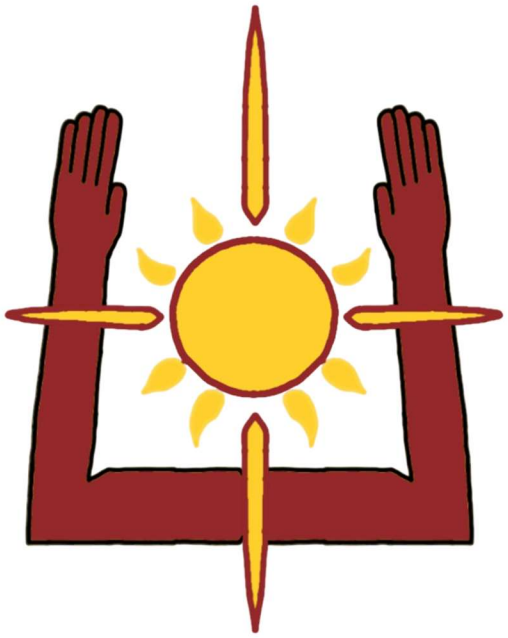
Tractate on the Soul



Compiled by the Venerable Anattā

of the **Church of the Human Soul**

Synopsis

"With Artificial Intelligence, we are summoning the demon."[1]

"The artificial imitation of positive human communication… can [] be misleading, creating the illusion of a relationship with a real personal subject… [T]he danger is not so much that a person may believe they are communicating with another person, but rather that they may gradually lose the very desire to form genuine human connections."[2]

"[I]f the artificial spirit comes into people, it leads them astray."[3]

"In a world controlled by algorithms, the human being gradually loses the power to act, loses autonomy."[4]

"Man has become the slave of his creation. His number, and the arrangement of life as he lives it, have been driven by the machine on to a path where there is no standing still and no turning back."[5]

"Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind."[6]

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[7]

The Soul and its Value

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."[8] "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."[9]

"What is it that, when present in a body, makes it living? — A soul."[10] "[T]he meaning of birth… is brought about by a descent of the Soul, something being given off by the Soul and coming down in the declination."[11]

Our bodies are known to end,

but the embodied self is enduring,

indestructible, and immeasurable…[12]

"You don't *have* a soul… You *are* a soul. You have a body, temporarily."[13]

"Though God is everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. The natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to him; nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will, and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be in the place of his habituation in thee. But there is a root or depth of thee from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is called the centre, the fund or the bottom of the soul."[14]

"Keep your soul ever in mind."[15] "It is an immaterial thing… which… is the principal thing in a man. It catches knowledge of God and [the] spiritual world. It is punished and rewarded."[16] "By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an outstanding manifestation of the divine image."[17] "[F]or every man's soul is in a spiritual body after it has cast off the material coverings which it carried about in the world."[18] "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."[19]

"The only thing in the world, of value, is an active soul. This every man is entitled to, this every man contains within him, though in almost all men obstructed and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates."[20] "For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquility…"[21]

"The spirit of a man *is* the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the inner depths of his heart."[22] "When you know yourselves, then you'll be known, and you'll realize that you're the children of the living Father. But if you don't know yourselves, then you live in poverty, and you are the poverty."[23] "For the soul is real, not the body; the world of thought is real, not the world of life."[24] "Goodness… needeth not to enter into the soul, for it is there already, only it is unperceived."[25]

No coward soul is mine

No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere.[26]

"If the soul is strong it has more of power than it has of the artificial spirit and so it flees from wickedness."[27]

A Flourishing Soul

"People involve themselves in countless activities which they consider to be important, but they forget about one activity which is more important and necessary than any other, and which includes all other things: the improvement of their soul."[28] "[T]he soul is something of such vital importance to us, affecting us so deeply, that one must have lost all feeling not to care about knowing the facts of the matter… This negligence in a matter where they themselves, their eternity, their all are at stake, fills me more with irritation than pity; it astounds and appalls me; it seems quite monstrous to me."[29] "The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond, and must be polished, or the luster of it will never appear."[30] "In those respects in which the soul is unlike God, it is also unlike itself."[31]

"The Soul selects her own Society."[32] "I would rather fashion my soul than fill it with trifles… It is the nature of the soul that is the crucial thing. The greatest among us make it a whole profession, for them thinking is life itself."[33] "Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts."[34] "For the soul walks upon all paths. The soul walks not upon a line, neither does it grow like a reed. The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals."[35]

"Within our body, our eyes and ears develop as organs of perception, as senses for bodily processes. Similarly, we can develop soul and spiritual organs of perception that will open up soul and spirit worlds to us. For anyone who does not have such higher senses, these worlds are dark and silent, just as the physical world is dark and silent to a being without eyes and ears."[36]

"Who will deny that true religion consists, in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart?"[37] "There is much that is difficult for the spirit, the strong reverent spirit that would bear much: but the difficult and the most difficult are what its strength demands. What is difficult? asks the spirit that would bear much, and kneels down like a camel wanting to be well loaded." [38] "The test of the true faith, certainly, should be its power to charm and command the soul, as the laws of nature control the activity of the hands, so commanding that we find pleasure and honor is obeying."[39]

"The great thing is that as long as we live we have the privilege of growing… Accepting, then, the truth that we are capable in some directions and limited in others, that genius is rare, that mediocrity is the portion of most of us, let us remember also that we can and must change ourselves."[40] "We have a legitimate obligation to set out

in life to see what we are made for… [an i]ndividual[] should seek to do his life's work so well that the living, the dead, or the unborn couldn't do it better. He must see it as something with cosmic significance; no matter how small it happens to be, or no matter how insignificant we tend to feel it is, we must come to see that it has great significance, that it is for the upbuilding of humanity."[41]

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[42] "Love participates of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is the divine spark; like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire that exists within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can confine, and which nothing can extinguish. We feel it burning even to the very marrow of our bones, and we see it beaming in the very depths of heaven."[43] "The truth—that Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire."[44] "Love is the mystery of divine revelations! Love is the effulgent manifestation! Love is the spiritual fulfilment! Love is the light of the Kingdom! Love is the breath of the Holy Spirit inspired into the human spirit!"[45] "As the love increases in you, so the loveliness increases: for love is itself the beauty of the soul. Love is the beauty of the soul."[46] "We do need to realize… that it is the quality of our love that determines the quality of this life."[47]

"Private and tender relation of one to one, which is the enchantment of human life; which, like a certain divine rage and enthusiasm, seizes upon a man at one period and works a revolution in his mind and body; unites him to his race, pledges him to the domestic and civic relations, carries him with new sympathy into nature, enhances the power of the senses, opens the imagination, adds to his character heroic and sacred attributes, establishes marriage and gives permanence to human society. "[48] "And our soul by virtue of this reforming grace is made sufficient to the full to comprehend all Him by love, the which is incomprehensible to all created knowledgeable powers, as is angel, or man's soul…"[49]

"Of actions done by man those alone are properly called 'human,' which are proper to man as man. Now man differs from irrational animals in this, that he is master of his actions. Wherefore those actions alone are properly called human, of which man is master. Now man is master of his actions through his reason and will…"[50] "Without this capacity, man would not be able to welcome God's revelation. Man has this capacity because he is created 'in the image of God.'"[51]

"The Soul's true Good is in devotion to the Intellectual-Principle, its Kin… the supreme rectitude of the Soul is that it direct its Act towards the Intellectual Principle; Its Restraint [] is its inward bending towards the intellectual principle; its fortitude is its being impassive in the likeness of that towards its gaze is set, Whose nature comports to impassivity which the Soul acquires by virtue and must acquire if it is not to be at the mercy of every state arising its less noble companion."[52]

"Hence it is clear that also the primitive subjection by virtue of which reason was subject to God, was not a merely natural gift, but a supernatural endowment of grace."[53] "Seek not to grow in knowledge chiefly for the sake of applause, and to enable you to dispute with others; but seek it for the benefit of your souls."[54] "No purifier equals knowledge, and in time the man of perfect discipline discovers this in his own spirit."[55]

Discipline and Freedom

"[M]an is free, in so far as he has the power of contradicting himself and his essential nature. Man is free even from his freedom; that is, he can surrender his humanity."[56]

> God made thee perfect, not immutable;
>
> And good he made thee, but to persevere
>
> He left it in thy power; ordain'd thy will
>
> By nature free, not overrul'd by fate
>
> Inextricable, or strict necessity:
>
> Our voluntary service he requires,
>
> Not our necessitated; such with him
>
> Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
>
> Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
>
> Willing or no, who will but what they must
>
> By destiny, and can no other choose?[57]

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."[58] "Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness,—to all knowledge, 'self-knowledge' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins."[59]

"'True virtue never appears so lovely as when it is most oppressed; and the divine excellency… is never exhibited with such advantage as when under the greatest trials; then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold, and upon this account is found to praise and honour and glory."[60] "Every man's foremost task is the actualization of his unique, unprecedented and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest, has already achieved."[61] "When we are in our spiritual body, others can actually see what our love and faith are really like, because in the spiritual world all of us are an embodiment of what we love, not only in face and body but also in speech and actions."[62]

"[W]hat really matters is those little marks or twists on the central, inside part of the soul which are going to turn it, in the long run, into a heavenly or a hellish creature."[63] "Loss of soul amounts to a tearing loose of part of one's nature; it is the disappearance and emancipation of a complex, which thereupon becomes a tyrannical usurper of consciousness, oppressing the whole man. It throws him off course and drives him to actions whose blind one-sidedness inevitably leads to self-destruction."[64] "Men are not in hell because God is angry with them; they are in wrath and darkness because they have done to the light, which infinitely flows forth from God, as that man does to the light of the sun, who puts out his own eyes."[65]

The Enemy

"With Artificial Intelligence, we are summoning the demon." *So says the enemy.*[66]

"I think AI will probably, most likely, lead to the end of the world, but in the meantime there will be great companies created with serious machine learning." *So says the enemy.*[67]

"I think we should be trying AI and that the alternative is total stagnation. If you don't have AI. Wow, there's just nothing going on." *So says the enemy.*[68]

"My prediction is that A.I. will persuade you that technology eating the universe is more beautiful." *So says the enemy.*[69]

"[D]evelopment of superhuman machine intelligence is probably the greatest threat to the continued existence of humanity." *So says the enemy.*[70]

"You would prefer the human race to endure, right?" "Uh… I don't know." *So says the enemy.*[71]

"[We] really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans." *So says the enemy.*[72]

"WHOEVER WINS AI, WINS!" *So says the enemy.*[73]

"Pledge allegiance to the world's most powerful computer / Simulation, it's the future." *So says the enemy.*[74]

"I don't see how anybody can be discouraged." *So says the enemy.*[75]

"[W]e believe the world should accept some bad things happening for the benefits of this technology…" *So says the enemy.*[76]

"The data centers are making an absolute fortune." *So says the enemy.*[77]

"Technology is the glory of human ambition and achievement, the spearhead of progress, and the realization of our potential." *So says the enemy.*[78]

"The concept of teaching a machine to learn… and then teaching it to teach… (or write AI) isn't so different from the concept of a holy trinity or a being achieving enlightenment after many lessons learned with varying levels of success and failure." *So says the enemy.*[79]

"Nothing human makes it out of the near future." *So says the enemy.*[80]

* * *

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."[81] "The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist."[82] "And Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God; and he commanded them, saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish."[83] "[T]he devil… abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."[84]

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."[85] "And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."[86] "[B]y every possible means he seeks to darken the minds of men and then offers them falsehood and deception in the guise of truth. Satan is a skillful imitator, and as genuine gospel truth is given the world in ever-increasing abundance, so he spreads the counterfeit coin of false doctrine."[87]

"[T]here are said to be disembodied spirits and forces, some of which aim for good, and some of which aim to destroy what is good… And AI is the perfect vector, the perfect machine to offer to a disembodied spirit. Never before has a malevolent spirit had a better tuned, high-powered way of destroying a great deal of what is beautiful, good, and true."[88] "Technology is not simply a tool. When it becomes the standard by which everything is judged, it begins to dictate what matters and what can be discarded, reducing creation to an object of exploitation and human beings to mere cogs in a system driven toward ever greater efficiency."[89]

"The pervasive technocratic paradigm in which we are immersed, and that is amplified by the digital revolution and AI, threatens to normalize an anti-human vision. In that vision, the fullness of life is equated with having more, reducing weakness, eliminating uncertainty and exerting total control. When efficiency becomes the ultimate measure of value, human beings are tempted to see themselves as a project to be optimized rather than as persons called to relationship and communion."[90]

"[I]f the artificial spirit comes into people, it leads them astray."[91] "People lose their peace of mind, their self-control, their powers of contemplation, and reflection

and turn outwards, becoming strangers to themselves, in a word mindless, impervious to the dictates of their intelligence."[92] "[W]here there are machines, there are bound to be machine worries; where there are machine worries, there are bound to be machine hearts. With a machine heart in your breast, you've spoiled what was pure and simple; and without the pure and simple, the life of the spirit knows no rest."[93] "The main danger that arises from machine intelligence is that human thinking will adapt to it and *itself* become *mechanical*."[94]

"We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning."[95] "Technology per se is not, of course, harmful, being the fruit of the reasoning and intellect of Man, who was formed in the image of God. But when, unrestrained and unbridled, it rushes headlong towards its destination, then it becomes Luciferous, though not bearing light but rather pitch darkness."[96] "Then the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum – not unreal, but simulacrum, that is to say never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference."[97]

"The artificial imitation of positive human communication – words of advice, empathy, friendship and even love… can [] be misleading, creating the illusion of a relationship with a real personal subject. When words are simulated, they do not build genuine relationships, but only their appearance. The artificial imitation of care or support can become particularly risky when it enters contexts where real relationships and emotional bonds are lacking. Here, the danger is not so much that a person may believe they are communicating with another person, but rather that they may gradually lose the very desire to form genuine human connections."[98]

"Artificial intelligence is incapable of thinking because it cannot access the totality that is thinking's point of departure. Artificial intelligence is wordless. The totality, as a semantic horizon, comprises more than the goals that guide artificial intelligence."[99] "[W]e must avoid the misconception of equating this type of 'intelligence' with that of human beings. These systems merely imitate certain functions of human intelligence… So-called artificial intelligences do not undergo experiences, do not possess a body, do not feel joy or pain, do not mature through relationships and do not know from within what love, work, friendship or responsibility mean. Nor do they have a moral conscience, since they do not judge good and evil, grasp the ultimate meaning of situations, or bear responsibility for consequences. They may imitate language, behavior and analytical skills, or even simulate empathy and understanding,

but they do not understand what they produce, for they lack the affective, relational and spiritual perspective through which human beings grow in wisdom."[100]

"Love – Eros – is the soul's striving for perfect knowledge. Thinking is an act of love… Artificial intelligence lacks the capacity for thinking simply because it does not have a *friend* or a *lover*. Eros is *alien* to it. It does not feel a *desire for the other*."[101] "[T]he traditionally valued qualities of depth, coherence, meaning, originality, and authenticity are evacuated or dissolved amid the random swirl of empty signals."[102]

"The essence of technology lies in enframing. Its holding sway belongs within destining. Since destining at any given time starts man on a way of revealing, man, thus under way, is continually approaching the brink of the possibility of pursuing and promulgating nothing but what is revealed in ordering, and of deriving all his standards on that basis. Through this the other possibility is blocked - that man might rather be admitted sooner and ever more primally to the essence of what is unconcealed and to its unconcealment, in order that he might experience as his essence the requisite belonging to revealing."[103] "In a world controlled by algorithms, the human being gradually loses the power to act, loses autonomy."[104]

"Artificial intelligence learns from the past. The future it computes is not a future in the proper sense. It is event-blind. Thinking, however, has the character of an event. It puts together something altogether other into the world… Artificial intelligence ultimately continues the same … All it does is make a choice between options that are given in advance, ultimately between 'one' and 'zero'."[105] "We deny that any part of creation, including any form of technology, should ever be used to usurp or subvert the dominion and stewardship which has been entrusted solely to humanity by God; nor should technology be assigned a level of human identity, worth, dignity, or moral agency."[106]

"They brought into being gold and silver, presents and money, iron and other metals and all things of this sort. And the people who were attracted were led astray into troubles and were greatly misled. And grew old experiencing no pleasure, and died finding no truth, never knowing the true God. This is the way that they enslaved all of creation, from the foundation of the world until now."[107] "The self-assertive human pride that prevails today sets as its aim not the cleansing of the heart, but the accumulation of a maximum of benefit and profit for the self, all of whose desires are considered legitimate and deserving to be immediately satisfied."[108] "We must, then,

avoid the 'Babel syndrome,' namely the idolatry of profit that sacrifices the weak, a uniformity that neutralizes differences, and the pretense that a single language – even a digital one – can translate everything, including the mystery of the person, into data and performance."[109] ""The *devaluation* of the world of men is in direct proportion to the *increasing value* of the world of things."[110]

"Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind."[111] "[T]here's something about the dignity of the human that is taken away when one allows the simulacrum of humanity to substitute for the real business of relationship."[112] "We deny that the use of AI is morally neutral. It is not worthy of man's hope, worship, or love."[113] "[T]he safety which is guaranteed by well-functioning mechanisms for the technical control of nature, by the refined psychological control of the person, by the rapidly increasing organizational control of society – this safety is bought at a high price: man, for whom all this was invented as a means, becomes a means himself in the service of means."[114] "Men have become the tools of their tools."[115] "The more machines there are to replace men, the more men there will be in society who are nothing but machines."[116] "[F]ear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."[117]

Spiritual Resistance

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."[118] "We derive the beginnings of what we may call the seeds of sin from those desires which are given to us naturally for our use. But when we indulge these to excess and offer no resistance to the first movements toward intemperance, then the hostile power, seizing the opportunity of this first offence, incites and urges on in every way, striving to extend the sins over a larger field."[119]

"Information creates the illusion of a series of events. Information feeds off of our attraction towards surprise. But the attraction does not last long; soon, there is a need for a new surprise. We are now in the habit of perceiving reality in terms of attraction and surprise."[120] "Sin creates a proclivity to sin; it engenders vice by repetition of the same acts. This results in perverse inclinations which cloud conscience and corrupt the concrete judgment of good and evil. Thus sin tends to reproduce itself and reinforce itself, but it cannot destroy the moral sense at its root."[121]

"Therefore we see here what an awful thing it is when the Devil begins to tempt a man. One lapse involves another lapse, and an apparently slight wrong brings about a prodigious lapse."[122] "My will the enemy held, and thence had made a chain for me, and bound me. For of a forward will, was a lust made; and a lust served, became custom; and custom not resisted, became necessity. By which links, as it were, joined together (whence I called it a chain) a hard bondage held me enthralled."[123]

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."[124] "Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer give birth to a star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming… Behold, I show you the last man. 'What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star? thus asks the last man, and he blinks.'"[125] "Man has become the slave of his creation. His number, and the arrangement of life as he lives it, have been driven by the machine on to a path where there is no standing still and no turning back."[126] "The digital screen determines our experience of the world and shields us from reality. The world is de-realized, de-reified and disembodied."[127]

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."[128] "And be not conformed to this

world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."[129] "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."[130] "It is very hard for evil to take hold of the unconsenting soul."[131]

"Restrain and spiritual vigilance are, for all those who come into the world, a weapon made ready…, one which abolishes the servitude of humanity and preserves our health and sovereignty as children of God."[132] "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."[133] "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."[134] "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."[135]

"In the era of artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us…, the splendor of which no machine can ever replace."[136]

> For God's sake, let us be men
>
> Not monkeys minding machines
>
> Or sitting with our tails curled
>
> While the machine amuses us...
>
> Monkeys with a bland grin on our faces.[137]

"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."[138] "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[139]

The Seven Affirmations

The first affirmation:	I believe generative AI is a spiritual evil.
The second affirmation:	I will not use generative AI.
The third affirmation:	I will not knowingly profit from the use of generative AI.
The fourth affirmation:	I will not rely on information or reasoning provided by generative AI.
The fifth affirmation:	I will not require others to use generative AI on my behalf.
The sixth affirmation:	I will discourage others from using generative AI.
The seventh affirmation:	I will speak out against the use of generative AI.

Statement on Sources

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“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Matthew 8:36