

**A PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION OF PLATO'S TRIPARTITE
SOUL AND PAUL'S TRICHOTOMY OF THE HUMAN NATURE.**

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BY

PASTOR JOSEPH A. FARAYOLA

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ABSTRACT

The study is a theoretical investigation examining Plato's tripartite soul and Paul's theology of trichotomy of the human nature or tripartite being.

Philosophical tools were used for the investigation which revealed that both conceptions are relevant for the understanding of the soul. Detailed explanations of Paul's trichotomy create some problems which tend to suggest that in the long run, the dualism of Plato and the Old Testament is reasonable. If the body at death returns to the earth and the spirit of man returns to its author, what becomes of the soul? Separating the soul from the spirit can make some intelligibility but thinking of the destinations of these two concepts presents some theological problem.

The author calls on theologians and scholars to show more interest in researching into the concept of the soul with a view to providing thorough understanding of this all important and basic concept in Christian religion.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the term soul is a basic concept in Christianity, and since its understanding is essential to understanding some other key teachings in Christianity such as sin, salvation, resurrection, etc. It is recommended that theologians, Bible scholars should give its study more attention with a view to creating sound foundation in understanding some core lessons in Christianity and wipe off some erroneous teachings concerning the soul, the spirit or the nature of man.

D. CONCLUSION

The Yoruba conception of the nature of man in its tripartite form: ara, iye, emi, Sigmund Freud's Tripartite structure of the mind: Id, ego, superego, the Aquinas tripartite functioning of the soul: knowledge, appetitive, and volitive have similarities comparable with Plato's tripartite conception of the soul.

Paul's trichotomy gave three parts but in the examination of the functions of the three parts the functions are the same with the functioning of the tripartite soul of Plato. Apart from the issue of salvation which has no direct relevance in Plato's philosophy, it is believed that his philosophy has influenced the thought system in understanding of the human nature especially the human soul. The difficulties created by trichotomy seems to be absent in dualist conception of man. This

author believes that every explanation that may be offered by the theory of trichotomy as in Paul's theology may also be neatly offered in Plato tripartite soul.

Paul had knowledge of Greek philosophy and his thoughts must have been influenced. Education at Paul's time was essentially philosophy which denoted the sum total of human knowledge having been tutored by Gamaliel, Paul must have been influenced by the Greek conception of man.

Besides, Paul uses interchangeably the term soul and spirit to the extent that the tendency was high for him to fall back to the dualistic posture of the Old Testament.

Plato's tripartite soul and Paul's trichotomy of human nature are quite relevant, meaningfully related and should be further critically studied.