



The Superior Man



DON MACDONALD

PREVIEW

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Preview Version

About the Preview

"The Superior Man" is an introduction to spiritualism. While many people now openly believe in spirits and things metaphysical, they may still not understand much about them. What is a spirit, and what is a spiritualist? This book is a personal take on spiritualism as philosophy, and discusses how it may profoundly affect a person's outlook on life. While the concepts may be surprising or difficult for some to accept, they are presented in a lighthearted way, with a sincere desire to affect readers positively - and by extension the world in which we all live.

This preview version of "The Superior Man" is offered at no cost, and contains the foreword and first three chapters. I believe this should be sufficient to help people decide if they like the book or not.

As of this writing, the book is not finished. I have nonetheless been encouraged to present the preview version of it now, with hope that some interest in the project may be generated. Read more about it at mac-don.com/book/.

My sincere thanks for your interest,

Don MacDonald

Foreword

This is a book about spiritualism. I'll tell you how it came about. I was told by a medium many years ago that I was going to write a book. I was vaguely surprised; I knew I had some writing ability, but my ambition was mainly toward music. Since I had no idea what to write about, I had no choice but to put the book project off indefinitely. I did think it would probably not be fiction, but at the same time I didn't feel knowledgeable enough about any factual subject.

Eventually I was made aware of a book that had been published on the subject of how to murder someone and get away with it. Thoroughly appalled by this, I began to realize that I wanted to do the exact opposite. That is to say, write a book about how to do right, instead of wrong. A kind of manual to life, pretentious as that may sound, particularly coming from someone who still isn't very knowledgeable. However, my viewpoint would be that of the spiritualist, and a book intended for "ordinary people" might not require me to be the master of all things occult. In any case, I accepted that if I was going to write a book, this would be the subject.

When I was young, mediums were hardly taken seriously, and spirits were either feared or discredited - frequently both. Times have changed in this respect, but even as spiritism is on the rise, the basic concepts of spiritualism are lost in a New Age fog. While people today openly believe in spiritual healing, mediumism, clairvoyance and so on, those same people may have little insight into the philosophy behind these concepts. There would seem to be a need for some "spiritual basics", so I wanted to explain spiritualism in simple terms, if possible, and then try to make it practical, somehow. Most people need ideas to be useful, and I agree with them. What's the point of philosophy, if it's all talk and mental discombobulation?

Of course, this book and all ideas therein are presented from my personal viewpoint, I see no reason to do otherwise. I'm sure readers will make up their own minds about things as they are presented, just as I myself have decided what makes sense to me. I think it is as important to be critical, as it is to have an open mind. Much of what I now believe in, I once discounted. From a developmental standpoint, it is similarly as important to believe as to disbelieve, or indeed, to be right as to be wrong. Either way, you'll learn.

The title "The Superior Man" may require explanation. The expression comes from *I Ching*, the ancient Chinese Book of Change. There it is used to indicate the wise course of action. "The Superior Man fords the great river" for example, means it's a good time to take a trip. In other words, the Superior Man is us when we're getting it right.



1 Definitions

The textbook definition of "spiritualism" is, basically, belief in the existence of a spirit world. OK, so far so good, but I find that doesn't really say a lot. Not only does it not address the reasoning, it is also broad enough to encompass all philosophies and religions that say there's more to life than the material. So I will substitute a personal, narrower definition: "*a belief in reincarnation of the spirit, according to the laws of Karma*". Now, there's a mouthful, and yet, that probably still applies to many philosophies and religions.

I am not a religious man, so I use the word "spiritualism" to describe the *philosophy* in which I believe. The difference between philosophy and religion, as I see it, is that religion involves worship. Philosophy does not, so "my" spiritualism is non-religious. Philosophies and religions the world over have much in common, as well as their differences, and many people specialize in comparing them. In this book I will stay away, as much as possible, from such comparison, only hoping to present spiritualism as I have come to know it.

"Karma" is a word closely associated with religion, but that is only natural, after all. Spiritual and philosophic concepts float across belief systems all the time. "Good karma" and "bad karma" have become common expressions, but I see Karma not as the moral balance of one's actions, but as a set of rules governing the spiritual path, all fearfully neutral.

"Reincarnation", as many people will know, is the belief that a person's spirit lives on when the body dies, and is born again in a different body. I have found that many people believe in reincarnation instinctively, even when they have few other articulated beliefs.

And "spirit", of course, is that which is not of the body, the essence of a person. The True You.

In the coming chapters we will explore these basic concepts, and try to piece them together. While reincarnation is one cornerstone of spirituality, it is only the starting point of our philosophical journey. I may as well caution the reader now, that there is no room for narrow-mindedness or prejudice here. Although commonplace in the world around us, they are the stumbling blocks of spiritual development.

The purpose of this book is to make advanced concepts easier to understand, especially for those who as yet have little experience with what is called the occult. While much maligned, the word "occult" really only means that which is hidden. When I call myself an occultist, it doesn't mean anything sinister at all, but only that I have an interest in spiritualism, astrology, mediumism, and such. In other words, things which concern a deeper level of truth, hidden from "everyday life".

Invariably, the spiritualist will encounter people who believe only in what occultists call the mundane world. People who will say there are no such things as spirits, and that when we die we're dead. Period. They can be quite adamant about it, as if they're trying to convince themselves. The spirit knows better, of course, and all people have one whether they're ready to believe it or not. For reasons which will become obvious, spiritualists should never argue with such people. Insight comes to us when we're ready for it, and not before.



2 Meaning

Human beings should perhaps be called "thinking beings" instead, because our ability to contemplate the abstract appears to be unique to us. The quest for meaning is the ultimate in abstract thinking, and pretty much every one of us is on it, to some extent. We wouldn't have philosophy and religion if people weren't constantly asking the "why" question. *Why am I me, why is this happening to me, why is the world the way it is.* It's all one big "why".

Obviously this is important, or we wouldn't be worrying about it. If you have a dog or cat, you'll know for sure their concerns are more basic, but we humans seem to be born with a need to *know*. I was fortunate to be exposed to spiritualism early, yet I remember being asked about it and already knowing the answer. "Don, a lot of people believe they go to heaven or hell when they die, but I don't think you believe that. What do you think life is all about?" I must have been eight years old or something. Now here I am writing a book about what I believe. How about that.

Over the decades I slowly expanded my esoteric knowledge, eventually including astrology, which continues to be my main point of reference, particularly in understanding why people are different from each other and do the things they do. This is not a book about astrology, but if I occasionally make reference to it, you'll know why. People *are* different, and some think a lot and write books and such, while others are more practically oriented and perhaps only ponder the eternal questions occasionally, when they are not busy fixing cars or building houses or something. (If ever you get frustrated with such practical people, remember how good it is you have a nice, dry, warm place to sit and think.)

For a lot of people, it may require some reverse thinking to figure out the "why", perhaps late in life when experiences have been gathered, both good and bad, amplifying the question. Did my life, and everything in it, just happen, or was there some reason? What could that reason be? Was it all random, when it seems so clear at times that my life had to be just the way it was? That there was a *meaning* to it? If I had known at the start what I know now, would things have been different? And that is the answer, of course, right there. It doesn't really require figuring out, as much as realizing it. There *was* a meaning, because the person I am now is not the same as the person I was. Along the way, I *learned*.

And that's what I said in answer so long ago, that the purpose of life is to learn. Many people know it instinctively, and I was one of them. Good, that's it then. Got it. Problem solved. Well, not really, but once accepted, many pieces do start fitting together. The next logical question, once "I am here to learn" has been realized, is "who am I?", or perhaps even, "what is I?". Now, the answer to that is more complicated, and once common perceptions begin to crumble, "here" is also not what it seems. After that things get really interesting.

I realize I probably lost some folks already. Such is the nature of spiritualism, that in order to accept it, you have to have "lived it" first. How can anyone really know something without having experienced it? I can say "if you fall down, you'll hurt yourself", but nobody really knows what that's about until they've actually fallen. A sense of imagination is helpful, so we don't have to experience absolutely everything in order to function, but true knowledge always comes at a price, and it's called experience. This is the very reason why certain sciences are occult, why spiritualism is labelled esoteric. You have to reach a certain level of inner knowledge, true knowledge, or what we call wisdom, before the concepts make any sense to you. It doesn't matter how smart or keen you are, because *wisdom can only be gathered from experience*. Call it karmic law number one, if you will.

However, this book isn't about uncovering profound spiritual secrets, after all. I'm hoping to make just enough sense to most people to keep it interesting, I suppose, and readers will take away that which they need.



3 Being Different

I am not you. Most people can understand that statement. You are you, because you have your own life which is different from mine. Maybe you are a plumber and I'm a policeman. Maybe I have children and you don't. Maybe I live in China and you live in Greece. People are different in endless ways. But what if they weren't? What if we lived in the same place, and did the exact same things? Would that make sense? I suppose if we were microbes living in a pool of water it would make sense, but in all higher life forms individuality is a big deal, and in humans more so than in any other animal. There has to be a reason for that.

In a litter of puppies each is an individual, certainly. But when the puppies grow into mature dogs, they won't become plumbers and policemen. Usually they all will be happy enough chasing a stick. Similarly, one goose, zebra or dolphin isn't very different from another goose, zebra or dolphin. Human individuality is of a much higher order. A lot has been said about how clever humans are with their hands or to have developed verbal skills, but what makes us truly unique is our uniqueness from each other. Not a physical uniqueness, although obviously there are variations in appearance, but the immense *personal* difference between any two individuals.

The common explanation for diversity is genetics, but in investigating spiritualism we must look beyond the mundane. Whatever the physical reasons for a phenomenon may be, we are searching for the deeper meaning of things, often called the *metaphysical*. To the occultist, it is, believe it or not, the *natural* realm. You see, it depends on your point of view. But more about that later.

While personality is a commonly used concept, astrology makes a distinction between personality and individuality which I find very useful. 'Individuality' is the

word used to describe the inherent qualities of a person, while 'personality' is what you project to other people. If you think about it, those two are rarely the same. When you meet someone new, the first things you notice are appearance, manners, and so on. Only when you get to know someone better are you connecting with the individual beneath the surface. That's not to say personality is unimportant, far from it. It is that by which we perceive each other, and as much a part of us as anything else. In the context of spiritualism, however, individuality would seem to represent a person's spirit.

If we accept that the purpose of life is to learn, then how does that learning come about? You guessed it. Diversity. If we are all different, then we can learn from each other. And if the goal is spiritual development, then various levels of such development must be in evidence. In other words, how can we strive to be wiser, if there aren't any wiser people we can learn from? So, we have to be diverse in this way as well. It's quite the puzzle, as you can see. How is this all made to happen? We have arrived at the concept of reincarnation.

Reincarnation is a quite profound subject, really. If you only believe in what your senses tell you - and you only have the usual five - it will not fit into your world at all, because it hinges on the spirit. Most people can't see spirits. Therefore many only believe in death. Death is, after all, visible. I don't suppose they actually walk up to you and say "hello, I believe in death", but, it's the truth, isn't it? Given a choice, I'm sure everyone would rather believe in an eternal spirit, but we do not choose what to believe. Some may argue that they "choose to believe", but isn't that an oxymoron? A true belief - I believe - comes from one's personal source of inner wisdom. And wisdom can only be gathered from experience. I said that already, didn't I?

This is why a true spiritualist would never preach or proselytize. Each of us will find our own wisdom in our own way and when we are ready for it. We each have what is called a spiritual path. We can offer each other guidance, help and comfort, but ultimately the spirit must learn for itself. The mechanism of reincarnation allows the spirit to experience life from different perspectives over many lifetimes. This is why we have the expression "old soul", indicating someone who has lived many lives already, and "young soul", meaning the opposite. You will notice, however, that I generally avoid using the word "soul", as it means different things to different people. "Spirit" will do nicely for our purposes.

You see now the importance of being different, and it's a very pertinent lesson, because sameness is easier. The ignorant tend to frown on those who are different. The greater the ignorance, or if you like, lack of wisdom, the less a person can understand other people and circumstances which differ from his own. All human conflict stems from this.