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Siger of Brabant
On the Intellective Soul

[Chapter VII: Whether the Intellective Soul Is Multiplied in Accord with the Multiplication of Human Bodies]

As to the seventh point raised above, viz. whether the intellective soul is multiplied in accord with the multiplication of human bodies, it must be carefully considered insofar as such pertains to the philosopher and can be grasped by human reason and experience, by seeking the mind of the philosophers in this matter rather than the truth since we are proceeding philosophically. For it is certain according to that truth which cannot deceive that intellective souls are multiplied with the multiplication of human bodies. However, certain philosophers have thought otherwise.

According to philosophy, then: 1. A nature which is separated from matter in its being is not multiplied with the multiplication of matter. But according to the Philosopher the intellective soul enjoys being which is separated from matter, as we have already seen. Therefore, it should not be multiplied either with the multiplication of matter or with the multiplication of human bodies.

This reasoning is confirmed as follows. To differ in species, as man differs from ass, is to differ by reason of form. But to differ in number while belonging to the same species, as horse differs from horse, is to differ by reason of matter. For the form of horse is found in different parts of matter. Because of this it is asserted that what exists apart from any principle causing number or difference or multiplication lacks number, difference, and multiplication. But if the intellective soul enjoys being which is separated from matter then it exists apart from any principle that causes difference and number and multiplication of individuals within a species. Therefore, there do not seem to be many intellective souls within the same species.

2. No nature that subsists in itself and exists apart from matter and is thus individuated of itself can admit of numerically distinct individuals. But the intellective soul subsists in itself and exists apart from matter and is thus individuated of itself. Therefore it cannot admit of plurality of individuals within the same species.

Proof for the major: If it were of the essence of man to be this man or to be Socrates, just as there could not be many men each of whom would be Socrates or this man, neither could

there be many men [at all]. Now if man subsisted in himself and apart from singulars, he would be individuated of his essence. Therefore every form that subsists in itself and has no materiality is individuated of its essence. And since nothing individuated can be common to many, no form enjoying being independently from matter can be common to many individuals. According to this reasoning, then, there is numerically only one intelligence in each species of intelligences separated from matter, a point on which all the philosophers have agreed. Wherefore, in holding that the ideas and species of material things are separated from matter, Plato posited only one individual per species.

[. . .]

But someone might say that since there is an intellective soul in me God can make another like it and thus there will be more than one. To this it is to be replied that God cannot make that which is self-contradictory and repugnant. In like manner, God cannot produce many men, each of whom would be Socrates. For then he would make them to be many men and one man, many men and not many men, one man and not one man. But if the intellective soul is individuated of its essence and subsistent in itself and thus like Socrates, to make another intellective soul identical in species with one now existing would be to make it different from and the same as the first one. For in things separated from matter the individual is the species itself. Therefore, another individual within the species would be something contrary under that individual, which is impossible.

3. Something white can be divided into parts not because it is white but because it is quantified and continuous. But if there were something white that was neither quantified nor continuous, it would not be divisible into many white things. Nor would a separate and subsistent whiteness be divisible into many whitenesses. Just as that which is white is divisible into many white things because it is quantified and continuous, so too, if numerically distinct white things are actually found within the same species this is because of the actual division of the quantified and continuous thing in which the whiteness is present. From this it is argued that a nature whose being is separated from the quantified and continuous in such fashion that it is neither quantified nor continuous nor exists in anything quantified or continuous is unable to admit of many individuals within the same species, because of the absence of a cause to multiply and render distinct the various individuals of that nature within that species. But the intellective soul exists apart from the quantified and continuous and is not itself quantified or continuous as the Philosopher [Aristotle] proves in *De anima* I. . . . Therefore, since the intellect exists apart from the quantified and continuous and is not itself quantified and continuous, it will not admit of many individuals within one species. For such plurality and multiplication arises by division of that which is continuous.

4. The Philosopher [Aristotle] says in *Metaphysics* XII, that if there were many individuals [heavens] of the same species there would be many first movers of the same species. And he notes that then the first mover would have matter because that which is one in species but many in number has matter. But if the intellect is impassible, and shares nothing in common with anything else, and is separated from the body and a potency without matter, as the Philosopher holds, then that same Philosopher would not be likely to think that it is one in species and many in number but rather that it is only one in number.

5. According to the mind of the Philosopher an infinity of men have already existed. But if intellective souls are multiplied with the multiplication of human bodies, the Philosopher would have to hold that souls are infinite in number, which does not seem to be the case.

In the light of the above we must consider what kind of thing can be multiplied and predicated of numerically different members of the same species. And we must also determine how the various members of a species differ and in what respects.

Concerning the first point: It is to be noted that nothing that is singular and individuated can be multiplied into or predicated of many individuals within the same species. For then the singular and the universal would not differ. And since a subsistent form is numerically one and singular of its nature, it is clear that it cannot be multiplied into many individuals within the same species or predicated of them. That which is composed of form and determined matter as existing in this place or that is singular, like the entity named Socrates. Therefore, for the same reason Socrates can neither be multiplied into many nor predicated of them. Nor can the same material form as received in determined matter be multiplied into many or predicated of many. And in general, since everything that exists does so as a singular (granted that certain things may be understood or spoken of universally), no being viewed as it exists can be multiplied into many individuals within its species or predicated of them. Only a material form considered in the abstract or something composed of form and indetermined matter, as that which is signified by composite universals such as man or horse, can be multiplied into many within the same species and predicated of them.

Concerning the second point: It is to be said or understood that two individuals of the same species do not differ in form. As found in them form is not divided according to its substance. Of itself the matter of this individual is not divided from the matter of that individual. Rather one individual differs from another of the same species through this, that one possesses its form under determined dimensions or under a determined position as located here, while the other possesses the form of its species as located there. The form as found in the two individuals is not rendered other by diversity according to the form itself and its substance, for such diversity of form results in difference in species. Rather both individuals possess the one form, which is undivided as form. Nor should anyone wonder at us for saying that the form in each individual is one by that unity which follows upon its substance and yet that it is found here and elsewhere. When we understand a form to be one by the unity that follows upon its substance we do not have in mind something taken individually, but rather according to species, since a material form is not individuated of itself. It is not impossible for that which is one in species to be found in different individuals and to occupy different positions, thus being found here and elsewhere. . . . And just as form found in individuals is not divided as form either directly or by way of consequence, so too, neither is matter. It is not divided of itself, but is divided because quantified things are located here and elsewhere.

But there are weighty arguments according to which the intellectual soul must be multiplied with the multiplication of human bodies, and authorities can also be cited for this view. Thus Avicenna, Algazel, and Themistius maintain this. Themistius also holds that the agent intellect, taken as illuminating and as illuminated, is multiplied even though there is only one [supreme] illuminating intellect. All the more so does he mean that the possible intellect is multiplied.

Again, there are arguments for this view. If there were only one intellect for all men, when one knows then all would know. And one would not know while another did not. If to imagine is not the same as to understand, granted that the man who understands has phantasms, which the ignorant man lacks, this will not account for the fact that he knows more than the other. For the intellect in which actual understanding takes place is no more his than the ignorant man's, unless the position is changed.

For the sake of discussion someone might say that the one man knows and the other does not for this reason: that the act of intellection takes place by reason of one unique agent or one unique intellect operating in the man who knows, but not in the man who does not. Thus we described above how man understands or how the act of understanding may be attributed to man himself, namely, because the action of an agent united to matter is attributed to the whole composite. In the act of understanding the intellect unites itself to the one who knows and not to the one who does not know because it derives knowledge from the phantasms [of the knower]. Thus one man knows while another remains ignorant, not because the act of imagining on the part of one is greater than the act of understanding on the part of the other, nor because the intelligible species is found in the body of one rather than in the body of the other (for it exists apart), nor because they use different intellects in understanding (as the present position maintains), but because the act of understanding takes place by reason of the intellect, which is united to the body of one in operating but not to the body of the other.

But if someone should say this, then the argument may be developed in another way. Operations may be distinguished either by reason of the agent, or by reason of the time at which they occur. Thus if both you and I see the same object at the same time, the acts of sight are different [by reason of the agent]. If someone sees a white and a black object with one and the same eye, the acts of sight are different by reason of the object. If I see something white and then after some time see the same white object, the acts of sight differ by reason of time. Therefore, if two men understand the same intelligible object at the same time and if this takes place by means of one and the same intellect, this man's act of understanding will be the same as that man's act of understanding, which seems absurd.

Again, the Philosopher holds that the intellect is in potency to intelligible species and receptive of these species and is itself without species. But if there is only one intellect then it will always be filled with species and thus there will be no need for the agent intellect. Therefore, because of these difficulties and certain others, I acknowledge that I myself have been in doubt for quite some time both as to what should be held in the light of natural reason about this point and as to what the Philosopher thought about it. In such doubt one must hold fast to the faith, which surpasses all human reasoning.