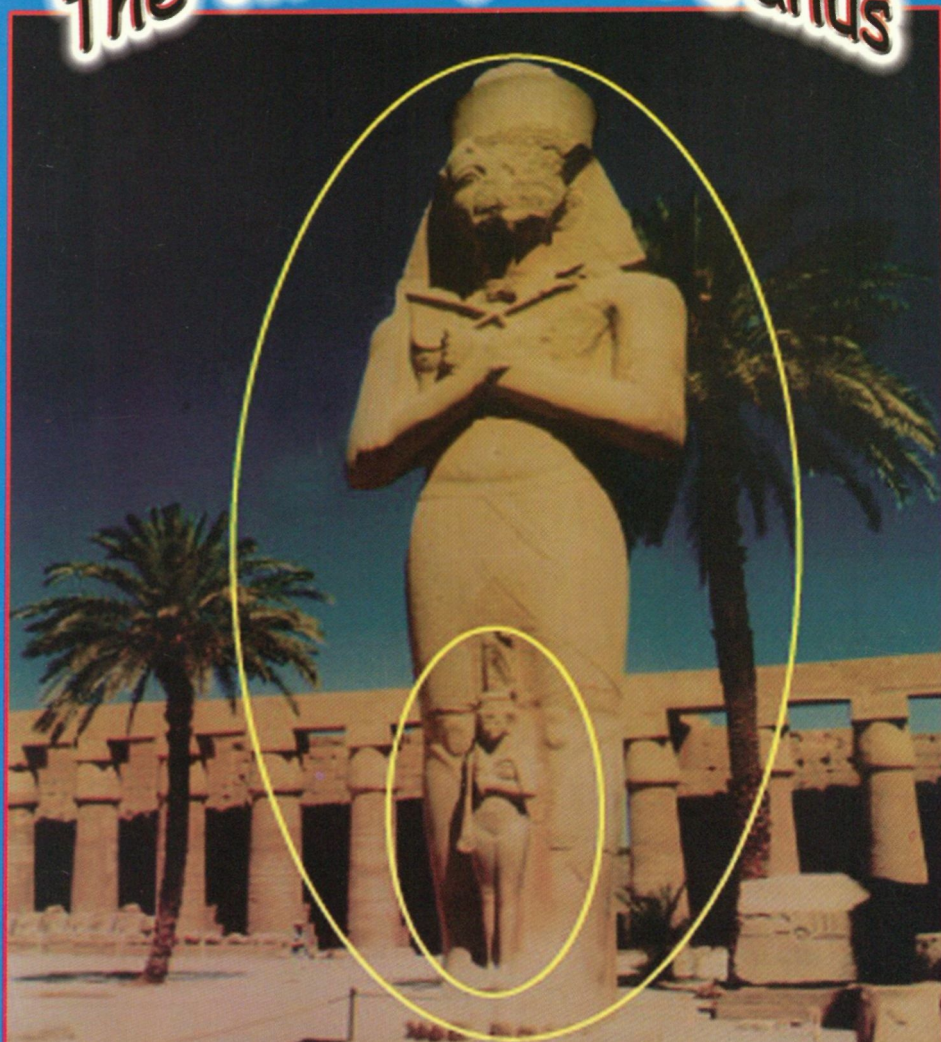


ESOTERIC PSYCHOLOGY

The Theosophical Janus



Blavatsky Lecture 2008
by JOHN S. GORDON

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ESOTERIC PSYCHOLOGY - The Theosophical Janus

H. P. Blavatsky, as we know, at least once remarked that “Theosophy is not for dumb skulls!” By that, as her writings clearly demonstrate, she meant that the operative principles behind this all-embracing form of wisdom-philosophy have to be studied carefully and followed in practice before it can even begin to be properly understood. However, those principles are not to be taken on board like some religious ritual, driven by blind faith and a happy assumption that somebody else will take the ultimate responsibility for explaining their full significance. What Theosophy is and how it works cannot really be understood other than through direct experience of the principles behind the operation of consciousness; and as consciousness itself is regarded by the cutting edge of modern science as the next major frontier to be crossed, it is this subject which I propose to address today – although not perhaps in the manner which an orthodox scientist might adopt.

As regards the nature of this talk, let me preface it with a prior word of warning. Consciousness is not a straightforward subject to address because it deals fundamentally with the manipulation of what appears to be an almost totally abstract quality of matter. However, we humans possess the power to discriminate between different qualities of consciousness and can thus learn – if we try hard enough – to develop the capacity to recognise and use subjective matter of often considerable subtlety in an intelligent manner. But this capacity is only achieved by sustained effort, through a marriage of both inward and outward activities, involving meditation and observational objectivity. However, most human beings in their thought processes usually only use subjective matter of very low quality and their concentration is generally poor – so they consequently only generate weak and poor quality ideas, ideals and perceptions – as is evident in much so-called ‘modern art’. What I am going to try to do in this talk, therefore, is

to explore with you the functional rationale behind the quality of matter which we use in our consciousness; and, to begin with I am going to suggest to you that thought itself is not what we commonly believe it to be. As regards the ‘theosophical Janus’ in the title of the talk, most of you will be aware that Janus was the dual-faced Roman god who, standing at the crux of the winter solstice, simultaneously looked forward and backward in time. I leave you to draw your own conclusions regarding this metaphor, once you have listened to this talk. However, in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, there is an interesting aside by the Mahatma KH who expresses his irritation at the misleading clumsiness of the words ‘Past, Present and Future’.¹



The image of Janus taken from a coin, probably 2nd century B. C.

Bearing in mind that we use these terms constantly in order to define our mutual human experience by reference to time and space, such a view might appear somewhat strange and even illogical; but there is a very definite and straightforward logic to it, particularly if we bear in mind Plato’s axiom that “All is recollection” – preceded by Socrates’ paradoxical observation to the effect that one cannot teach anyone something which they do not already know.

Simply put, the kosmos is itself the expression of Universal Memory, the storehouse of the Universal Mind – of which our own consciousness is but a partial expression. All of this is in turn supported by the statement in the Graeco-Egyptian *Hermetica* that we must conceive of the omniverse as existing within the Mind-consciousness of an Intelligence beyond all possible conception.² The essence of that idea is of course one with which all theosophists should be familiar, namely that there is an universality of existence – an all-being of spiritual essence and substance within the Oversoul of our local universe (governed by our Solar Logos), over which Parabrahm (Universal Law) has the absolute and controlling influence. Thus we are but participants in a gigantic mental process of which we, as yet, have little understanding. However, the journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step . . .

Now in order to understand the nature and development of human thought in any world period, whether past, present or future, one must first logically understand the way in which the Mind principle itself works. If there is really an universality of knowledge in the kosmos, the sole issues related to its understanding must be those of accessibility and interpretive capacity on the part of the seeker. That in turn means that any true seeker must first be able to formulate their enquiries in such a way that the Universal Memory will automatically provide an intelligible and useful answer to their enquiry. So what exactly are the pre-requisites of faculty which the seeker requires in order to engage intelligently upon his or her quest? Perhaps the very first thing that we need to understand is how to observe and to listen. But a further word of due caution; for this involves the *absolute* requirement to bring under complete control our reactive tendencies towards like and dislike. As long as these stand between us and our experience, we shall learn nothing of any real value. Nor shall we be able to maintain our focus. In relation to understanding consciousness, we must first learn to treat all experience coming our way – whether good or bad – as our teacher. And we must learn to do so without complicating matters by any form of reaction or complaint, whether spoken or unspoken.

Somewhat paradoxically perhaps, the second thing that we need to learn is how to define priorities. However, these are not *personal* priorities. If we are going to learn, we have to engage with knowledge on its own terms and follow wherever it leads, no matter how uncomfortable the results of that might turn out. In other words, we have to understand that there are natural sequences and obstacles in subjective Nature and it is only by acknowledging these that we come to a direct perception of the principle of shifting context which underlies all real knowledge. When we appreciate context in this way, we can begin to define relationships. When we can define relationships in due context, we begin to perceive that Nature is naturally hierarchical and always dualistically complementary in its techniques of self-presentation. When we acknowledge the universally operative principle of hierarchy, we understand the corresponding factor of limitation and when we understand limitation, we begin to appreciate relative value and the true extent of our own existing range of knowledge – and ignorance.

Now you might ask, if there is nothing but Universal Memory, how can there in reality be any limitations within it? Surely these are nothing but illusions? Well, illusions they might perhaps be; but that does not mean to say they have no existence. To understand why, we have to go back to the beginning for a moment. As we are told by the Sacred Wisdom tradition, in the first stage of the process of Creation there is nothing but Universal (and thus homogeneous) Spirit which even pre-exists the duality of spirit and matter. At this stage, all Memory and Knowledge in our local universe (as in our own soul) remain completely undifferentiated as *Akasa* which is itself the root essence of all possible knowledge. Yet something causes it to differentiate into discrete and organised forms, involving hierarchically organised sequences which have interactive relationships with each other. What exactly is that something?

Well, when trying to understand something universal in application, it helps to understand first of all how our own consciousness works from its own general state of relaxed non-differentiation. After all, remember the old adage: “Man know thyself and thou wilt know all else.” So how does our consciousness work when we are trying to think creatively or scientifically? Well first of all, we isolate that portion of our consciousness within which we intend to generate an idea. This follows Plato’s statement that the first stage of Creation involves asceticism or isolation – and it can only be achieved by the use of the faculty of imagination. The same principle is found allegorically depicted in the Vedic tradition where *Siva Natarajah* [Fig. 1] – often referred to as ‘the Great Ascetic’ – is found dancing on the waters of Universal Space, surrounded by the flames of his own alter ego, *Agni*.

But if nothing exists but Universal Memory, what is Imagination? Is it in any way different? Of course not. That would be philosophically illogical. The answer to the conundrum lies in the nature of the separation and inter-communication of spirit. When spirit acts as ideation in



Figure 1
**Siva
Natarajah**

response to Divine Necessity, it necessarily does so as a group; and to that group of spirits which possess an instinctively cohesive sense of relationship and function, esoteric philosophy gives the name 'soul'. The soul is thus the first principle of phenomenal existence and, very importantly, as Blavatsky confirms, it is esoterically synonymous with the words 'cell' and 'atom', all of their associated forms being spheroidal – the simplest form in Nature.³

The soul is thus a composite entity which contains a field full of the essences of potential existence and knowledge⁴ and it was thus depicted in ancient times as the egg coiled around by the serpent. [FIG. 2] But from

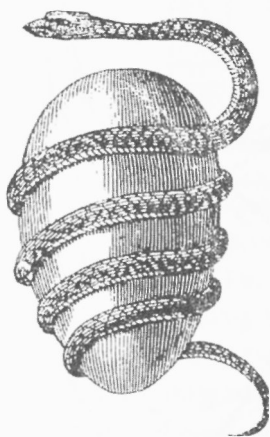


Figure 2

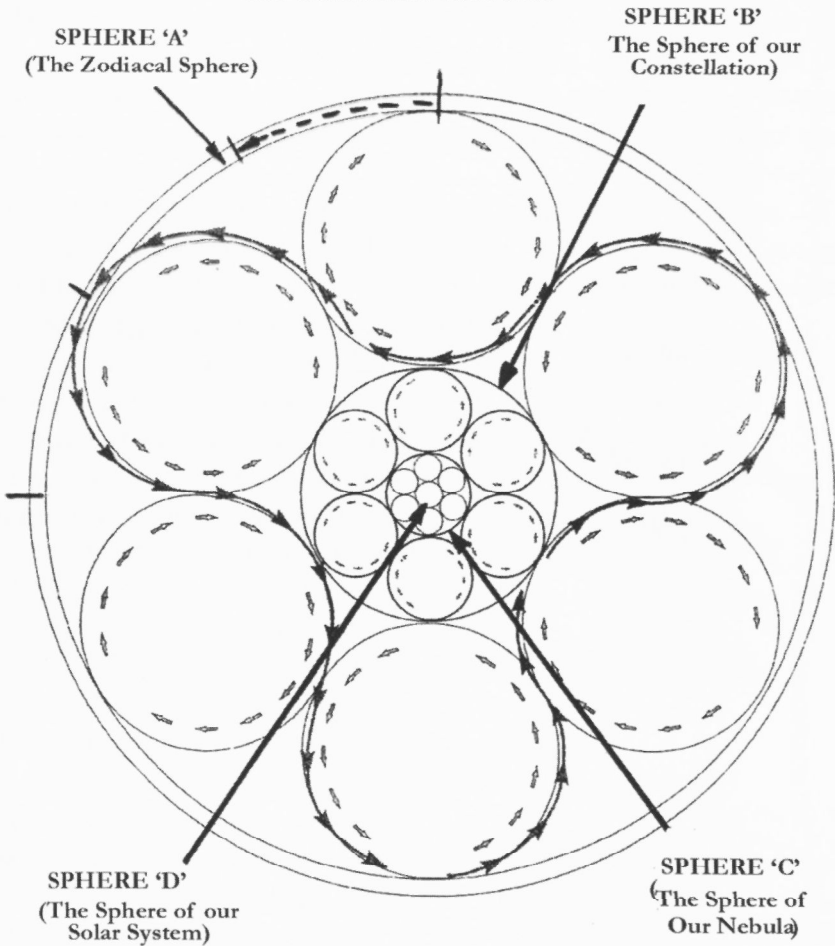
The Orphic Egg - from Bryant's
"An Analysis of Ancient Mythology"

where comes the impulse to generate this field, which we recognise as one of consciousness? Well, the answer is to be found again in the *Hermetica* which tells us that kosmos is concentrically organised.⁵ In other words, the soul is itself the microcosmic emanation of a greater, parent Oversoul. In the same way, the cell in the human body is itself the primal emanation of our own terrestrial soul, which is itself a cell emanated from the body of the World (or planetary) Oversoul, this latter itself being a cell primordially generated from the macrocosmic Oversoul of our solar system. And so on. The sevenfold sequence

involved here is as shown in this next graphic. [FIG. 3]

What takes place in the concentric sequence is that an *inward* emanation takes place from a greater Oversoul, thereby generating a partial reflection of itself within the lesser mass of matter which it contains. By virtue of the Oversoul representing the field of a superior Mind-state, this same emanation is regarded as causal. In Theosophical terms, it is synonymous with Fohat the intelligent kosmic electricity which, as *The Secret Doctrine* tells us, "digs holes in Space",⁶ thereby

Figure 3
The Concentric Universe



generating a microcosmic counterpart, which then goes on to do exactly the same. This, I suggest, is the origin of the serpent with a head at both ends of its body found in the Egyptian tradition. [FIG. 4] Here the double-headed serpent is held by the goddess Sekhmet, who is represented as the wife or shakti of the Creator-god Ptah who, out of his own nature, generates the 'crystal sphere' (i.e the Oversoul-sphere') of the world-



Figure 4: **The Goddess Sekmet**

scheme-to-be. The Egyptian name *Ptah*, by the way, is phonetically and factually synonymous with the name *Buddha* – that is to say, the *Dhyani-Buddha* of *esoteric* Buddhism, akin to the Vedic Krishna who, in the Bhagvad Gita, is represented as saying: “At the beginning of the cycle I generate the universe out of myself. At the end of it, I withdraw it all back into myself.”⁷

The biblical story of Genesis allegorically tells us of the same tradition. Lucifer, the chief of all the archangels is represented as

answering the challenge of Michael “Who shall be alike unto (i.e. equal to) God?” by answering that *he* would. But Michael is the Lord of the Hosts of Heaven, representing the hierarchies of the *local* Universal Memory. Lucifer, ‘Son of the Morning’ is, I suggest, representative of the kosmic and the human Imagination – that which is willing to go beyond the existing sphere of limitation. But in taking up the challenge, Lucifer – like us – is first of all forced to create an exoteric world-system, based on thought, which he can use as a foundation for expressing his conceptual self-expression, only thereby being able to mount to a higher form and forum of consciousness. He is thus allegorically depicted as being thrown down into the Underworld of Sheol ‘in a blaze of sparks’ – a story completely misunderstood by Christian theology which has interpreted his ‘fall’ as that of the ‘Devil’.

There is a direct parallel to this in Gnosticism. To the Gnostics of Alexandria and elsewhere, the lesser soul-being generated by the Oversoul to create a lower world scheme was regarded as a ‘Demiurge’ (a secondary Creator)⁸ – comprising a composite hierarchy of archangelic spirits, such as the *Ah-hi* of *The Secret Doctrine*. Because this Demiurge, in one sense, ‘holds captive’ the ‘sparks’ of kosmic Imagination emanated from the

greater Oversoul, it was mistakenly regarded by the Gnostics as ‘evil’, thereby creating a completely distorted philosophy of the supposed ‘fight’ between Good and Evil. That then, for over a thousand years, tried to impose itself upon already existing other distortions of ancient esotericism promulgated by Christian, Jewish and Islamic theologians – a very real case of the ‘blind leading the blind’ which still retains its potency even today in mainstream religion.

Even in esoteric Judaism, we find yet another distortion in the same field which has led to the generation of the Kabbalistic ‘Tree of Life’ in a graphic manner which is actually completely misleading. In the *Zohar* we find the following statement: [FIG. 5]

One is the source of the sea. A current comes forth from it making a revolution, which is yod [the first letter in the name of God]. The source is one and the current makes two. Then is formed the vast basin known as the sea, which is like a channel dug into the earth and it is filled by the waters issuing from the source; and this sea is the third thing. This vast basin is divided up into seven channels . . . and the waters from the sea go into the seven channels. Together, the source, the current, the sea and the seven channels make the number ten . . . In this same wise has the Cause of causes derived the ten aspects of his Being, which are known as sefirot . . .⁹

From this we can see the outline form of the metaphysical idea which I have just described. The ‘sea’ is that part of Space within the Universal Mind which is contained by ‘the One’, its source. The agent of the ‘One’ or Source is thus the Ego, the Egyptian ‘Akhu’, the primal emanation of the Oversoul. Its peripheral field of limitation is also the Hebrew ‘Ain’ (the same as the Greek ‘Aion’)* beyond which lies ‘Ain Soph Aur’ – the Boundless Light’.

* The words ‘Ain and ‘Aion’ appear both to be derived from the Tibetan ‘Ahi’, the hierarchy of kosmic beings which *The Secret Doctrine* describes as ‘containing’ the manifest universe. ‘Aion’ is ‘Ahi’ plus the Greek collective suffix ‘on’ – hence the resultant compound ‘Ahi-on’ which telescopes into either ‘Aion’ or the Hebraic ‘Ain’.

THE BOUNDLESS LIGHT

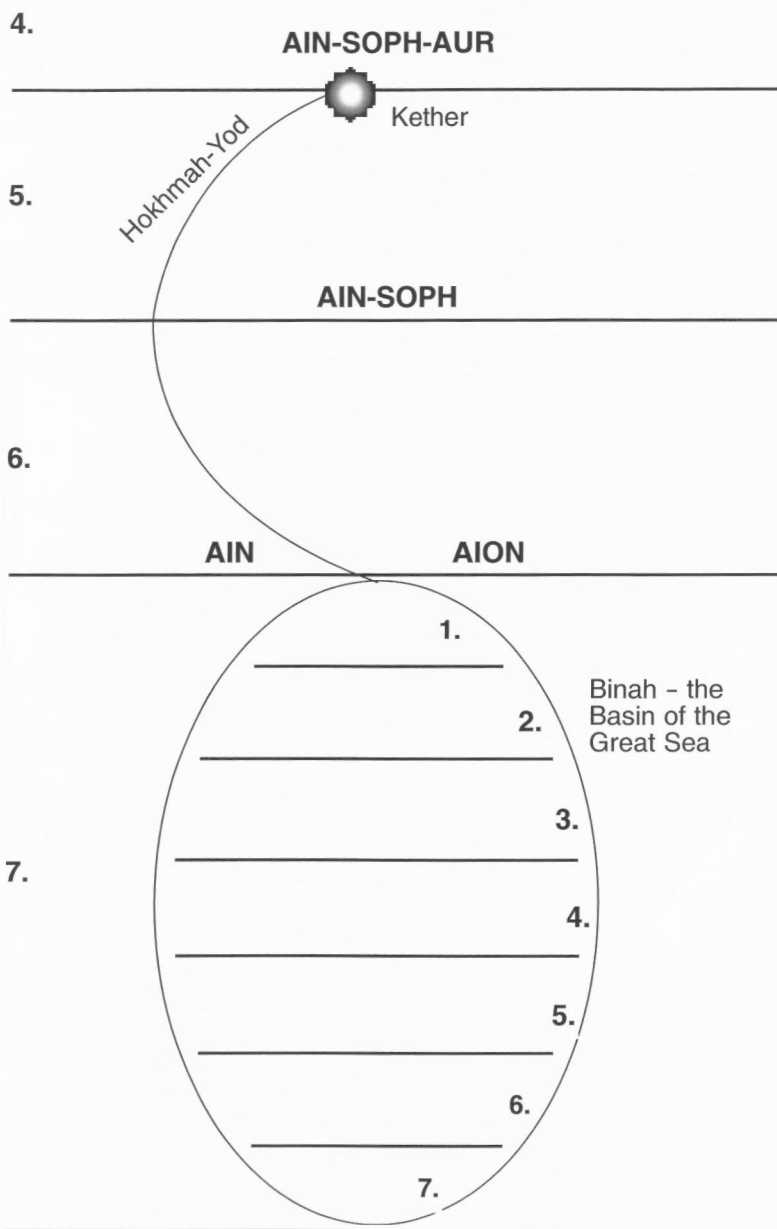


Figure 5: Zoharic Creation of the Sephiroth

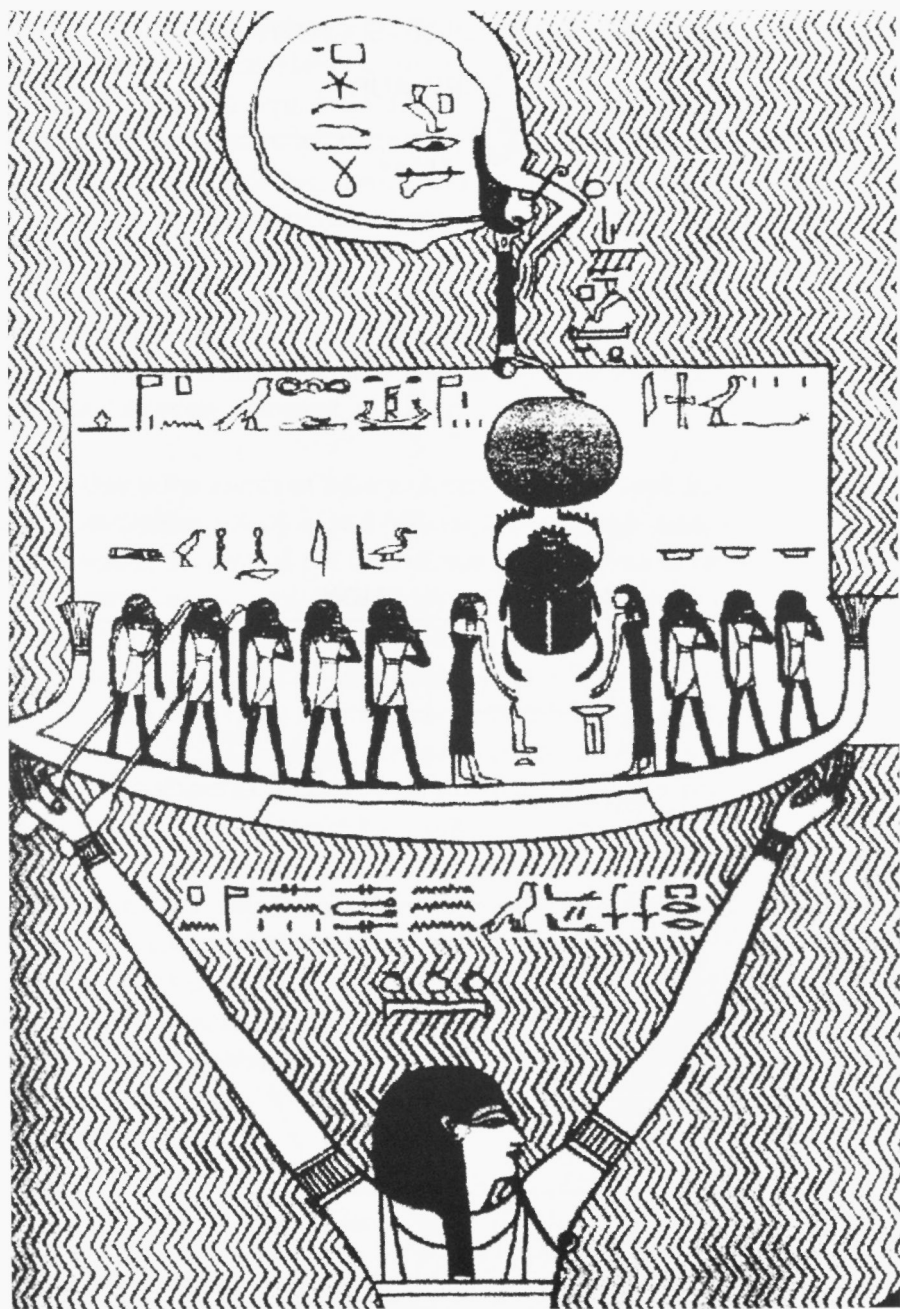
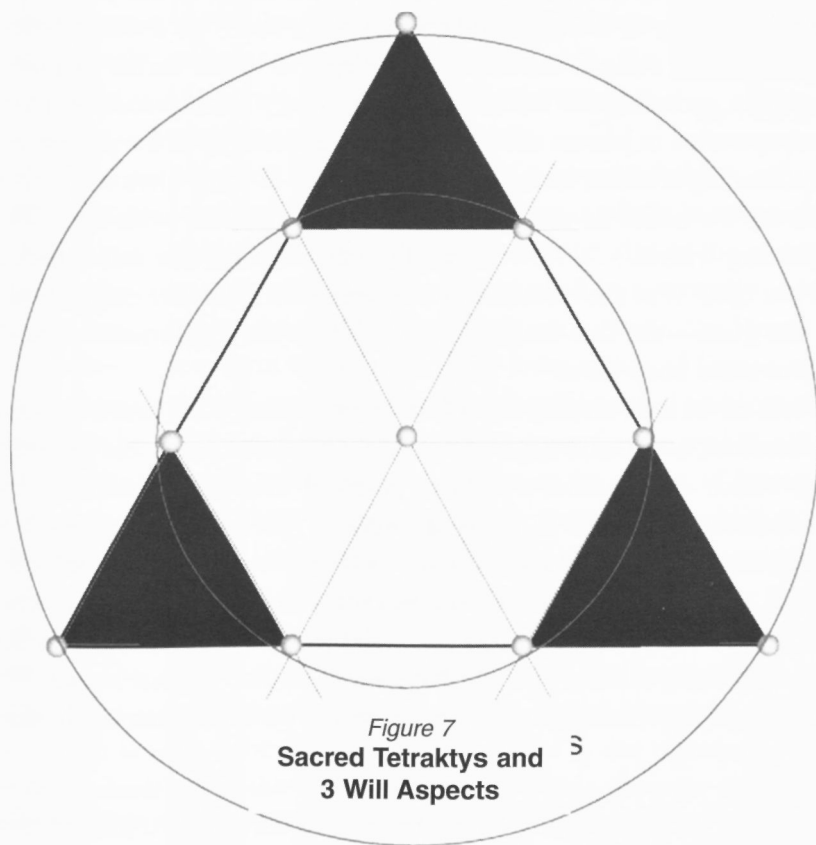


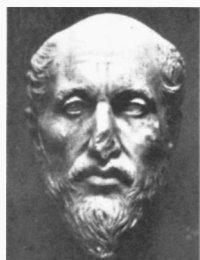
Figure 6: Egyptian Allegory of Creation

However, from within the periphery of the Oversoul, Kether – the same first emanation – is projected out into the lower sphere of existence, thereby taking the form of Geburah – which we know as Fohat but which was actually derived from *Khepera*, the name of the ancient Egyptian scarab god representing the principle of self-regeneration, or reincarnation. [FIG. 6] Geburah-Fohat then ‘digs a hole in Space’ thereby mutating into *Binah*, the Great World-Egg, the octave of a lesser field of existence which contains the seven lower sephirot. These latter beings then are the archangelic entities whose own sub-fields of consciousness become the hierarchically organised seven planes of solar existence with which theosophical students are generally familiar. The ten sephirot are in fact the



same as the Pythagorean *tetraktys*, [FIG. 7] both Pythagoras and the Hebrews having derived their knowledge on such matters at around the same time, when both were being held captive in Babylon.

Rather interestingly, Plotinus confirms exactly the same universally applicable triadic sequence of creative principles as the Zohar in his work *The Enneads* where he says: “We need not then go seeking any other Principles; this – the One and the Good – is our First; next to it follows the Intellectual Principle, the Primal Thinker, and upon this follows Soul. Such is the order in Nature. The Intellectual Realm allows no more than these and no fewer.”¹⁰



Plotinus
205 - 270 A. D.

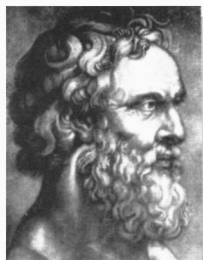
The *Hermetica* otherwise tells us¹¹ that the Mind is too powerful to incarnate directly in the body and thus takes for itself ‘as a wrap’ the soul around which it curls in containment, as depicted in the earlier graphic of the serpent enclosing the World Egg. But this very same principle is to be found operative in human affairs (and in Freemasonry) in the parallel of a client needing a home, hiring an architect who, in turn, hires a builder to construct the house as designed by him in accordance with the client’s originating wishes . . . Now in purely relative terms, the self-conscious soul is a ‘god’. The *Hermetica* also otherwise tells us, rather enigmatically, that the gods – the first creative beings – have the appearance of heads, without other body parts.¹²

Well, as we have already described the most primordial forms in Nature as spheroidal, how could this be otherwise? In the first place, the spheroidal shape which encapsulates a field of potential existence within our own consciousness is known to us as an ‘idea’, a word which appears to be derived from two ancient root words which together suggest a dual ‘entity of light’. An idea is complete in itself as a mind-being (i.e. an ‘ego’)* which we might in one sense regard as synonymous with the concept of a god-head, containing a brain plus the faculties of all the various senses. Why would a god need more? Rather interestingly, modern quantum physicists

* The Latin word ‘Ego’, like the Greek word ‘echo’, appears to be a corruption of the ancient Egyptian ‘Akhu’.

regards the atom as being contained by a superfine membrane, which they call the 'brane' and regard it as its 'organ' of memory.

Within the god-nature of the soul principle, we find the fundamental triplicity of function – being, knowing and doing – which Plato regarded as the foundation of all Creation, because, without this, existence itself would be impossible. In psychological terms we might define this triplicity as: 1. the will-to-be 2. the will-to-know 3. the will-to-create/generate. The curious thing about the god-nature, however, is that, philosophically speaking, it is also representative of partial failure. By that I mean, why would a divine ideation need to appear in the first place except to consider a problem which had not yet been resolved in the Divine Consciousness? In our own consciousness, that which has been fully resolved passes out of the realm of speculative form into that of purely instinctive mental force and faculty. So why should the principle be different with the superior hierarchies of Being? As above, so below.



Plato
427 - 437 B. C.

The very nature of an idea is indicative of a concept that has only been partially thought through and is therefore at least dualistic in nature. If we look at it in graphic terms [FIG. 8] – following the idea of the sevenfold nature within the octave of soul-being – we shall consequently see that ideation itself implies the duality of certainty and uncertainty. Hence it is that the *incomplete* form taken by the Will-force is that of Desire, which also has a trinity of self-expression. In order that the central problem of this duality can be resolved, it then becomes necessary for the soul to call in a more highly evolved 'arbitrator' and it does so by an act of invocation aimed at the higher sphere of knowledge (the Oversoul) of which it itself forms part. In graphic terms, this takes us back to the concentric principle.

As we can see, when the soul unfolds its dual internal nature, it leaves a seventh state – the central, intervening one – as one of unconditioned potential. This fourth state in the light spectrum is Green, which is the predominant *colour* of our planetary Nature. In the harmonic scale it is Fah, which is said to be the predominant *sound* in our planetary Nature, our planet itself being the fourth in sequence within the solar system. It is therefore into this intermediate state that the soul, responding in vibratory

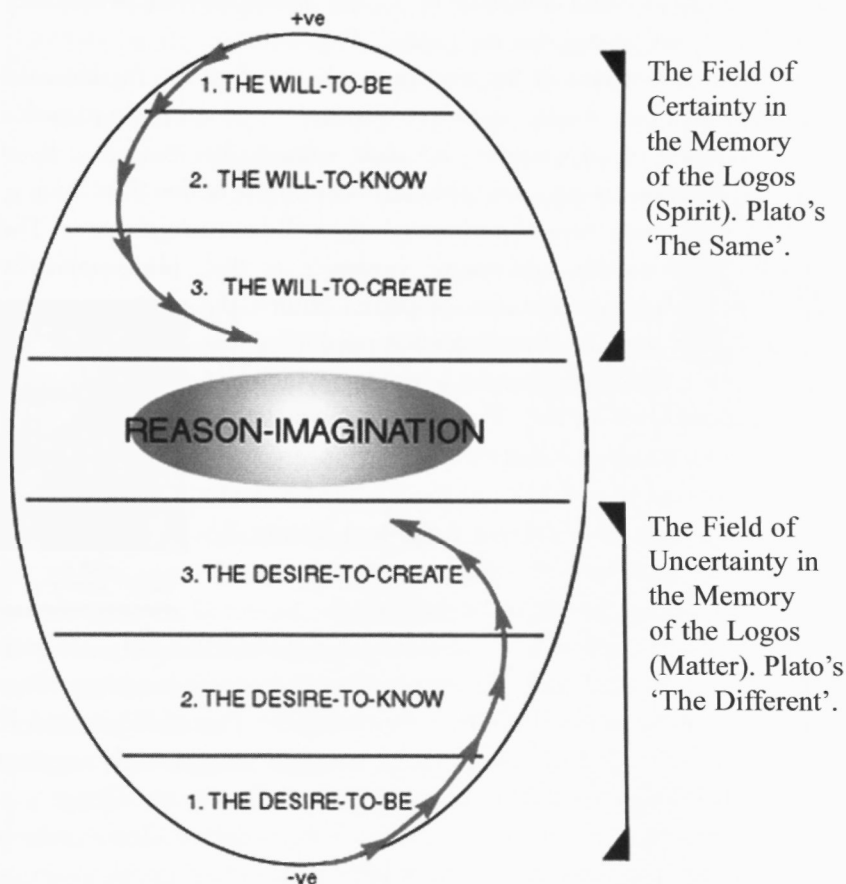


Figure 8: The Duality of Memory in the Mind of the Logos

thrill, generates a 'chord' of the higher sphere of knowledge which it has invoked. This 'chord' is itself a composite living being, also sevenfold in nature and it is referred to in the Masonic tradition as the 'Lost Word'.

By virtue of the higher sphere of knowledge being archetypal, relative to the lower one, the sevenfold 'word' generates out of itself seven prototypal 'echoes'. These then become the essential types of the seven kingdoms of Nature in the desire nature or field of ignorance and uncertainty of the lower world system – i.e. what in theosophical terms is referred to as 'the Outer Round'. [FIG. 9].

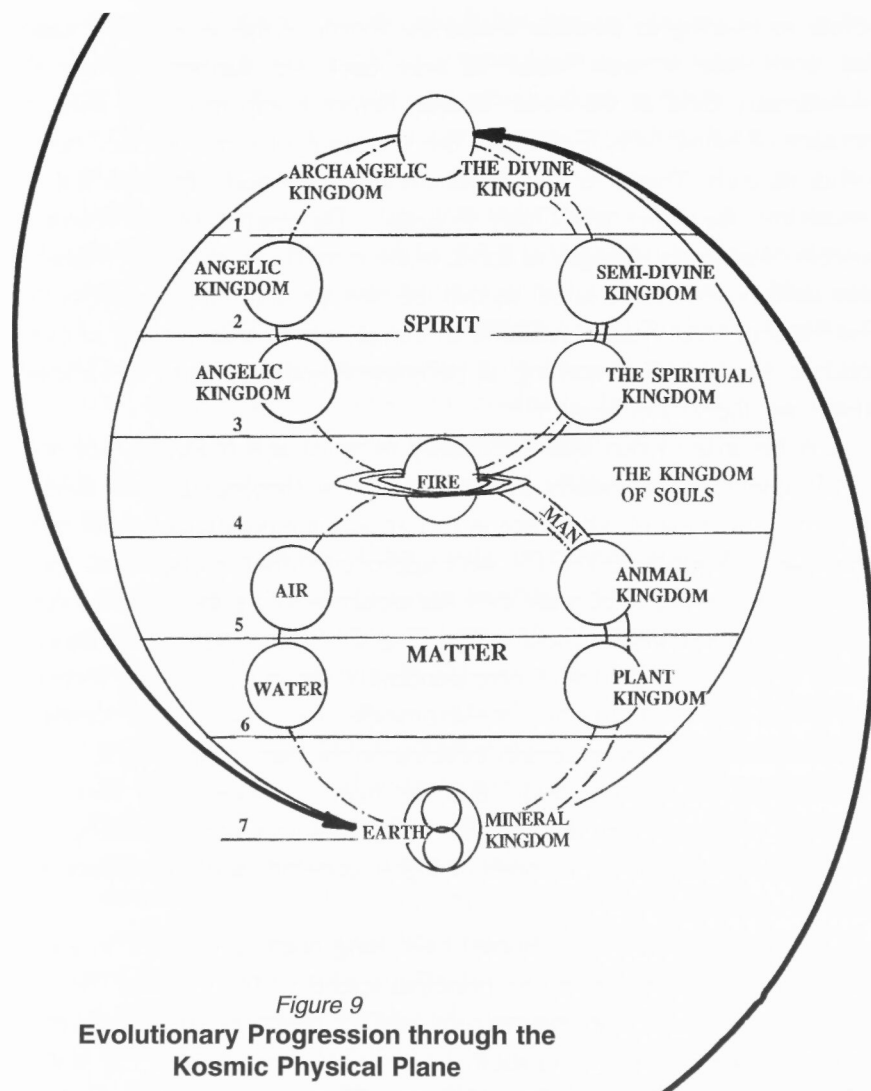


Figure 9

Evolutionary Progression through the Kosmic Physical Plane

As seen from the graphic, this sevenfold nature unfolds as a progressive cycle of lesser types, beginning with the salamander and ending with Man, who is himself said to be the expression of a higher quality of Fire. Thus the fragmented 'Lost Word' has to cycle down and back through the lesser kingdoms of Nature, constantly generating new forms of self-expression,

before recovering its position within the fourth of the seven solar states. But from here it must wend its way back yet further through the evolutionary field of the *Inner Round*, before it can re-merge with the ‘serpent of Mind’ which contains the Oversoul of our planetary nature within its coils. Thus it is that in his work *The Enneads*, Plotinus tells us concerning the Inner and Outer Rounds: “The matter of the realm of process ceaselessly changes its form; in the eternal [i.e. as Spirit] Matter is immutably one and the same; so that the two are diametrically opposites. The Matter of this [lesser] realm is all things in turn, a new entity in every separate case, so that nothing is permanent and one thing ceaselessly pushes another out of being.”¹³

It is because of this that the duality of spirit and matter in our solar world scheme is so usually misunderstood by theologians and modern philosophers, most of whom are in fact argumentative dialecticians rather than true philosophers. Yet if it were appreciated that real spiritual forms do not change simply because they (as archetypes) are the expressions of certainty in the consciousness of the Logos of our system, the rationale would become self-evident. Correspondingly, the ever-changing forms in the lower field of Logoic consciousness are due to the constant fluctuations caused by uncertain thinking on the part of the Logos.

There is one further thing that we need to understand about the principle of duality and the way in which it works out psychologically throughout Nature as expressions of logoic certainty and uncertainty. It is quite simply this.

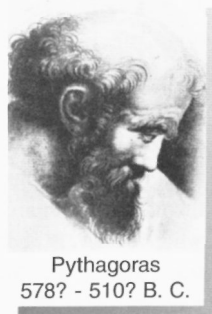
The angels or devas (or Suras) have long been recognised in all the main religious traditions as the principal agents of Divine Law. As such they are responsible for ensuring the perfect phenomenal expression of God in Universal Nature. As such also they have no sense of any instinct to the contrary – i.e. no sense of choice. Their purpose is to go on ad infinitum manifesting the perfection of what lies in their particular field of the Universal Memory. Man however – seen here in the generic spiritual sense – is the agent of Logoic Imagination. His purpose is to change the status quo to something better – better in the sense of incorporating a yet wider and deeper field of spiritual knowledge and functional capacity.

As I have already described, the primal form which knowledge takes is

that of an ovoid ethereal entity which has become known to us as ‘the soul’. However, a greater soul-being cannot just incarnate in a lesser one, because it is far too powerful. What it actually does therefore is to emanate an aspect of itself to enfold that lesser organism within its embrace and then impregnate it with a merely partial aspect of itself. That is why knowledge and wisdom are only gradually gained. This ‘partial aspect’ comprises a group of spirits* whose job it is to reorganise the structure of the lesser field of consciousness in sympathy with the greater field. Hence, like the spermatozoon which impregnates the ovum, it splits up into sub-groups and then, proceeding on the basis of the principle, ‘divide and rule’, its dynamic magnetism gradually brings about a radical alteration of the structure of internal relationships within the lesser soul-sphere, thereby generating *hierarchy* – and consequent differentiation of function.

This then is the basis of the cycle of existence of any organism, including the human being. It is also the basis of the principle of ‘cross-fertilisation’, whether in plants and animals or otherwise in relation to human ideas, thereby leading to the generation of culture and hence civilisation itself. Thus the phenomenon of an existing idea form which is impregnated with a different germinal essence can only be generated by Man. The devas maintain and perfect merely the existing archetypal forms of differentiation whilst their lesser counterparts, the Elemental hierarchies, produce objective forms of constant change in response.

As Blavatsky tells us, the Divine Spark or spirit is a monad, an entity which paradoxically has no manifest existence in its own individual right, yet at the same time is the product and agent of kosmic Memory. She also tells us that there are Man-monads and deva-monads, which becomes perfectly understandable once we appreciate that the word ‘monad’ was itself derived from the Pythagorean ‘monas’ by the 18th century German philosopher Leibnitz, to mean a point of living existence. However,



* Hence the idea of ‘the Fall’ which is actually an act of self-sacrifice, necessary for the evolutionary ‘redemption’ of lesser hierarchies of being

the Pythagorean ‘monas’ was itself originally derived from the Sanskrit ‘manas’. Our human ‘divine spark’ is thus an emanation of the Kosmic Mind, which itself emanates streams of lesser ‘monads’, referred to as ‘jivas’ in the Vedic tradition (hence the Hebrew collective term ‘Ieva’ or ‘Jehovah’).^{*} A still greater paradox lies in the fact that the ‘monad’ – like the kabbalistic Kether – is that ‘spark’ of Akasa which generates the primal divine soul-body, or Atman, from itself, yet still remains infinite in its own greater field of potential. In relation to the Atman – the Monad is not to be found at its centre, as many assume, but rather surrounding it and thereby containing it. Hence the emanation of the Monad, or Divine Spirit, contains the Spiritual Soul – which, we shall recall, is itself a hierarchically organised group of lesser spirits or ‘fallen’ jiva-monads.

What then is the essential difference between the deva monad and the human monad? I have already suggested that the deva soul is the agent of kosmic memory whereas the multiple human soul is the agent of kosmic imagination. In practical terms, however, *all* souls are deva souls. But when the deva soul is impregnated by a spark from a higher soul-sphere, it *becomes* a human soul, at least in potential. In parallel terms, a human monad is a spirit that has fallen from a higher soul nature into a lower one and has thereby caused it to attain that point of differentiation which is known to esotericists as ‘individualisation’, whereas a deva monad is one that remains within its own organic soul-sphere. The soul-sphere is the basis of self; yet, paradoxically, the unimpregnated deva soul does not possess self-consciousness.

Having spent the last half-hour or so dealing with background issues, now let us look at the way in which consciousness actually operates. This is in fact quite different to what is normally assumed. For example, if I

^{*} As HPB confirms from the *Esoteric Catechism*: “The Monads (*Jivas*) are the souls of the atoms. Both are the fabric in which the Chohans (Dhyanis, gods) clothe themselves when a form is needed.”¹⁴ This is why in the generally misunderstood Old Testament, the Elohim are the creative (hence involuntary) Demiurge, whereas Jehovah (a corruption of *Jiva*) represents the evolutionary collective of Monads (higher Divine Sparks) which guide the already ‘fallen’ divine sparks (metaphorically called *Israel* but actually As’r-El) out of the lower world and thus initiate the great ‘Exodus’ and return to ‘the Promised Land’.

were to tell you that it is actually impossible to think, you might be excused for believing that I was quite mad. Yet it is so, for the following reasons.

First of all, if Universal Memory exists, there can be nothing new in the field of All-Existence. What we are effectively doing when we believe ourselves to be thinking is actually calling an entity or group of entities into a cycle of *re*-existence within the field of our mind. The technical term for this is Invocation and it is essentially a magical process based upon the use of sound and light, although the process is by now so skilfully managed by mankind in general (after millions of years of evolutionary effort) that its very speed of operation makes it difficult to observe and analyse. However, let us try to see what is actually involved.

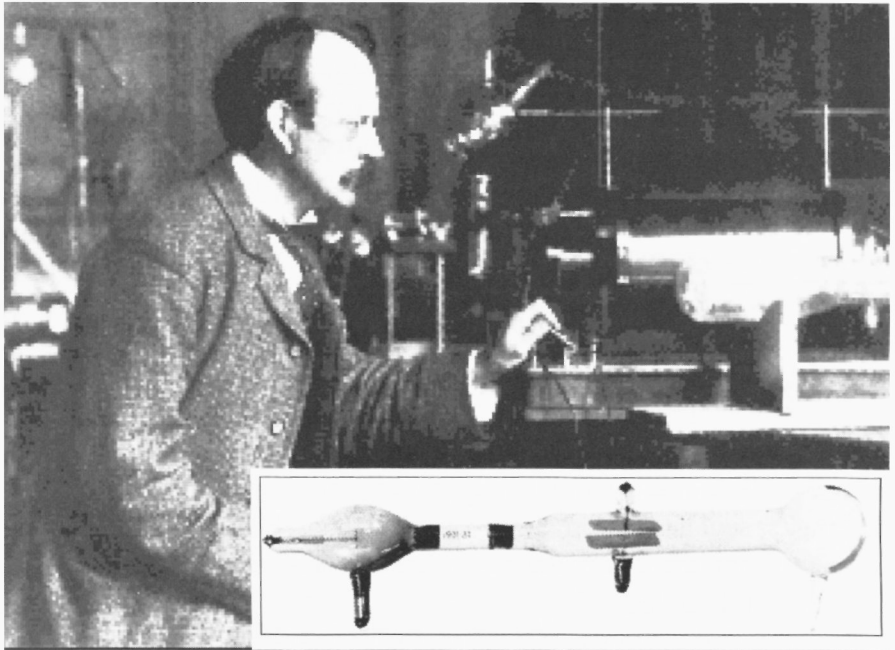
I mentioned earlier that the universe is qualitatively organised and concentric in existence; that the soul principle is the container of all knowledge relative to its own field of existence. We also looked at the fact that one sphere of knowledge gave rise fohatically to its own offspring – hence the atom is the offspring of the cell which is itself the offspring of the terrestrial soul, which is in turn the offspring of the World Soul; and so on. The soul itself is a deva entity, a being of light when it is in a state of activity. However, the transfer of its knowledge – used to bring about organisational change – occurs through vibration, resulting in the formation of cymatic images. As H. P. B. tells us, the soul is attached to its parent by the finest thread of Fohat; and it is by virtue of the vibration that thrills through a greater sphere of mind or knowledge, down through this fohatic thread, that the lesser soul entity is influenced and controlled. That control, however, is not automatic. The higher soul has to learn how to bring it about (like a puppeteer) and the lesser soul has to learn to cooperate through self-discipline.



H. P. Blavatsky
in the 1870s

I want to suggest to you that the soul is, in one sense, rather like an old fashioned television mechanism – what science refers to as a cathode ray tube, akin to the earliest form of transistor used to accelerate data down the first telephone lines. This tubular glass mechanism was what the scientist J. J. Thomson used to ‘discover’ the electron in 1897, at which time it (the

electron) was regarded as a particle, although subsequent scientific speculation now thinks it might either be a mere wave, or both a particle and a wave, depending upon the mental involvement of the person watching the experiment. The cathode ray tube contains within itself what science regards as a vacuum but which occult science says is actually a purely etheric state from which all gases have been removed. An electrical impulse is passed through the tube from the negative end (the cathode), which – once heated up – gives off electrons which are then gathered into a streamlined accelerator (an anode) and fired towards the other end, then returning the impulse so that a differential state of force exists in the middle. At this point, a two-dimensional plasmic image is electromagnetically formed out of the electrified etheric substance by virtue of the interaction of the different wave phases emanating from the



Main picture: Professor J. J. Thomson in his Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge. Thomson used results from cathode ray tube experiments to discover the electron in 1897. *Inset photo:* An entirely handmade 'CRT' used by Thomson in his experiments. It is about one meter in length. *Credit:* Wikipedia

positive and negative ends of the tube. A laser hologram works in a somewhat similar way, but with three differently phased laser beams to produce a three dimensional image in space.

Exactly the same principle operates, I suggest, in the case of the soul entity [Fig. 10] which also has its positive and negative ends, fed by a psycho-spiritual charge emanating fohatically from the overshadowing spiritual soul. These energies meet centripetally at the centre point between them – what becomes the Spine Base Centre in man. This centre is thus forced into a centrifugal activity which transforms the substance of the etheric double into ectoplasm which then hardens into what we know

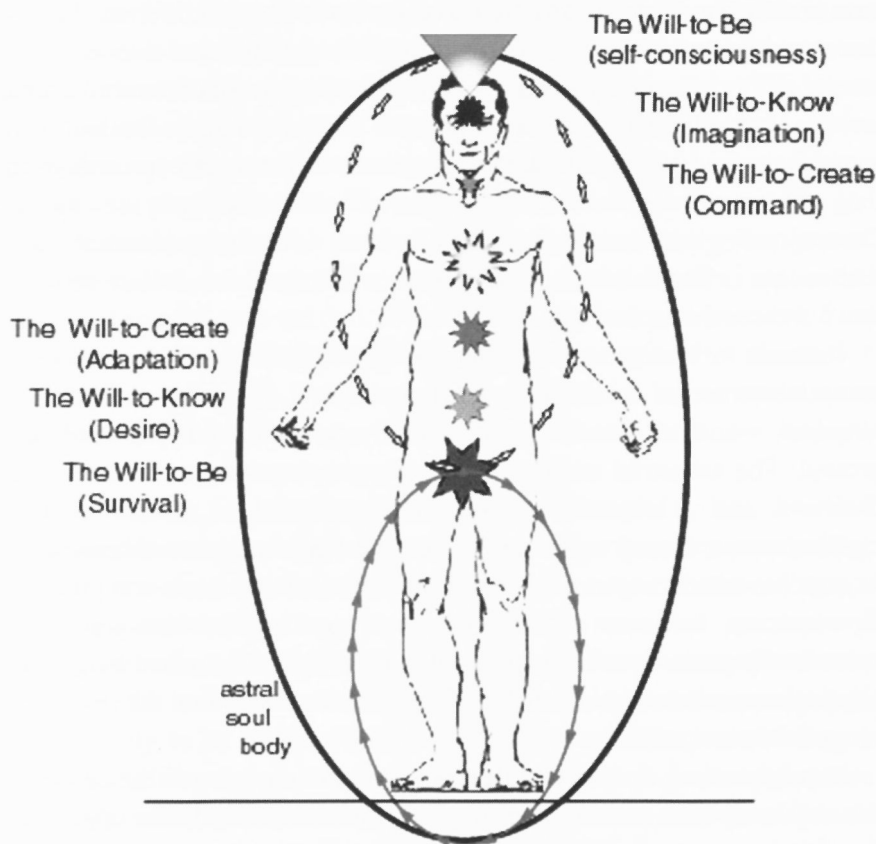


Figure 10: Man's Body - Created by the Astral Soul

as the marrow of the skeleton within which blood cells are formed. Thus the blood cell becomes the microcosm to the macrocosmic terrestrial soul entity.

Now the centrifugal-centripetal energies in the upper half of the soul field evolve a rather different quality to those operating in the lower half. Consequently, the forms produced – although fully integrated and coordinated – are also markedly different. The upper half is responsive to the positive energies emanating from the top of the soul's aura, which are mental in nature, whilst the lower half is responsive to the negative energies emanating from the bottom of the soul's aura, which is magnetically fastened to the Earth's crust by what science calls gravity, a term and explanation for which in occult science is quite different. Just as the energies emanating downwards from the top of the soul aura are of a mental nature, those emanating upwards from the bottom of the soul's aura are of an astro-terrestrial or kamic nature. Thus when the individual is in an over-charged emotional state, the resultant tension works upwards from the ankles through the sciatic nerve and thus to the spine. Correspondingly, when the individual is in an over-charged mental state, the tension is first felt in the neck and then the shoulders, before moving down the cerebro-spinal system.

It needs to be remembered that the etheric double and dense body's components are of the Earth – the lower Astral Light and the Mineral kingdom – and are thus attracted naturally (gravitationally) towards the ground. The terrestrial soul-body, however, is an emanation of the World Oversoul and is thus attracted upwards, towards it. Under normal circumstances, during wakefulness, the soul-body is anchored because of its psychic attachment to the etheric double and its dense components. However, in the case of the obsessive mystic (and the yogi who consciously understands the principles involved) the main 'weight' of physical consciousness is transferred into the soul-body and the result is – progressive levitation.

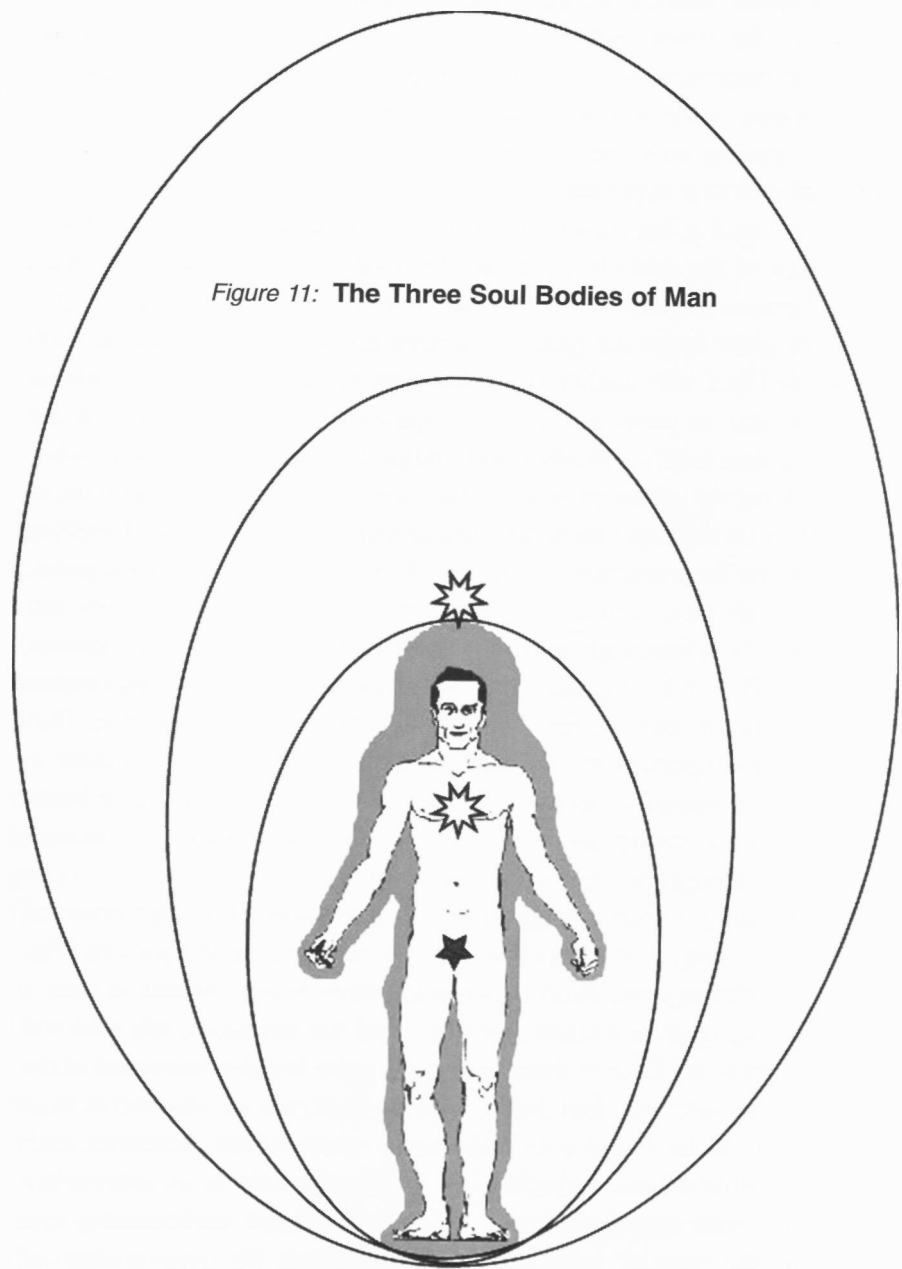
It is interesting to note that the energies moving towards the centre of the soul body from its two poles are both dual in nature. In the upper half they are known in the Hindu tradition as the Ida and Pingala nadis which curl downwards around the spinal cord, causing that centrifugal response

from the Spine Base Centre that we call kundalini, which feeds the other chakras. In the lower half of the soul aura, the equivalent centripetal duality and responsive single centrifugal energy involves the legs and tail of the animal body – now curtailed in man because of evolutionary necessity, leaving only the coccyx at the base of the spine as a historic witness of previous experience.

Now as I said at the outset, my primary concern in this talk is to focus on the issue of the soul principle and the *quality* of consciousness which we use, because it is this which defines us as human beings and it is also that which gives rise to the type of character and karma we generate. Both uncontrolled and low quality thoughts, plus imaginations and emotions (leading to fear, in particular, and an acquisitive instinct) generate in our etheric double a darkly unhealthy and malign breeding ground for psychosomatic elemental states of activity that we find particularly difficult to shake off and which also cause us endless pain and grief. These, I venture to suggest, are the immediate source of all our illnesses – of a psychiatric as well as a physical nature. They also breed karma of a low quality and uncontrollable elemental nature which carries a very unpleasant magnetism. But, in a very real sense we are ourselves entirely responsible for generating the way we feel. We cannot blame it on anyone else. That is why it is so important from a purely practical viewpoint to maintain in ourselves a constantly outgoing sense of cheerful open-mindedness, optimism and a strong sense of humour. Without these, we become literally lost through psychological implosion.

In concluding, I wish to suggest to you something of an also practical nature, to take away and think about. As you can see from this picture [Fig. 11] there is a close correlation between the three major chakras in man – the spine base, heart and crown centres – and the terrestrial, spiritual and divine soul bodies. Each of these chakras is to be found in sequence at the centre of the relevant soul body, although all are at the same time paradoxically to be found within the auric nature of the terrestrial soul. Each thus fulfils a basic centrifugal or distributive role in its appropriate soul body whilst also fulfilling a somewhat different coordinating role overall in the human organism. Each emanates its own quality of kundalini. This is of fundamental importance in the consideration of

Figure 11: The Three Soul Bodies of Man



spiritual development in our individual lives and of spiritual evolution in general. It is the very basis of the philosophical concept that man is the 'microcosm of the Macrocosm'. However, I do not intend to expand upon this here. It is instead dealt with more fully in one of the Appendices to this talk, as published.

The essence of what I have been trying to get across in this talk is the necessity of understanding what the soul actually is by way of function and what a fundamental part it plays in the individualising evolutionary development and expression of human intelligence and its objective vehicle out of an otherwise merely amorphous or ill-defined field of planetary consciousness. By those who still believe in the soul today, it is commonly but erroneously assumed to be single in man and just as generally assumed to be a spiritual entity. It is in fact multiple in man and its lowest expression – that of the terrestrial or 'astral' soul – is a merely psychic entity (generated by the planetary Oversoul of our Earth globe) which donates to man a set of physical or purely elemental senses for his use during incarnation.

It is also this lesser soul which otherwise acts as a 'springboard' for the evolutionary development of the kamic (emotional) and lower mental functions in the lower kingdoms of Nature. These faculties, if properly evolved under the self-disciplined recognition of the spiritual soul in man, result in the development of character, leading eventually to wisdom. However, the real nature of the spiritual soul (as distinct from the terrestrial or 'astral' soul-body) has become confused by merely religious association, whereas it needs to be seen and properly honoured today in a rational, *psychological* context which gives the highest respect and rational deference to its very real powers and constantly overshadowing influence.

These facts, I suggest, need to be made more widely known, particularly amongst those directly concerned with both education and medical treatment. Once the dual soul principle is generally acknowledged again as the formative principle in human affairs, as seen from the viewpoint of occult science – and as allegorically depicted [Fig. 12] in this statue from the temple of Karnak in Egypt, of a human initiate standing on the feet of a god – our human society will unavoidably take a dramatic and

irreversible change of psychological direction for the better. As H. P. B. says in *Isis Unveiled* "It but needs the right perception of things objective to finally discover that the only world of reality is the subjective."¹⁵ It is thus our responsibility as theosophists, I venture also to suggest, to understand this same principle properly and thus have the confidence to discuss it openly wherever we go – *especially* in non-theosophical circles. Thank you for listening.

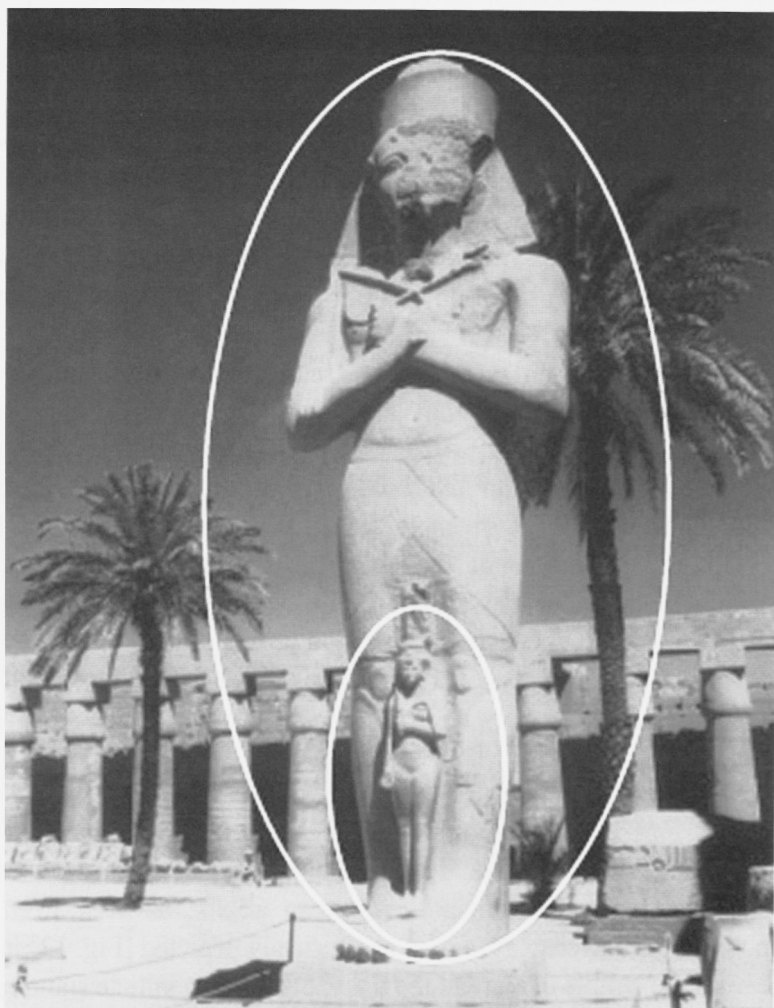


Figure 12: Karnak statue: human initiate on the feet of a god

APPENDIX 'A'

The relationship of the three main chakras – at the Spine Base, the Heart and the Crown – to the three souls of Man is of vital importance in relation to the issue of spiritual evolution. It can only be understood, however, by reference to the quality of matter being used and the associated vibratory response.

As we can see from Fig. 11 each of these three chakras is shown as being at the sequential centre of the three soul bodies – terrestrial, spiritual and divine. However, this is not intended to be taken literally, in terms of actual location or size of the two higher soul bodies because the latter exist in a different, qualitative state altogether. What the depiction is intended to suggest is that there is a direct relationship between the quality of vibration in these three chakras in the human organism and the base vibration of the soul in question. Hence there is a (top-down) hierarchical progression as per the following (incorporating the Vedic parallels):

1. The Divine Soul – (Siva) The Will-to-Be
2. The Spiritual Soul – (Visnu) The Will-to-Know
3. The Will-to-Create – (Brahma) The Will-to-Create/Generate

Each soul entity represents the triple field of expression of the Monad within the lower world order for the cycle in question. In man the microcosm, they result in the following:

The basic quality of steady psycho-spiritual tension achieved in the terrestrial soul body generates centrifugal energies emanating from the Base of the Spine chakra. These have a direct association with the Mineral kingdom and are thus formative in generating the skeleton in the animal-human form. There is also a direct association with the Desire-to-Be, hence also with the instinct to survival. The Sacral chakra is thus the expression of the Desire-to-Know (dealing with duality and relationship) and therefore with procreation and the Plant kingdom, whilst the solar plexus chakra is the expression of the Animal kingdom and its coordinated sense of a lesser self which gives rise to purely personal desires and cravings, plus fear.

When we consider the Heart chakra, we see that it stands at the centre of the Spiritual Soul body, which is itself the expression of the Logoic Will-to-Know. It is representative of the fourth kingdom in Nature (the human) in particular, standing mid-way between the upper triad of chakras (representative of spiritual Will force) and the lower triad of chakras (representative of matter-based Desire force). Hence the Base of the Spine chakra is simultaneously the monadic Will-to-Create whilst also the purely animal-human Desire-to-Exist/Survive. Whilst the heart is found as an emanating centre in the animal organism, the quality of vibration achieved in the terrestrial soul of the animal entity (being unindividualised) is much lower than that achieved in the terrestrial soul of the human type. Hence the heart vibration (and the material nature) of the animal is psychospiritually far cruder than that of the human.

APPENDIX 'B'

As we are still considering the subject of consciousness and how it operates, let us look briefly at the issue of how images actually arise in the consciousness and why it is that we react to them (or fail to react to them) as we do. The basis of what we are going to consider involves, as I have already said, psychic cymatics – the production of patterned forms that appear in the consciousness as a result of waves and vibrations.

As I mentioned earlier, it is impossible to think *per se*. What we are involved in is actually a process of invocation of deva and/or elemental entities, some of which we have generated ourselves through use of the imagination and others which *seem* to have been projected into our consciousness by external influences or experience. However, the germs of all these are actually stored up in the Universal Memory in a state of passivity or quiescence. We merely call them forth. Thus when we wish to respond to influences or events surrounding us, we use our powers of imagination to ‘think’ objectively or to react either emotionally or with a mixture of mental and emotional imagery. The former requires a high degree of control over quite subtle elemental forces; the latter require merely a mere overflow of psychic reaction. However, there are of course intermediate ranges of degree in between both.

As we have already just seen, when we call forth a purely mental type of energy or a high ideal into activity, we first of all generate a field of potential ideation within our consciousness, thus following Plato’s dictum that the first stage of Creation is isolation. We then unconsciously use a type of pulsed sonar invocation (very similar in principle to that used in submarines) to summon the requisite type of entity within that field of isolation. You can perhaps see why I said earlier that thinking is a magical act. Now when we use this type of invocation, we have in mind not an image as such, but rather a quality of sound which contains within itself the *essence* of the form we are looking for in our memory; and it is this sound which we (quite literally) emit within our own consciousness. However, such an emission, to be successful in invoking the type of entity required, necessitates not only an accuracy of quality in selection

(involving psycho-mental discrimination), it also requires the generation of adequate force. It has literally to be of the nature of a summons.

The emission of such sound generates sonar echoes through the almost limitless cavities of our memory which we search. We listen to those echoes, register them and then we choose from them – *according to a quality which particularly attracts our attention*. When our choice is made, the act of invocation is executed and a group of entities automatically appears within our mental field. By our very attentiveness to them they are given the power to express themselves in the form of a creative idea and, when we turn our attention away from them, they cease to exist in the phenomenal sense. It follows from this that the wise individual keeps his or her mind tidy and uncluttered, empty of purely personal concerns at all times, so that the higher consciousness can clearly transmit its influences whenever necessary and have these accurately registered. The achievement of this, although seemingly difficult, merely requires sustained effort until it becomes instinctual faculty.

Such registration of these higher transmissions involves a vibration of the upper aura of the soul body (this is the *Voice of the Silence*) which, if properly registered, produces a cymatic reproduction of abstractly patterned forms (of light) indicating esoteric relationships, which the individual recognises – if he or she is psychically awake – and then interprets accordingly. Some have learned to do this through regular introspection and disciplined meditative practice. The mass of humanity, however, does not realise how the mind works and thus tends to leave the field of their consciousness all of a clutter, which makes clarity and objectivity of observation impossible. Regretfully, the modern education system in the West does little to improve this situation. Instead it constantly over-stimulates the consciousness of children and fills their minds full of unfulfillable desires as well as useless and largely unprocessed technical or other information, all of which merely cause varying degrees of mental constipation and consequent imbalance of temperament.

APPENDIX 'C'

Perhaps the greatest difficulty which we face in getting the world of modern science to understand the basics of the theosophical viewpoint is the fact that, amongst them – even amongst those who have the sincerest wish to understand consciousness and who are progressive enough to see it as existing apart from the body – there exists the fundamental misperception that consciousness is itself quite different from and somehow distinct from matter in general. This I can confirm from attending various recent Scientific and Medical Network conferences. From the philosophical viewpoint, however, it is logically impossible for any sort of faculty (no matter how subtle) to exist apart from existence itself. Unfortunately, modern science still believes in only one quality of (dead) matter whilst hypothesising the completely illogical concept that life somehow emerged primordially from it. We, on the other hand, start from the premise that the universal first principle of existence is that of Life itself, defined by the ‘divine spark’ or monadic principle, which always manifests in groups – thereby generating that dynamic structural ‘web’ of relationships to which we give the name ‘matter’.

There is thus no such thing as ‘dead’ matter. Matter is Life in manifestation; but it is *qualitative* in expression, that quality varying according to the state of being in which it is found – something which modern science has not even begun to contemplate as a possibility because it would require a complete reorientation of all scientific theory. Thus, in relation to this pursuit of apparently wilful illogicality and self-inflicted myopia on the part of modern science I am reminded of St. Augustine’s prayer: “O God, grant me chastity – but not just yet.”

Our philosophy otherwise also holds to the principle that Life possesses sentience, the faculty of awareness and associated responsiveness through knowing, or recognition – in other words, the being, knowing and doing of consciousness, the higher equivalent of which is our Atma-Buddhi-Manas. Hence, the combination of Life and Consciousness provide Universal Nature with the basis of all phenomenal creative faculty. But what of modern science’s approach?

Modern psychology started with Freud and Jung in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Freud's research took him downwards into the lower elemental world, hence his eventual belief that all human motivation was based upon the sexual urge in Nature – a belief which ended quite understandably in a completely dark cul-de-sac. Jung, on the other hand, developed a semi-mystic approach to the subject, which gravitated naturally upwards towards the light of the higher soul nature, which expresses itself through sympathetic relationships being represented in terms of archetypal forms and interactive abstract imagery. Not surprisingly, much of Jung's work focussed on the issue of mandalas and synchronicities. However, Jung in striving to maintain his academic-scientific status, was otherwise very cautious and made considerable endeavours not to find himself too directly associated with particular areas of established religious mysticism – particularly oriental mysticism – in case this gave his fellow scientists reason to suggest that he had crossed the boundary of scientific objectivity.



Carl Gustav Jung

At the end of the nineteenth century, shortly after H. P. B's death, the Curies discovered radio-activity, the emanation of the atom, whilst the Australian physicist Ernest Rutherford posited the idea that the atom itself



Ernest Rutherford

was constructed like a miniature solar system, with electrons circulating around the nucleus in orbits, each such orbit containing a specific number of electrons which thereby confirmed the element of the atomic field. Since then, however, physicists have put themselves in a mathematically progressive tail spin by arguing incessantly and with ever increasing complexity over whether the basis of matter is as a particle or a quantum

wave function, all without first trying to understand the basics of occult metaphysics.

Had they done so – and had they not decided irrationally to deny the existence of an universal 'aether' (which is now being considered afresh under the title of 'dark matter') – modern science would have a very different view of the nature of consciousness and would thus present a

very different and perhaps not so materialistic face. As it is, we are faced on the one hand with a modern scientific orthodoxy, self-interested in mere minutiae and largely bereft of any wider sense of philosophy and, on the other, with religious orthodoxies which similarly show little interest in anything other than their own just as restricted theological viewpoints. In fact, however, these are merely the opposite sides of the same out-of-date coinage, each fearful of the other and insisting upon its own supremacy.

As is commonly accepted, it is impossible to understand and appreciate the full beauty and force of literature and poetry without first knowing something of grammar and syntax. In music we have to learn correspondingly of how progressive scale notes, chords and rhythms are built into the harmonics of sonic relationship. Through understanding the latter we begin to appreciate the depth of perceptual skill and craftsmanship which goes into its organisation, as well as the overall beauty of the coordinated imagery. That is why we have to experience in depth before we can experiment usefully and in a purposeful way. That is why disciplined education and training are fundamental to any real understanding of our place and purpose in Nature. Yet how much of our life experience has that focus and application of self-discipline?

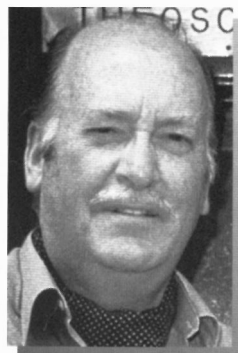
I said at the outset of this talk that I was going to try and show you the fundamental rationale of the way in which consciousness itself operates and that the Mind principle is not quite what we imagine it to be. In trying to understand that rationale, we have considered the operation of consciousness from both the Macrocosmic and the microcosmic viewpoint, by looking at a variety of corresponding sequences of unfoldment, inter-relationship and eventual withdrawal, all of which follow exactly the same principles, although you might be forgiven for thinking them quite different. I also said at the outset that the study of consciousness is not straightforward. That is because our experience of it is drawn from personal experiment which is usually unfocussed and incontinently uncontrolled. From what has been said here, however, I hope that it will have been seen why it is that one does not actually have to have a science degree to appreciate quite how, in practical terms, to approach the subject.

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John Gordon is a practising Chartered Surveyor who also has an MA degree in Western Esotericism from the University of Exeter. He has been a member of the TS since 1975 and has studied the fields of esoteric philosophy, comparative religion and occult science for over thirty five years, with several books published on related subjects, specifically in connection with ancient Egypt, esoteric astrology and theosophical metaphysics. His most recent book *The Rise and Fall of Atlantis – The Mysterious Origins of Human Civilisation* has been described by Colin Wilson as “erudite, intelligent, wide-ranging . . . undoubtedly one of the best books on Atlantis ever written.” John is currently President of Blavatsky Lodge, a member of the National Council and has otherwise been a past Secretary of the Theosophical Research Centre and the Theosophical Science Group.



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