

CONSCIOUSNESS

By Eric McGough

The origin of consciousness lies at the heart of the 'darkness', which is all that remains at the end of a period of existence. In this state – known as pralaya in Sanskrit – all that once existed has been reduced to the opposing poles of duality, now fused into their antithesis, and even then, remaining only in potential. Only non-being, non-existence, the opposite of being or existence, remains of the great, cycling poles of duality manifesting and non-manifesting throughout unlimited eternities.

As duality vibrates through the whole term of the manifestation (manvantara) so it does through the whole of pralaya; in the one it is active in the other passive, in the one phenomenon in the other nuomenon – apart and in juxtaposition in creation, fused and united in pralaya. These then, are the poles within poles, the pairs within pairs – as the cycles are expressed within cycles. It is the dance of the opposites, the eternal flickering of the flame of love's longing for its beloved.

The darkness of the void contains all, and in its fused polarity are the Father and the Mother. The Mother waits for the spark of the Father to penetrate her, even from within, for he sleeps wrapped in her invisible robes, deep within her potency. As he stirs, wakes, and pulls apart to start again his aeonic search for that which is his eternal desire, his spark – his potential – impregnates, remaining caught within the potential of the Mother's necessity – her eternal need to ceaselessly give birth.

The Mother is all too often seen as illusion, in that she is the matter or form side of creation. But illusion is misleading in this context. She is the only means that the Father (spirit) has to develop and experience consciousness. And equally, he is the only means that she has of her creations becoming self-determining – they would remain mere husks without his quickening life-force. Without Her nature He cannot manifest and develop consciousness. She is the desired object in whose pursuit He – spirit – pushes out into identification with form. She is also Sophia the Divine Wisdom. She is the manifesting aspect of the Darkness, the Mother Deep, that which is known/knowable. She is The Beloved, who wraps herself around her lover clothing his desires, his will, yet he slumbers on, even in life – sees only his beloved's illusory form and not herself. We are 'the sleeper' chasing our beloved through the endless corridors of our dreams, and could we but wake we would find ourselves already in her divine embrace.

It is spirit acting through matter – form – that gives rise to consciousness. In this way, spirit can come to know itself, without this partnership it cannot.

To quote the Master KH. "But what is "Spirit" pure and impersonal per se? Why, such a Spirit is a nonentity, a pure abstraction, an absolute blank to our senses — even to the most spiritual. It becomes something only in union with matter." – letter 93B The Mahatma letters to A P Sinnett.

Consciousness comes about as a result of the friction between spirit and matter, we could say between energies flowing at right angles to each other, or with opposing directions of spin. These are just examples; you can meditate on these as a starting point and see what other insights you can come up with.

But consciousness definitely evolves; it is not one thing in one state, like some timeless, unchanging condition of pure spirit. As consciousness evolves it acquires different characteristics, capacities, or abilities. These come about through experience, and are the fruits of the involution/evolution journey. For the purposes of this paper, the capacity or ability of consciousness to focus at specific areas of its field of activity is of prime concern – this is awareness. In awareness we see an action of consciousness, a specific focus for a specific purpose. It is the ability to focus consciousness at will which is the skill each one of us is developing in our lifetimes of experience.

In the early phases of the Earth Scheme, long before physical mankind came on the scene; spirit had to pass through many preparatory stages. This is the pattern of all things coming into manifestation. First the limits or boundaries are defined by the Great Devas, the Cosmic, Solar, or Planetary Architects. Then the involving energies emerge setting up pathways or archetypal patterns. Finally, prototypal forms of the principle, attribute, or manifestation that is to unfold emerge. The unfolding or evolving will take place according to the inherent characteristics (we could even say – laws) of the preparatory work. This process is not in any way arbitrary it is established by work accomplished in previous manifestations along similar lines. We can see a perfect example of this in our physical world in the genetic codes, which govern the physical development of a given organism.

When the monadic sparks of the first spiritual life-wave reach the physical plane at the farthest reaches of involution (on the downward arc), they must first occupy and work within the mineral kingdom (now beginning the ascending arc). In this form and at this stage, they are virtually unconscious. Yet in this extreme condition and limitation they gradually establish the first principles of organic growth via the development and subsequent action and reaction of chemicals and eventually the extension of lattices into crystal growth. Here then, are the embryonic patterns of the future vegetable kingdom – along with the chemicals and minerals needed for that future stage of expression.

Later, when those monads move on seeking higher forms of expression, they can use the patterns and modifications that were gained and experienced in the mineral kingdom to begin evolving the more complex forms of the vegetable kingdom. Thus, we see the origin of organic life in physical terms, the process by which living organisms developed from inanimate matter, which is 'generally thought' to have occurred on earth between 3500 and 4000 million years ago. The scientific view of chemical evolution suggests a quantum leap to have taken place using energy from the sun and electric storms to form ever more complex molecules, such as amino acids, proteins, and vitamins, and eventually self-replicating nucleic acids. Sadly, the theories of scientists do not include spiritual consciousness, let alone monadic involution/evolution, in their mind boggling mathematical equations.

It is significant that basic plant cells have rigid walls or membranes, mimicking the crystalline structure of minerals. Animals, on the other hand, have flexible cell membranes, which can be seen as a consequence of the development of cellular chains in plants.

Cellular growth in the vegetable kingdom results in capillary action and rudimentary circulatory systems, which will later form the basis for fluid circulation in the animal and human kingdoms. We see the development of the assimilation of solar energy through the action of photosynthesis and the chemical exchanges of gasses. In mammals these can be seen in their later stages as respiration and the exchange of gasses which take place in the lungs with the blood-stream.

The vegetable kingdom provides us with the first example of rudimentary awareness in the monads, utilising the opposing forces of solar and Earth energies via leaf and root. Following on in the animal kingdom, the monads gain true awareness through the development of sophisticated sense organs. Yet these are extensions – further developments – of plant interactions with their surroundings. Plants have extremely rudimentary senses, embryonic compared to the later versions in animal and human. Plants ‘sense’ the light of the sun, even turning to expose more of their foliage to its life giving rays. They respond to sound because of the tiny hairs and micro fibres on stems and leaves (forerunners of the antennae of insects and the tiny hairs of the cochlea, which vibrate to sound waves). Plants are sensitive to touch and also to gasses. In this stage the monads reach out in every direction seeking sensation in their dream-like awareness.

The same two opposing forces are at work in humans and animals as in the mineral and the plant – the solar and the earth energies. The solar energies enter humans in rhythm with the cycle of respiration and in the same rhythmic cycle also through the chakras. Solar energies are also available to us as light radiation. The earth force – known as kundalini – rises from the ground, through the feet and legs to the base of the spine, from where it travels etheric pathways to the chakras, meeting the incoming solar force. The two forces rotate or spin in opposite directions to each other and so set up a plane of friction just inside the bell of the chakra. The result is physical awareness.

Both solar and earth energies have seven layers, fires, or potencies. Present humanity, now individualised, self-aware monads, have three to three and a half layers functioning at this time. The physical layer, the etheric or pranic layer, the astral or emotional layer, and up to half of the mental layer. These were opened in and correspond to the kingdoms – layer one – mineral, layer two – vegetable, layer three – animal, and the half of layer four is from the development so far of the human kingdom.

Spirit sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the vegetable, stirs in the animal, and awakes in man.

Each layer or portion of a layer can flow only through channels that have been opened up for it. And each increase in energy flow is marked by a similar increase in consciousness or ability to focus awareness at an appropriate level or plane. The flow of energy and corresponding awareness are interwoven. Each supported by the other. This is why the responsible teacher cautions the student that it is dangerous to meddle with the flow of energy to the chakras (especially through pranayama – breath control). Any significant increase in flow without the spiritual development necessary to accommodate it may result in harm; such as life-long pain, unwelcome psychic visions, or even some form of mental impairment.

It is interesting to note that the life-wave monads arrive at the physical plane locked in the earth itself – earth bound. They then rise out of it in the vegetable kingdom yet are still bound to it by roots. First encased, and then rooted. Next, moving into the animal kingdom, they struggle free completely, and can even evolve forms that can fly above it. In the human kingdom, the monads reach beyond the earth and the air, with the ability to travel out into space.

Awareness needs to keep pace with our expanding capacity to know. The Higher Self or Spirit/monad must attain liberation and fulfilment in unison with the personal self. Just as with the solar and earth forces, the two must become as one with the freedom of expression that can only be found in the complete unfolding of consciousness and the complete mastery of awareness working together.

The Master KH, letter 93B again:

“What is the good of the whole process of life on earth — you may ask them in your turn — if we are as good as ‘pure’ unconscious entities before birth, during sleep, and, at the end of our career?”

As the human kingdom evolves, with many more individuals breaking into higher awareness, the second half of layer four of the earth and solar fires will become ever more integrated into our human makeup. This will endow us with readily accessible higher minds just as the first half of layer four gives us lower mind. This stage of consciousness is referred to as enlightenment and by degrees, as each individual opens up, brings about a much needed higher consciousness generally in human affairs.

We may say that consciousness is not personal but rather impersonal. It is universal; omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. We have consciousness because we are a fraction, a fragment, a spark of that Divine Universality. In the fullness of time, of evolution, we will come to knowingly identify with that universality.

“Know ye not that you are Gods?” [Hermetic injunction]

From this point of view we may say that while consciousness is universal, awareness on the other hand is personal. Awareness can be thought of as how we focus the impersonal and universal power of consciousness for our own individual use. This is like our own bubble of that great sea. Awareness, however, is in itself unfocussed; more of a background than something specific. During sleep awareness shifts to the less controlled subconscious states, wherein we experience within a range of energy bands from blankness or dreaming to a full waking awareness of an inner plane or world.

In order to register and measure items, concepts, and particulars within this general field we need to refocus awareness into a narrower range. This can be seen as our perception. It is what we perceive within the general background of our personal awareness – that which we concentrate or focus on. We are surrounded by images and information from the total background of the space we occupy but we can isolate to a great extent the individual things that interest us leaving all else as peripheral. This, then, is what we actually perceive. The ability to focus on specifics is what helps us to learn and to evolve beyond the instinctual levels of awareness of the younger kingdoms.

The mind is the main receptacle or embodiment of our individual conscious awareness. Our mental bodies have evolved to the extent that they can focus awareness like a light is focussed through a lens. This is not confined to awareness of objects and external vibrations received through the five senses – such as in the lower kingdoms – but also include concepts, self-reflection, and creative imagination. Phrases such as ‘rigid thinking’ and ‘hard headed’ are indications of an inflexible mental body – a lens that is not malleable enough to refocus beyond well-established boundaries. We call such boundaries conditioning or programmed thinking.

The evolution of consciousness in the human kingdom requires the gradual development and eventual mastery of our mental bodies as we reach for harmonic resonance and unity with universal consciousness. It is this task that heads the list of key notes for our Root-race – the fifth, with the fifth Sub-race leading the way. However, all peoples, of whatever Sub-race, are playing their part in this to some degree adding their unique note to the human

song at this time. Future Sub-races – sixth and seventh – will take this development even higher, as they explore the Love/Wisdom and the divine Will aspects of human potential from the stepping stone of higher mind.

Thinking is good for the mind; it is as food is to the body. Imagination is good for the higher mind; it is a creative power, which must be exercised. Meditation is good for the spirit; it helps us to take full possession of our mental body freeing it from conditioning and leads to Self-aware conscious living.

Having reached this far along the course of involution and evolution, we humans can now come to comprehend our own nature. We can see both ways along the roadway of creation; back to our unconscious circling through embryonic principles and patterns long before the earth was born, and forward to the divine archetypal perfection of the Masters of Wisdom and the Great Beings who's work is to create, guide, maintain, and oversee planetary schemes such as ours.

We perceive:

We are aware:

We are consciousness.