

The Third Phase of Soul

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BOOKS QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

PLOTINUS QUOTES REFERENCED: I.6.9, IV.3.17, V.3.9. These quotes are referenced in the Astronoesis version of this paper, not in this version.

DIAGRAMS appended to this paper:

- FIGURE 1983 0429b-1-AD. Tripartite Soul, Levels of Cosmos, and Sheaths.
- FIGURE 1983 0429b-2-AB. Mercurius and Three Levels of Aspects.

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VERSION OF PAPER IN ASTRONOESIS: This is an early draft which is published in a different form in Astronoesis. There it is primarily found on pp. 252-256 of “The Third Phase of Soul,” Endnote 52, and a paragraph (“As we continue retracing our steps...”) in “Astrology: The Topography of the Subtle World” (Epistemology of Astrology). The last five paragraphs remain unpublished.

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NOTES:

- **RETYPE AD PAPER presented in class (V09MP).**
- This is **1983 04/29b, The Third Phase of Soul Paper, and the second entry associated with this date. 1983 04/29a = Astronoesis; Nature; Mercurius Class.**
- This paper is read and discussed in WG Class 1983 0429a Astronoesis; Nature; Mercurius. A different version of this paper is read and discussed in WG Class 1983 0527a Plotinus; Soul.

THE THIRD PHASE OF SOUL

[Paper as read by AS in WG Class 1983 0429a Begins]

The third phase of the soul, which we may call for convenience Mercurius, needs to be thoroughly understood and explained, and its functioning amplified by illustrating its relation to a body which is part of the cosmos.

It is a spark from that soul in the Nous and identical in essence with it, and therefore an eternal offspring, receiving from the cosmos or World-Idea the vehicles or sheaths which it must ultimately bring to qualitatively resemble its highest phase through the practice of the “imitation of God” or the philosophic disciplines, including yoga.

Without understanding the fundamental nature of this eternal twin, the theories of reincarnation and karma become hopelessly muddled. Some contemporary writers’ precise understanding of the philosophic doctrines falter here. To criticize a misunderstood theory of reincarnation is not of service to philosophic students, and may even have serious consequences for the author and his followers. Their intense and overwhelming aspiration to explain everything by reducing it to the nondual is an admirable display of devotion; but it is not the balanced view required by philosophy, for it leaves certain very important and practical matters unexplained and unexplainable.

The fact remains--and no words can abolish the situation--that our identification with our ego includes a meaning that cannot be whisked away at the stroke of a pen. They have not properly inquired into the value and significance of the ego. Obviously, the interval between the Self or *Atman* or the (Soul) and its representative, the ego, is a no-man’s land, and it is very noticeably left unexplained. That contemplative “Nature” put into so much travail to produce the necessary vehicles by which the Mercurial phase may evolve is in fact one of those questions which, if left unanswered, will rankle in our mind. It must be squarely faced. There are various views on this subject scattered throughout the ancient and modern writings, and we have attempted to bring them together in a coherent and organized fashion to help us in our understanding of reincarnation and, more to the point, metempsychosis, and also to understand the meaning and value of the ego, and how these fit into the metaphysical scheme.

As we previously pointed out, the ancients conceived the Soul as tripartite, but it can just as easily be conceived as dual. The higher Cognitive Act and the power of intelligence or (*cit-sakti*) of the soul as isolated cannot directly experience the sensible world; and therefore this higher phase acts through the lowest phase, or Mercurius, within which the manifestation of the World-Idea will take place. This third phase may be referred to as the function of manifestness, or *asmita* in Yoga terminology. This infinite light “descends” completely into the realms of manifestation by a process that will be explained later, that is, into the womb of the world, or what the Buddhists call the *Tathagatagarbha*.

This spark of the higher soul will evolve or gestate through indeterminable time concomitantly with the Idea of the World. This World-Idea is sponsored and organized by the Universal and cosmic souls (laughter) and projected through the individual soul. The perpetual unfoldment of the World-Idea is irreversible in its direction and therefore ultimately guarantees the evolution of that individual soul in its second phase. The evolving “double” of the soul, as part of the World-Idea, is spoken of as the “second soul.”

Through its function of manifestness, the soul is projecting the Cosmos given to it from within, and its experience of that Cosmos is the modification of its own functioning, referred to as *citta-vrittis*, or the world as thought, and this will depend on the level with which it is identified. This world of thought

encompasses the entire manifest universe for an individual soul. The archetypal or intellectual Idea of the universe is manifested through the secondary phase of soul, which will project it within itself by continuously transforming itself, and which Idea will include the necessary sheaths that the soul will operate through.

The very function of manifestness or *asmita* is also the means by which the individual soul takes itself, at any particular level, to be part of the cosmos, that is to be incarnated in one of those modifications or in some vehicle. The mental modes of its functioning are instantiating or imaging the Ideas as various grades of thought, and all these are manifest to, and appear within, the Mercurial phase of soul. In the Vedantic classification these grades are called *Anno*, *Prana*, *Mano*, *Vijnana*, and *Anandamaya koshas*. The Platonic equivalents Shelly, Moonlike, Sunlike, Noeron, and Augoeides. The imaged cosmos itself provides a framework within which we can locate these levels of vehicles. [Note: See FIGURE 1983 0429b-1-AD, Tripartite Soul, Levels of Cosmos, and Sheaths, appended to this paper. See also *Astronoesis*, p. 349, Figure 168.] We have tabulated and correlated these various classifications within the chart in the attempt to pictorialize somewhat the concept of Man as the ancients conceived him.

The Mercurius phase of the Soul as the pure form of manifestness-- that is, consciousness or “I AM”, our “I AM”--is first identified with the highest reaches of heaven, the intelligence of the cosmos in its pure (*sattvic*) aspect, called Reason or Wisdom of the Universe. Here it assumes substantiality as the pure joy of existence called the *anandamaya kosha*, or the Robe of Glory. The principle of pure light is being aprioristically conceived, that is, before it manifests a cosmos. But through this function of manifesting, the soul takes itself to be embodied in these reason-principles. The I takes itself to be this mind, the self-affirming certitude of “I am the World, I am the World-Idea.” At this level, the I or *asmita* is thus the substratum or basis for the differentiation of the appearances within itself, i.e., the basis of the lower principles that will evolve from Reason. At this stage of *ananda*, the soul that still has its wings is associated with a vestment of luminous reason-principles that form the “Robe of Glory” or Augoeides, the radiant body, and may truthfully say, “The world is my idea.” For here, the intelligence of the stars is the locus for the soul’s first association with the cosmos, and it is infused here with the intelligible form of the cosmos, or the World-Idea. At the station of Reason and its act--that is, the clear shining of the intelligence which contains the Ideas for the formation of the world--the highest phase of the Mercurial soul is in harmony with the operation of the cosmic and Universal Soul in forming the World-Idea.

The ray of the Soul in its universality, dressed with its robe of reason-principles, participates in the spiritual powers of absolute willing, knowing, and feeling, through which it is modalizing or particularizing itself as this individual soul at the level of *vijnanamaya kosha* or the Noeron body. This Nous or intelligence of the cosmos as being manifested through an individual soul includes that particular soul’s role in the World-Idea, and constitutes its spiritual knowledge. Consequently, the soul functioning at this level of intelligence is a spiritual gnosis that includes the spontaneous knowledge and activity of the planetary spheres, i.e., the next lower vehicle, the *manomaya kosha*. This self-knowing within the soul occurs through the modes of willing, feeling, and knowing, symbolized in the cosmology of astrology by the three trans-Saturnian functions, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. And these stand for the absolutes of knowing, feeling, and willing.

From here the Mercurial spark descends to its association with the cosmic soul’s faculty of understanding or image-making faculty and the resulting sensible world. First we have to consider its association with the cosmic soul’s functioning, its faculty of understanding that can create the necessary

concepts to implement its production. This is the realm of the Chaldean planets and their functioning, producing the World-Idea in its subtle form.

As we have said, the “I principle” or *asmita* identified with the *vijnanamaya kosha* includes the knowledge of these two lower realms. It is that power to know by which the Ideas are being variously combined to form the World-Idea for an individual soul. This latter is received by the functioning of the *manomaya kosha* or the mind. The individual soul conjoined to the cosmic soul participates in the functioning of its powers. The soul or mind receives the World-Idea and makes a representation of it for itself, and inherent in this production is its knowledge or intelligence, which may be referred to as the faculty of understanding, which simultaneously imbues its productions with significance, that is, a system of beliefs.

The mind of the cosmic soul is receiving the World-Idea and with its powers making representations of it. These sensations are organized by its faculty of understanding into seed-principles or the subtle image of the world. This then organizes the imaginal essence or the Earth’s memory which becomes the medium through which that prior mind can become reflectively aware of its activity.

At this level of our unconscious mental functioning, the World-Idea is being incessantly instantiated and a total significance included within it. That is, the soul’s fabricative powers combined with its faculty of understanding are constantly recreating the World-Idea. This subtle recreation or subtle image of the World-Idea is not optical and is prior to our reflective awareness; it is an alogical whole which nonetheless contains all the features that will later on become available to us through our murky, reflective self-consciousness. It is this immaterial reason-principle that is organizing the “matter”--or more precisely, the Earth’s memory, the elements--into individual living creatures. The individual horoscope is the map of this subtle image and is thus a means by which the incarnated soul will become reflectively aware of its own content through the functioning of the psychosomatic organism.

And as we have said, this psychosomatic organism is an organization of the Earth’s imagination and may be referred to as imitative being. We wish to remind the reader that at this point we may also recognize the presuppositions or basic attitudes that will be manifested in the functioning of his mental powers and faculties. Here and only here may we speak of Jung’s archetypes as the precondition for an individual psychological experience and say that philosophy is a mouthing of these archetypes.

This last realm is the sublunary system of tropes or life traces which the cosmic mind’s knowledge has organized into a variety of species in conformity to the World-Idea, as far as this is possible. In this imaginal realm of the Earth’s dragonic belt are constituted the Moonlike and Shelly bodies, the lowest vehicles of the soul’s experience. That our mind is really cosmic in extent is obscured at this final identification with the lowest or imaginal sheath, and the apparent bifurcation of the soul into an empirical subject and a phenomenal object occurs here. A simplified picture of the vast cosmological presuppositions must be delineated in order to understand our sensible experience. And for example, another diagram, the following three circle diagram, may be helpful. [Note: See FIGURE 1983 0429b-2-AB, Mercurius and Three Levels of Aspects, appended to this paper.] In this way the ancients conceived of what conditions were necessary for the arising of knowledge. The entire panorama of the sensible world which was fabricated by the gods was a necessary prerequisite--the stage upon which the actors made their entrances and exits.

The entire manifested world can be conceived of as a huge thought projected forth from each individual soul. Within this whole we may conceive of a hierarchy of levels, each level distinguished from the whole and from one another, the highest level Life Intellectual and among the lowest, the

vegetative life, a life dim and obscure. The laws that apply to our level are different from those of another, and all those various levels we can conceive as operative within a single entity. The microcosm is a miniature cosmos.

Nonetheless, we are to remember that we are situated within thought--Mind's functioning. The Mercurial phase of the individual soul may be thought of as associated or identified with the lowest of Nature's kingdom and gradually rising through this hierarchy and consequently assimilating a knowledge of those reason-principles from each of the levels.

If we insert this "I-ness" into an animal body which has gone through a phylogenetic and ontogenetic development, this soul would first be superimposed upon by the inherent functioning and vitality of that organism. This corresponds to the "man of flesh and blood," the separative ego that regards the world as completely other and which must be the source of satisfaction to its own desires. This is a whirlwind of never-ending activity. Essentially, this gives rise to a realistic epistemology and a geocentric world-view.

These are abstractions, for in reality we cannot truly separate the various levels that exist simultaneously within an individual. However, constantly intruding into this "natural man" is the functioning of the world's intelligence, which is indicated by the motion of the Chaldean planets--altering, modifying, transforming that matrix of tendencies (despite the claims of inertia, which was referred to as the psychosomatic organism). Ultimately, a sufficient deposit of this higher mind's functioning orientates that individual soul towards a more rational view or a heliocentric position.

If we continue retracing our steps on the upward path of that part of the soul which is said to be divisible among bodies, we can summarize the foregoing remarks by pointing out the relationship that exists between the transiting Chaldean planets to the natal chart, or, how that individual's greater mind is attempting to become aware of itself in the reflecting medium that the psychosomatic organism supplies. It must do so through this organism that has a phylogenetic and ontogenetic background, but nonetheless to which it is heir. We should point out in a very specific way the interferences and distortions that intervene between the subtle image produced by the greater mind's functioning and its reflection in that empirical subject which is its vehicle.

To properly envisage the complexity of this situation, the astrologer cosmologist had to conceive the solar system or the seven Chaldean planets as the greater mind whose spontaneous activity or functioning is what Samkhya refers to as the eight powers of buddhi (which can be thought of as four powers operating either toward manifestation or away from manifestation), and including also seven fabricative powers of the soul. The former powers correspond to the four levels of dignities in the astrological mandala.

These eight are reduplicated in the psychosomatic organism as the reflective awareness of the empirical subject--as psychological functions in Jungian terms, or the equivalent in Samkhya as *alocana*, *vikalpa*, *abhimana*, and *niscaya*, whose activity results in the bifurcation of the subtle image into a subject and object that translates the unreflective activity of the transcendental imagination into a phenomenal world with all that it implies.

If we situate ourselves at this level of subjectivity--this unity of the transcendental "I" or the impersonal Witness or the undivided mind--then it can regard its transformations in five different modes corresponding to right knowledge, wrong knowledge, imagination, presentation of a presentation (memory), and presentation of absence, that is, including sleep. In trying to understand the impersonal Witness' overall view, we can fall back on the analogy of the dream. The dreamer is conscious of his

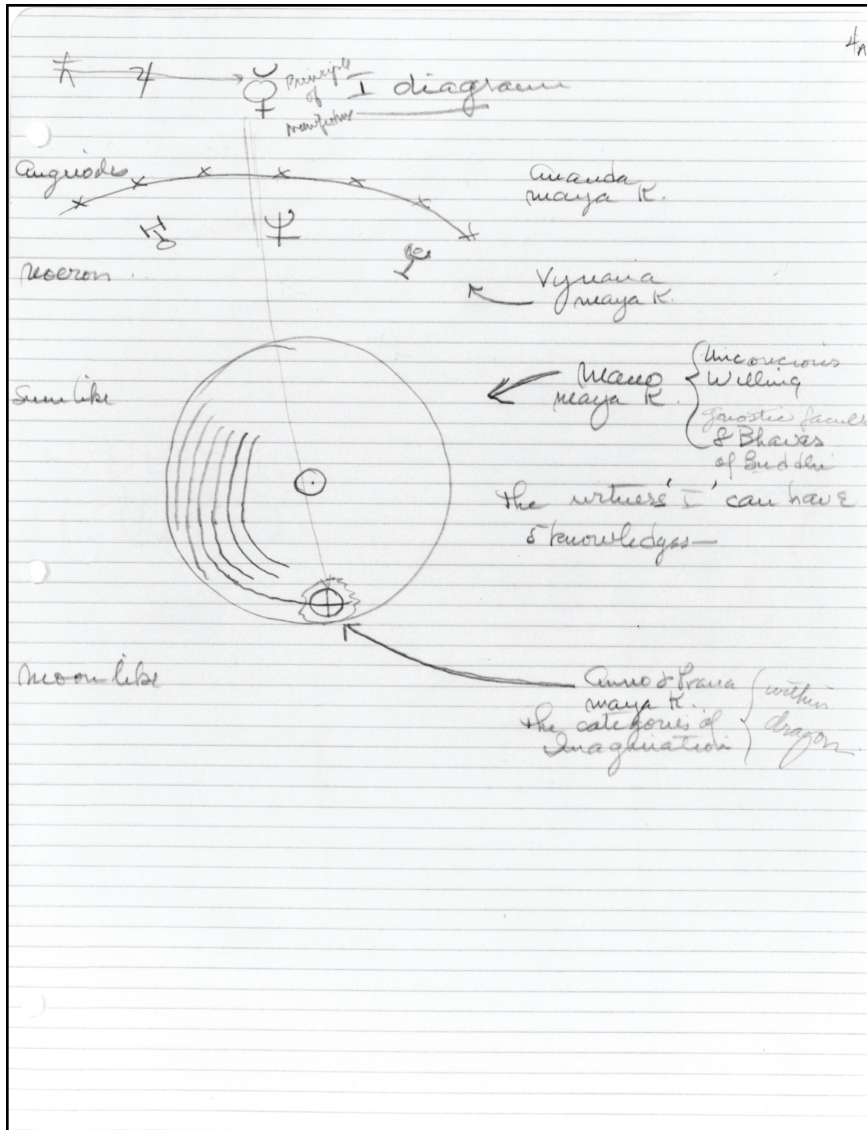
dream and has recognition that it is within the imagination; and that his dream self is asleep; or, that his dream self has right or wrong knowledge in regard to a given topic; or, that his dream self is remembering. It is a consciousness that is not tethered to the compulsions inherent in the psychosomatic organism. This grander knowledge inherent in the functioning of the individual mind is an entirety or the transcendental unity of apperception. The lower mind, i.e., the empirical, with its accompanying world image, is a synthesis, pure or impure as the case may be, within which the empirical subject is becoming reflectively aware of this "I" within himself.

If we continue with the dream analogy, a hidden complex which is neither in time or space, it is analogous to the World-Idea, stimulates the mind into an activity. In this activity the mind tries to represent to itself that stimulus, the complex, and is incessantly transforming itself into sensations that include a representation of the dreamer's self. This transformation is the first image which is prior to the dreamer's self becoming reflectively aware of it. In the process of becoming self-reflectively aware of it, those tendencies or strongly held attitudes and habits are constituent ingredients of the dreamer's self which intrudes in its perception of the dream world by superimposing prior tendencies on its judgments.

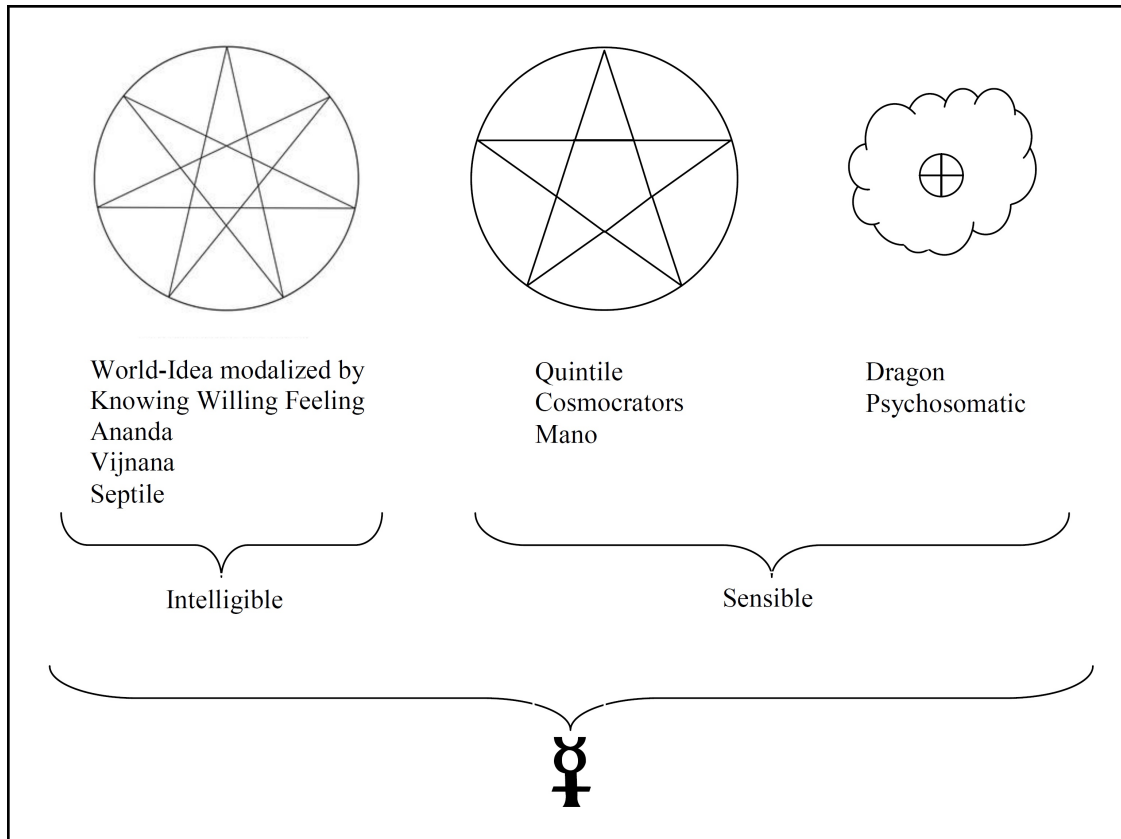
The dreamer's mind is like the impersonal Witness-I which has the power to think the dream world into existence, and then by identifying with a certain cluster of sensations which represent the dreamer's self, with which he can identify, it then experiences the world it has thought into existence, that is, the impersonal Witness mind can experience the world which it has itself thought into existence. Rarely does the dream self consciously realize that it is the functioning of his own mind that he experiences. We generally remain sleep-walkers.

[Paper as read by AS in WG Class 1983 0429a Ends]

DIAGRAMS FOR 1983 0429b



[FIGURE 1983 0429b-1-AD. Tripartite Soul, Levels of Cosmos, and Sheaths. K= Kosha. Facsimile scan of hand-drawn diagram by Anthony Damiani from *Astronoesis*, p. 254.]



[FIGURE 1983 0429b-2-AB. Mercurius and Three Levels of Aspects. Computer generated by NT and IT from AB class notes.]