

## 4 THE THREE QUESTIONS OF THE SPHINX: WHENCE? HOW? WHITHER?

### *4.1 The Trinity of Existence*

<sup>1</sup>As regards the theory of knowledge, everything is above all what it appears to be, but beside that always something totally different and immensely more.

<sup>2</sup>The trinity of existence is constituted by three equivalent aspects: matter, motion, and consciousness. None of these three can exist without the other two. All matter is in motion and has consciousness. Consciousness is either potential (unconscious) or actualized, passive (inactive) or active.

### *4.2 The Cosmos*

<sup>1</sup>According to esoteric hylozoics (Pythagoras' doctrine), primordial matter is unlimited space and contains the inexhaustible store of unconscious primordial atoms. In this primordial matter there is space for an unlimited number of globes. Our cosmos is such a globe.

<sup>2</sup>The cosmos is composed of primordial atoms (monads), which constitute the smallest possible parts of primordial matter and the smallest possible firm points for individual consciousness. The primordial atoms form a continuous series of increasingly coarser states of aggregation, increasingly coarser kinds of matter.

<sup>3</sup>The cosmos is a perfect organization consisting of a long series of interpenetrating material worlds of different degrees of density. The visible physical world is the lowest one being of the coarsest kind of matter. Higher worlds exist in all the lower ones. In the physical world thus exists the whole series of atomic worlds. The matter of each lower world is composed of increasingly more primordial atoms.

### *4.3 Involution*

<sup>1</sup>The worlds are built out from "above", from the highest world. The primordial atoms are involved into ever coarser kinds of atoms with each lower world. All the pertaining involutory processes are named by the comprehensive term involution.

<sup>2</sup>Each world has its own kind of "space" (dimension), "time" (continued existence, duration), atomic matter and aggregates composed out of this, motion (power, energy, vibration, "will"), and consciousness. Thus only primordial matter is "beyond space and time".

### *4.4 The Forms of Life*

<sup>1</sup>All life has a form, from atoms, molecules, aggregates, to planets, solar systems, and cosmic worlds. These forms are subject to the law of transformation, are continually being changed, dissolved, and re-formed. The monads (primordial atoms) make up (as viewed from the physical) an ascending series of ever higher forms of life, in which lower ones enter into and make up envelopes for higher ones. The entire cosmos constitutes a series of increasingly more refined forms of life, serving gradually to furnish the monad consciousness with the "organ" it needs for its continued development.

<sup>2</sup>The monads are the only indestructible things in the universe. There is no "death", just new forms for the monad consciousness. When the form has fulfilled its temporary purpose for the consciousness development of the monad, it is dissolved.

#### 4.5 Evolution

<sup>1</sup>Involution implies the involution of the monads to the lowest cosmic world, evolution their return to the highest cosmic world. Thereby they acquire in the lowest world full active self-consciousness, and later omniscience and omnipotence in ever higher worlds. Evolution thus consists in a series of ever higher natural kingdoms, ever higher stages of development. Every monad is found somewhere on this enormous scale of development; where depends on its age: the moment of its introduction into the cosmos from primordial matter, and its transition from a lower to a higher natural kingdom.

<sup>2</sup>Evolution is divided into five natural kingdoms and seven divine kingdoms. The planetary worlds contain the natural kingdoms, the solar systemic worlds the lowest divine kingdom, and the cosmic worlds the remaining six.

<sup>3</sup>Mankind, having up to now explored about one millionth part of reality, has in the physical world the possibility of exploring about one per cent of the whole of existence. The monad in the fifth natural kingdom can be conscious of about 10 per cent, as a divinity in the lowest divine kingdom about 14 per cent, in the second divine kingdom 28, in the third 42, in the fourth 56, in the fifth 70, in the sixth 85, and in the highest divine kingdom 100 per cent. All knowledge of existence is authoritative throughout series of monads in ever higher worlds, until the individual is able to acquire the necessary first-hand knowledge by his own experience.

<sup>4</sup>Before the monad has attained the highest divine kingdom, it distinguishes between god immanent and god transcendent. Immanent divinity is always conscious of its unity with all life. The superconscious belongs to transcendent divinity.

<sup>5</sup>When a sufficient number of monads have succeeded in working their way from the lowest natural kingdom up to the highest divine kingdom, this collective being is able to leave its cosmic globe in order to begin to build out a cosmic globe of its own in primordial matter, the material being primordial atoms taken from the inexhaustible store of primordial matter.

#### 4.6 The Process of Manifestation

<sup>1</sup>The entire cosmos makes up one continuous process of manifestation in which all monads participate with their consciousness manifestations, unconsciously or consciously, involuntarily or voluntarily. The higher the world or kingdom, the higher the kind of consciousness, the greater is the monad's contribution to the process of manifestation.

<sup>2</sup>When the monad has gone through involution and evolution of the process of manifestation, has acquired and discarded envelope after envelope in world after world, and, finally, in the highest cosmic world, has freed itself from its involution into matter, it becomes conscious of itself as a monad. Until then it will identify itself with one or another of the envelopes which it has acquired and activated.

#### 4.7 Consciousness

<sup>1</sup>Consciousness is one. The entire cosmos constitutes one total consciousness in which every monad has an inalienable part. The universal consciousness is like a sum total of the consciousness of all monads, just as the ocean is the union of all water-drops. All consciousness thus by nature is both collective and individual, although the normal individual cannot grasp this, his resources being enormously limited.

<sup>2</sup>There are as many different kinds of consciousness as there are kinds of matter. Each world has its own total consciousness, just as each monad envelope has its own. Each next higher world presents, as compared with each next lower world, an enormous increase, intensively as well as extensively, in respect of energy and consciousness. In each world the monad consciousness apprehends reality totally differently. This is what was originally meant by the saying that all apprehension of reality is maya, or "illusion", since there is no common

apprehension that is universally valid until in the highest cosmic world.

<sup>3</sup>Every world, every planet, solar system, etc., thus has its own collective consciousness, and constitutes a unitary collective being having one monad as the superior dominant. The higher the kingdom attained by the monad, the greater its participation in the cosmic total consciousness. When the monad has acquired planetary consciousness, it is a planetary being. When, finally, it has actualized its potential universal consciousness, it has become an individual unit in cosmic omniscience and omnipotence. Until then, it will have been the furthest developed monad in that increasingly larger material envelope which it has been able to regard as its own envelope. In each world it robes itself in an envelope of the matter of that world, this envelope becoming increasingly more extended.

<sup>4</sup>The monad is indestructible individual consciousness which, being originally potential (unconscious), is awakened to active consciousness in the lowest natural kingdom of the lowest world (the physical mineral kingdom) and gradually acquires consciousness in ever higher worlds. Only the coarsest matter offers sufficient resistance for the subjective monad consciousness to learn to discriminate between the opposites of inner (subjective) and outer (objective) reality, and to acquire active consciousness, which is the prerequisite of self-consciousness in all kinds of reality. After that, the monad is able by self-activity to acquire the requisite qualities and abilities in ever higher natural kingdoms in ever higher worlds.

<sup>5</sup>Consciousness in a lower kind of matter and world does not entail consciousness in or of a higher world, which thus appears to be non-existent. All that is superior to the monad belongs to its superconscious. The whole past of the monad belongs to its subconsciousness, in new incarnations only indirectly accessible as remembrance anew in connection with experiences of similar kinds.

<sup>6</sup>For the monad, evolution does not mean only self-acquisition of ever higher kinds of consciousness, but also liberation from identification with lower kinds, which always appear to be the only knowable and certain ones, since they are the only ones experienced and known up to then.

<sup>7</sup>Just as higher matter penetrates lower, so higher consciousness apprehends all lower kinds.

#### 4.8 *The Natural Kingdoms*

<sup>1</sup>The monad consciousness “sleeps” in the mineral kingdom, “dreams” in the vegetable kingdom, awakens in the animal kingdom, acquires self-consciousness in the human kingdom, and knowledge of existence in the fifth natural kingdom, subsequently to continue its consciousness evolution in the seven ever higher divine kingdoms, thereby acquiring omniscience and omnipotence in ever higher worlds.

<sup>2</sup>The planets represent the five lowest worlds and the five natural kingdoms. Of these five kingdoms, the mineral kingdom belongs to the visible physical world. The vegetable kingdom also has a part in the physical etheric world, the animal kingdom in the emotional world (improperly called the astral world), the human kingdom in the mental world, and the fifth natural kingdom in the causal world.

<sup>3</sup>When the mineral monads have succeeded in acquiring physical etheric consciousness, they pass to the vegetable kingdom. Consciousness first expresses itself as a tendency to repetition, becoming a tendency to organized habit, or “nature”. When consciousness increases, there arises a striving after adaptation. The vegetable monads become animal monads through acquiring emotional consciousness. When their mental consciousness is sufficiently active, the animal monads pass to the human kingdom; and man passes to the fifth natural kingdom through acquiring full consciousness in his causal envelope.

<sup>4</sup>The monads in the mineral kingdom are enclosed in an envelope that belongs to a mineral group-soul, those in the vegetable kingdom are in a vegetable group-soul, and those in the animal kingdom in an animal group-soul. In the higher worlds the monad itself is to enrobe

itself in an envelope belonging to the matter of the respective worlds. Having developed so as to acquire an envelope of its own in the causal world, the animal monad transmigrates to the human kingdom. The monad is subsequently during the whole of its sojourn in the human kingdom always enclosed in its causal envelope. One can say that it is the causal envelope that incarnates, embraces, and penetrates the lower envelopes. It should be evident from this that a man can never be reborn as an animal, any more than an animal can become a plant, or a plant a mineral. Transmigration cannot work backwards.

<sup>5</sup>It is by no means necessary for the monad to develop through organic envelopes. In fact, most monads (those following the parallel deva evolution, for instance) have never had other bodies than aggregate envelopes consisting of atoms and molecules held together electromagnetically, such as man has in all worlds except in the visible.

#### *4.9 The Envelopes and Worlds of Man*

<sup>1</sup>During incarnation in the physical world, the monad in the human kingdom has a total of five envelopes at its disposal, one envelope in each of the five lowest worlds: an organism in the visible physical world, an etheric envelope in the physical etheric world, an emotional envelope in the emotional world, a mental envelope in the mental world, and a permanent causal envelope in the causal world (Platon's world of ideas). Of these five envelopes, the four lowest are renewed at each incarnation and are dissolved more or less rapidly after the monad has freed itself from the organism. All envelopes except the organism are aggregate envelopes. Etheric matter encloses every cell of the organism and conveys those different functional energies which the ancients called vital force. The emotional, mental, and causal envelopes embrace and penetrate all the lower ones. They are oval in shape and extend between 30 and 45 cm beyond the organism, making the so-called aura. Approximately 99 per cent of the matter of these envelopes is attracted to the organism and is held together within its periphery, so that the aggregate envelopes form complete replicas of the former.

#### *4.10 The Consciousness of Man*

<sup>1</sup>During incarnation the normal individual, at mankind's present general stage of development, is as a rule objectively conscious in his organism only, subjectively conscious in his etheric, emotional, and mental envelopes, and unconscious in his causal envelope. "Visible" physical reality, comprising the three lowest physical states of aggregation (solid, liquid, gaseous), is the only one man knows anything about and that which he considers to be the only one existing. He regards his desires and feelings in his emotional envelope and his thinking in his mental envelope as subjective states only, not understanding that these phenomena objectively correspond to vibrations in the kinds of matter of the respective worlds.

<sup>2</sup>When the individual has acquired objective consciousness in all his envelopes of incarnation together with causal intuition and thus consciousness in his causal envelope, he passes as a causal self to the fifth natural kingdom.

<sup>3</sup>Before the monad has acquired the ability of permanent causal activity, it is upon the conclusion of its incarnation to await a new rebirth, asleep in its causal envelope. Thereby its continuity of consciousness is lost and its memory of the past becomes latent until the monad is able to be causally conscious.

<sup>4</sup>The number of incarnations in each natural kingdom is unlimited until the individual will have acquired the qualities and abilities requisite in the respective kingdoms, and an envelope of his own in the next higher world. It should be noted that all qualities acquired remain latent in a new incarnation if they are not developed, a thing which becomes increasingly easier, however. Usually only understanding is actual.

#### 4.11 Man's Stages of Development, etc.

<sup>1</sup>Classes are the natural order of things. The natural classes indicate different classes of age, in the human kingdom as well as in all other natural kingdoms, both lower and higher ones.

<sup>2</sup>During his sojourn in the human kingdom, the individual passes through five stages of development: the stage of barbarism (as a lower emotional self), the stage of civilization (as a lower mental self), the stage of culture (higher emotional self), the stage of humanity (higher mental self), and the stage of ideality (causal self).

<sup>3</sup>The monad develops through learning from its own experiences and reaping what it has sown in previous incarnations. Everything good and evil that the individual meets with is his own doing. Nothing can befall him that he has not deserved. Injustice in any respect whatsoever is absolutely precluded, and the talk about it is a manner of speech of the ignorant of life and envious.

<sup>4</sup>Development in monads of repulsive basic tendency can take a wrong course, this showing already in parasitism of plants and in predacity of animals. In the lower kingdoms the monads by and large counteract development, disarranging the order of things, everything on their own responsibility. Unconscious and, to a still higher degree, conscious encroachment on the monad's inalienable, inviolable divine freedom, limited by the equal right of all living beings, results in the struggle for existence and the cruelty of life.

<sup>5</sup>The vegetable monads develop through the plants being devoured by animals and men and in this being subjected to the forceful emotional vibrations in these animal bodies.

<sup>6</sup>The fault is not with life that the individual at lower stages of development in his almost total ignorance of life makes mistakes as to all but every one of the laws of nature and laws of life.

<sup>7</sup>According to the fundamental axiom of esoterics, there are laws in everything and everything is expressive of law. Anyone who possesses knowledge of all laws in all worlds is omniscient. Omnipotence and freedom are possible only through absolutely faultless application of all the laws.

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<sup>8</sup>The esoteric world view can never, of course, be anything else for mankind but a working hypothesis. But the further mankind develops, the more evident the incomparable superiority of this hypothesis will become. The causal self is able to ascertain its accordance with facts in the five worlds of man.

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