

COSMOSES 1

We live in a number of different worlds: mostly the world of human society. But a walk in the park or the countryside makes us aware of the world of nature. Seeing the sun and the moon and the stars shows us the solar system and our galaxy. Equally, other worlds live inside us: the world of organs and tissues – the heart, pancreas and so on, the world of cells – blood cells, brain cells, and so on down to subatomic particles.

We are barely conscious of most of these worlds, and some of them seem to be beyond our direct experience, for example the atomic world and the universe as a whole. Our only contact with them seems to be through physics.

These worlds outside us and inside us are largely physical worlds. However, we 'live' in other kinds of world as well: for example, the worlds of the mind and the spirit.

How do all these worlds relate to each other and to us?

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'Cosmoses' – is a precise plan of the different physical worlds. It says that each of them is constructed in the same way – meaning perhaps that the rules are the same though the appearance may differ – and it gives the relation between one cosmos and the next. The worlds are the same as those in the Ray of Creation, but it is better to forget about the Ray of Creation until later.

'Cosmoses' was first given as follows:

At one of the following meetings, after a fairly long talk on knowledge and being, G. said:

“Strictly speaking, you cannot as yet speak of knowledge because you do not know with what knowledge begins.

Knowledge begins with the teaching of the cosmoses.

You know the expressions 'macrocosm' and 'microcosm.' This means 'large cosmos' and 'small cosmos,' 'large world' and 'small world.' The universe is regarded as a 'large cosmos' and man as a 'small cosmos,' analogous to the large one. This establishes, as it were, the idea of the unity and the similarity of the world and man...

‘As above, so below’, is an expression which refers to cosmoses.
But it is essential to know that the full teaching on cosmoses speaks not of two, but of seven cosmoses, included one within another.

Seven cosmoses, taken together in their relation to one another, alone represent a complete picture of the universe...

The first cosmos is the Protocosmos - the first cosmos.

The second cosmos is the Ayocosmos¹, the holy cosmos, or the Megalocosmos, the 'great cosmos.'

The third cosmos is the Macrocosmos - the 'large cosmos.'

The fourth cosmos is the Deuterocosmos - the 'second cosmos.'

The fifth cosmos is the Mesocosmos - the 'middle cosmos.'

The sixth cosmos is the Tritocosmos - the 'third cosmos.'

The seventh cosmos is the Microcosmos - the 'small cosmos.'"

In Search of the Miraculous

These names are not self-explanatory; but we shall see later they make more sense when put on an enneagram. G. related them to physical worlds as follows:

"The Protocosmos is the Absolute in the ray of creation, or world 1. The Ayocosmos is world 3 ('all worlds' in the ray of creation). The Macrocosmos is our starry world or the Milky Way (world 6 in the ray of creation). The Deuterocosmos is the sun, the solar system (world 12). The Mesocosmos is 'all planets' (world 24), or the earth as the representative of the planetary world."

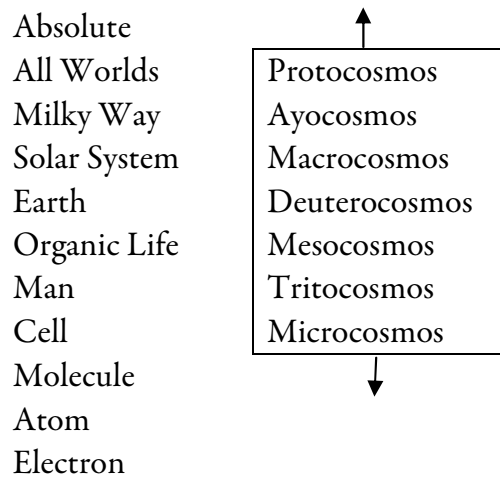
At this point there was a discussion over the identification of the last two cosmoses in terms of actual worlds. We will use Ouspensky's scheme for now and maybe look at alternatives later. In his view the Tritocosmos is 'organic life on earth' (or the biosphere, 'Gaia'). Microcosmos is 'man'.

Protocosmos	Absolute
Ayocosmos	All Worlds
Macrocosmos	Milky Way
Deuterocosmos	Solar System
Mesocosmos	Earth
Tritocosmos	Organic Life
Microcosmos	Man

It was also said that Microcosmos is the 'atom', defined as the smallest amount of any substance that retained all its properties.

Ouspensky realised that the set of cosmoses (Protocosmos etc) is a kind of ruler or ladder and any set of worlds could be put against it, starting with a different 'atom'. Also, he included another set of worlds smaller than man – cells, molecules, atoms etc. So the complete set of worlds looks like this (this uses a slightly different nomenclature than Ouspensky's, but is more in line with modern physics):

¹ or Hagiocosmos



That is as far as we go with Cosmoses this week. But there are some questions:

Not all the worlds one could think of are included as Cosmoses. For example what about organs of the body? What about asteroids?

What does Microcosmos being an 'atom' mean? In what sense is man the 'atom' of the whole universe?

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Most of what has been said so far about Cosmoses relates to the physical world. How do worlds such as those of the mind and spirit come into it? To deal with this we need to develop in parallel a teaching about these worlds and how they enter into the human organism. It is convenient here to use the Indian teaching in which there are 4 worlds or levels:

- Divine level
- Causal level
- Subtle level
- Physical level

The subtle level is the world of mind; the causal level is the world of spirit and the world of unseen causes. The divine level is out of our orbit! The divine level contains and creates the causal level, and so on down. In this system of teaching we humans have bodies corresponding to the levels: physical body, subtle body, causal body, maybe divine body.

Another piece of teaching we shall need is the 'five elements', ether, air, fire, water, earth. At first sight this seems rather medieval but it is worth persevering with it. The creation supposedly proceeds in the order:

ether→air→fire→water→earth

This is similar to the System teaching of the Ray of Creation – creating coarser matter from finer matter.

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Here is an exercise which should be done once a day while we are learning about CosmoSes:

Sit in a chair, comfortably, but upright. Close your eyes. Consider each of the following for about 30 seconds each:

Feel the weight of your body on the chair: this is earth.

Listen to or imagine the circulation. You may notice the heartbeat, or imagine blood circulating or imagine bodily fluids. This is water.

Locate mentally the solar plexus where you feel anger or excitement or fear, and try to feel heat in it. This is fire.

Notice your breathing. This is air.

Make a mental picture of the space your body occupies and let go of the image: try to be empty, float. This is ether.

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