

COSMOSES 4

“Knowledge begins with cosmoses”. What can this mean?

In the last three papers we have explored the idea mostly on a very large scale and have come to the idea that the chain of worlds that creates the universe we observe, from the infinitely large to the infinitely small, forms a circle, or a snake eating its tail. The key is that mysterious point where the two opposite ends of the chain merge and become one.

Here we begin to approach the mystery of a reality which has no beginning and no end. We have been looking at this mostly in terms of space and size, but if we think in terms of time we approach the mystery of human life and the possibility that the moment of birth and the moment of death are in fact simultaneous.

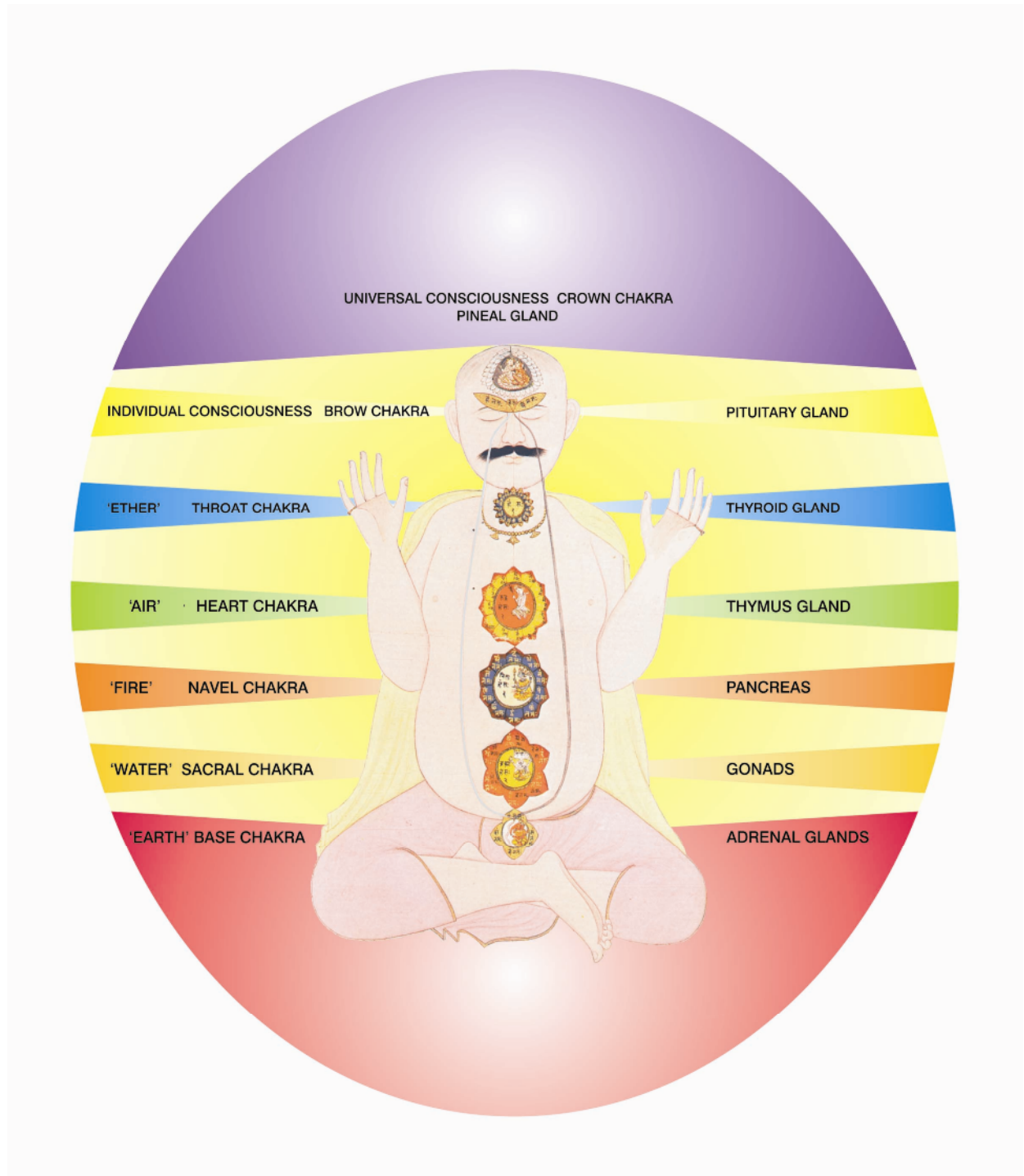
Yet modern science and mainstream philosophy offer no convincing answer to the question of what lies beyond the map they have created. There was nothing, then a Big Bang, and then here we all are. About 15 billion years ago there was absolute nothingness and then within less than a nanosecond the material universe exploded into existence. Stranger still, the physical matter so produced was not a random and chaotic mess, but seemed to organize itself into ever more complex and intricate forms—matter producing life and then mind and finally consciousness.

To the question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” there are two general answers. One answer, the scientific one, really comes down to, “Just don’t ask, it’s a silly question,” which is really not very satisfactory for enquiring minds. The other, an age-old answer, is that “Something else is going on, more than we are aware of, but we have no idea what it is.”

If we pursue the idea of cosmoses further we can begin to step out of the limitations of ordinary concepts. The ouraboros is more like a worm, a creature made up of a succession of circular segments joined together to create its length. Now every segment in itself is also a complete ouraboros, and the great ouraboros we began with is also just another segment of an even greater one, and so on without beginning or end. If we hold steadily to this idea we really will begin to feel that ‘time’ and ‘space’ really are only constructs of our particular mental apparatus. Ouspensky produced this figure to conceive from the three dimensional point of view an idea of the fourth:



The truly infinite is beyond the ordinary mind. The concept of hierarchy, a scale of relationships from Absolute All to Absolute Nothing is only a construct to accommodate the mind. In fact the relationships of this scale appear on an infinite number of levels, and how we see it depends on where we are standing. It is an infinitely sliding scale within which the relationships remain governed by the same laws. The nature of the phenomena they produce are infinitely varied but the underlying laws remain the same.



PART 2

Arthur Koestler coined the term 'holon' to refer to that which being a whole in one context is simultaneously a part in another. The whole hierarchy of worlds or cosmoses that we can observe consists of just this principle, and this is what the now common term 'holism' really means. But what does our own cosmos actually consist of?

The picture given by the Western system and the tradition of Advaita is of a whole being made up of a scale of different levels of matter which connect to similar levels in other cosmoses greater and smaller. Whether this 'whole being' is self-governing or governed by the outside influences received through these connections, is a matter of consciousness — even though it is a fact that we are made of the same matter as the stars.

We are all aware of some of our connections with the outside world—we call them food, air and impressions. But there are reputedly a further range of influences which we receive and transmit quite unconsciously. These influences are said to manifest through a set of subtle transducers, known as chakras, which shift and regulate the frequency and volume of the cosmic energies flowing in and out of us so that they can be expressed on our human scale. In medical terms these transducers can be related to the system of endocrine glands and the plexuses of the nervous system which control our emotions, moods and responses to our environment.

The comparative dominance of any one, or a set, of these transducers produces what we may call a 'type' of person. The choleric or martial solar plexus type, the mercurial thyroid, the cool, thoughtful saturnine type of the pituitary. The medieval 'humours' and the planetary types whose adjectives we still use in common speech were an attempt to express this same idea.

All this can imply that a great deal of what we regard as our precious individuality is actually the result of influences of which we are completely unaware — and this is one explanation of the 'mechanicalness' which, as we all know by now, only begins to lose its hold when we are consciously aware of ourselves in the present moment.

The chakras can transmit and receive energy on three or more levels, but, as the system says, we are born with only a sufficient capacity to preserve life and function in the world—anything else we have to earn or discover by our own efforts. Although we have the capacity to receive energies at a level to sustain a subtle and a causal body as well as the physical, this capacity is only latent in most of us. The subtle body is only active enough to support the physical body and of the causal body we know hardly anything at all.

In the ordinary mechanical state of identification where we pass most of our lives—however high flown our ideas—we are ruled by the three lower chakras. Our emotions are controlled by the solar plexus and our instincts and desires by the sacral and base chakras. Very rarely does emotion reach a pitch where it rises to the heart, or individual consciousness rise to meet the universal consciousness of which it is a part.

Once again, this time on an individual scale, we meet the idea that human beings stand at the midway point of creation, between heaven and hell, or as Nietzsche said, "Man is a bridge over an abyss." But this is an abyss over which we must pass if we are to claim our birthright to become truly, as the System proposes, Regent of the biosphere rather than as just another species. The truth of this suggestion may be demonstrated by the fact that as a species, even in our mechanical and unconscious condition, we are capable of destroying the world that we have the potential to rule and nurture. And this choice and capacity applies also to ourselves as individuals, to the cosmos that we are or could be.

The System suggests that if we can develop our potential to its full extent we can become 'immortal within the limits of the solar system'. In other words our consciousness can expand in duration and frequency to encompass unimaginable dimensions.

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Ouspensky wrote in his Notes on the Gospel of St John:

“St. John is a poet. He gives new meanings to ordinary words. When he speaks of Wine. Bread. Light. Flesh. Blood, he means Foods — New Powers.

Food is a key. It is a new force which starts machinery.

Food is another name for Power. If we stop for an instant feeding, we die.

Innumerable keys turn the wheels which control the circulation of our blood and feed our brain and keep up movement in us continually, which we call life. Our food is light, air, vision, sound and every impression of feeling and sensation drawn from our surroundings. We have an illusion of being active. In reality we depend entirely upon our foods and have no more power in ourselves than a windmill without wind.

Self-Remembering is an effort to make new power which will be Food for new faculties, which otherwise are starved."

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