

LESSON 10

THE WORLD OF THOUGHT

The World of Thought, also known as the Mental Plane, represents the highest of the three fields where the human evolutionary process takes place. We are told that, after our physical death, we undergo there a number of important activities directly connected with our development.

The mental sphere, which interpenetrates both the astral and the physical spheres of our planet, is made of mental matter. Like the matter of the other six spheres, mental matter is atomic but increasingly subtle in relation to astral and physical matter, so much so that if it were possible to transport a man directly from the physical sphere to the mental sphere, it would be the equivalent to electrocuting him, given the enormous difference in vibrational rate between mental and physical atoms.

It is, we are told, a world of ineffable beauty which affords a truly heavenly way of existence, but its reason for being far exceeds in importance the bliss and ecstasy of those who pass through it; its more important feature is that it provides learning processes which are essential to our development. These processes take place in a manner quite indescribable in physical terms, in a realm where language, as we understand it, does not exist and where the conditions of life - which we are told encompass five dimensions - are entirely different from both the physical and the astral realms. Another important function of the Mental World is to furnish the conditions for assimilation and storage of all the things we have learned during our sojourn through physical life, turning them into faculties. This is the method through which Nature allows us to retain the essence of everything we have learned in the course of our incarnations.

Like the five other spheres that surround and interpenetrate the physical sphere, the World of Thought has seven sub-divisions which are grouped in two regions, as follows. The Rosicrucians have classified them as follows:

Abstract Region

1. Sub-division of germinal ideas of form in minerals, plant, animals and man.
2. Sub-division of germinal ideas of life in plant, animal and man.
3. Sub-division of germinal ideas of desire and emotion in man and animals.

Concrete Region

4. The Continental Sub-division
5. The Oceanic Sub-division.
6. The Aerial Sub-division.
7. The Archetypal Subdivision.

NOTES

We are
told that

all ideas have their origin in the Abstract Region of the Mental World, but that in order to bring them into fruition the Region of Concrete Thought furnishes the mind-stuff or mental matter with ideas to clothe themselves in and produce the corresponding thought-forms. Let us give an example to illustrate this point. An engineer is asked to design a moving vehicle for someone who needs to travel. The first thing he will have to do is imagine such a vehicle. Hence his first thought will be of an abstract nature. But as he attempts concentration of the image in order to comply with the instructions of the person who ordered the vehicle, a thought-form will materialize in his Mental Body in the shape of a car. With this thought-form or mental image well set in his mind (or Mental "Body"), the engineer will go to his drawing board and draw the two dimensional image of a car; this is known as a blueprint. Now the thought-form of our designer exists not only in mental matter but also in the physical world. From this concrete or solidified idea, new ideas will surge forth in terms of mathematical calculations related to the measures and general structure of the vehicle and its dynamics. The engineer's blueprint will serve as the model on the basis of which the actual three-dimensional shape of the car will be constructed in a factory utilizing elements furnished by the Physical World such as steel, glass, plastics, rubber, leather, etc. This example shows an important occult axiom: everything that exists in the Physical World must have prior existence in the Mental World. In other words, for things to become a three-dimensional "reality" they must first be thought out, they must first be constructed in mental matter. This, of course, applies not only to mechanical things such as a car, but to everything that exists in the Universe, including physical bodies.

This brings us to the occult notion of Archetypes.

In our ignorance we attribute the building of forms in the physical world to the forces of Nature. Although this is not in essence incorrect, we are told that the builders of these forms are in fact high Intelligences known as Archetypes. The work of these High Intelligences is specialized in the lower or Concrete Mental Region, as follows:

1. The Continental Sub-division: Archetypal Forces of Human Mind
2. The Oceanic Sub-division: Archetypes of Desire and Emotion.
3. The Aerial Sub-division: Archetypes of Universal Vitality.
4. The archetypal Sub-division: Archetypes of Form.

The finest type of thought matter of the Mental World is found in the Region of Abstract Thought, that is, in its three top sub-divisions, known in some schools as the Third Heaven. This Region is also known as the Causal Plane, the experience of which is, we are told, of an indescribably blissful nature. Here is where the Ego dwells, his natural habitat and the place from where tries manage his vehicles (bodies). When The Ego (Soul) comes into incarnation,

all his energies are focused on these vehicles which will enable him to express consciousness in the three lower spheres (Mental, Astral and Physical) and thus learn and evolve. However, by imprisoning himself in the dense matter of his vehicles, the Ego cannot keep conscious contact with his Causal Body, his real home. The above is, however, a requirement because it is precisely in the conditions of restriction and limitation imposed by his bodies that the Ego will find the awareness and the expansion of consciousness which will eventually make the bodies unnecessary. When this is achieved, he will have reached the end of his human evolutionary phase, and will no longer be bound by the "cycle of necessity", the need to continue to incarnate. As this takes place we are told that the Causal Body, which has served as a permanent vehicle for the Ego all throughout his many incarnations, eventually disintegrates, since the Ego no longer requires it to store the faculties acquired; these are now a permanent part of himself, and he will never lose them. His human journey concluded, the Ego reintegrates itself into the Monad, who is now ready for further evolution at higher realms.

The Continental Sub-division of the Region of Concrete Thought (4th Sub-division of the Mental World) holds particular importance amongst all Sub-divisions of the three worlds of matter where human evolution takes place, because it is a sort of middle point in the septenary structure of our Universe. Over this Sub-division we find the three Sub-divisions of the Abstract or Causal Region, and over it the Buddhic, the Atmic, the Monadic and the Divine Worlds. Under it, we find the three lower Sub-divisions of the Concrete Region, the Desire (Astral) World and the Physical World. Hence the Continental Sub-division of the Mental World becomes a sort of bridge, flanked on one side by the higher spiritual realms and on the other by the worlds of form. It is also considered as the focal point where Spirit reflects itself in matter. Being then the highest realm of the Archetypal forces, it is also the point from where these forces direct the activity of the Archetypes in the Region of Concrete Thought. From this Region, Spirit works on matter in a formative manner, the forms manifested in the lower world, being thus but reflections of the Spirit in the higher Worlds. (See annexed diagram).

In order to avoid confusions of structure and nomenclature in the mind of the student, it would be useful to remind ourselves that when the terms planes, worlds, regions or sub-divisions are used, they must not be seen as located one on top of the other, but conforming spheres which co-exist and interpenetrate each other to the very core. This is possible due to the difference in vibratory rate - and therefore, density - which characterizes the matter of these spheres. We may offer, as example, a container filled with air, water and sand, elements which co-exist inside it without interfering with each other and forming a whole. If we think of the air in the water as representing the World of Thought

in the
Physical
World,

we may have an appropriate mental picture of the way in which the former, being finer and subtler, interpenetrates and interacts with the two lower spheres (Astral and Physical) without any difficulty.

The vehicle we utilize to express concrete thought (intellect) is known as the Mental Body, that is to say, the Mind. It is composed of matter of the Concrete Region or the four lower sub-levels of the Mental World. As above, so below. The Earth has a Mental Sphere or “body”, and so does man. Control and proper utilization of this Mind are not easy to achieve, but they are absolutely essential factors in reaching the human goal of perfection. Unlike the Causal Body which is composed of matter of the three higher sub-levels of the Mental Sphere, the Mental Body finally disintegrates when its work for the incarnation has been accomplished and the results of the assimilation of the learning experiences of the life just passed have been incorporated in the Causal vehicle for permanent storage.

Questions for consideration:

1. What is the World of Thought?
2. Describe its Sub-divisions and Regions.
3. Name the four Sub-divisions of the Concrete Region.
4. What are Archetypes?
5. Name Archetypes found in the Concrete Region.
6. Explain how Spirit reflects in the Lower Worlds.
7. Describe the relation between the Mental, Astral and Physical Worlds.
8. Explain the purpose of the Mental World and the activities the Ego undertakes in that sphere.

References for Supplementary Reading:

The Mental Body and the Ego, by A.E. Powell
Man and His Bodies, by Annie Besant
The Rosicrucian Cosmo Conception, by Max Heindel
Man Visible and Invisible, by C.W. Leadbeater
Space, Time and Self, by E. Norman Pearson