

Cosmic Consciousness (complete) - Dr Alan Roberts

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gUB6C4_eyk

Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind



By Richard Maurice Bucke (1837-1902)

‘1 Simple consciousness, which is possessed by the upper half of the animal kingdom. By the means of this faculty a dog or a horse is just as conscious of the things about him as a man is; he is also conscious of his own limbs and body and he knows that these are a part of himself. 2 Over and above this Simple Consciousness, which is possessed by man, as well, man has another which is called Self Consciousness. By virtue of this faculty man is not only conscious of trees, and rocks, waters, his own limbs and body, but he becomes conscious of himself as a distinct entity

apart from all the rest of the universe. *It is as good as certain that no animal can realise himself in that way.* [CC p1, my italics]

2 This is further refined into four distinct stages of intellect – first the perceptual mind – the mind made up of percepts or sense impressions [*a sound heard or an object seen*]; second the mind made up of receipts- the mind of simple consciousness [*he likens it to composite photography, building up percepts into a receipt – various impressions built into a unity*]; third we have the mind made up of percepts, receipts and ‘concepts’ [*where the being becomes conscious of itself as a knower and can name and communicate these constructed forms*] and fourth and last we have the intuitional mind – the mind whose highest element is not a receipt or a concept but an intuition . . . - sensation, simple consciousness and self consciousness are supplemented and crowned with cosmic consciousness.’ [CC p16]

3 Bucke disclosed that in his attempts to more fully understand his illumination experience of 1872, he was indebted to a certain C.P. [*Caleb Pink p10*] to whom he ascribed his further understanding of this illumination. C.P. was a self-educated laboring man, regarded by many who knew him as one who had a ‘Christ-like’ presence and lived a simple and honest life.

4 ‘This consciousness shows the cosmos to consist not of dead matter governed by unconscious, rigid and unintending law, it shows it on the contrary as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive; it shows that death is an absurdity, that everyone and everything has eternal life; it shows that the universe is God and that God is the universe, and that no evil did or ever will enter into it; a great deal of this is, of course, from the point of view of self consciousness, absurd.’ [CC p17]

5 ‘Man’s progenitor was a creature (an animal) walking erect but with simple consciousness merely. He was (as are today the animals) incapable of sin and equally incapable of shame (at least in the human sense). He had no knowledge or feeling of good and evil . . . he fell (or rose) into self consciousness, his eyes were opened, he knew that he was naked, he acquired the sense of sin . . . became a sinner . . . and learned to do certain things in order to encompass certain ends – that is , he learned to labor.’ [CC p6]

‘In still other words the animal cannot stand outside itself and look at itself, as any self conscious creature can.’ [CC p17]

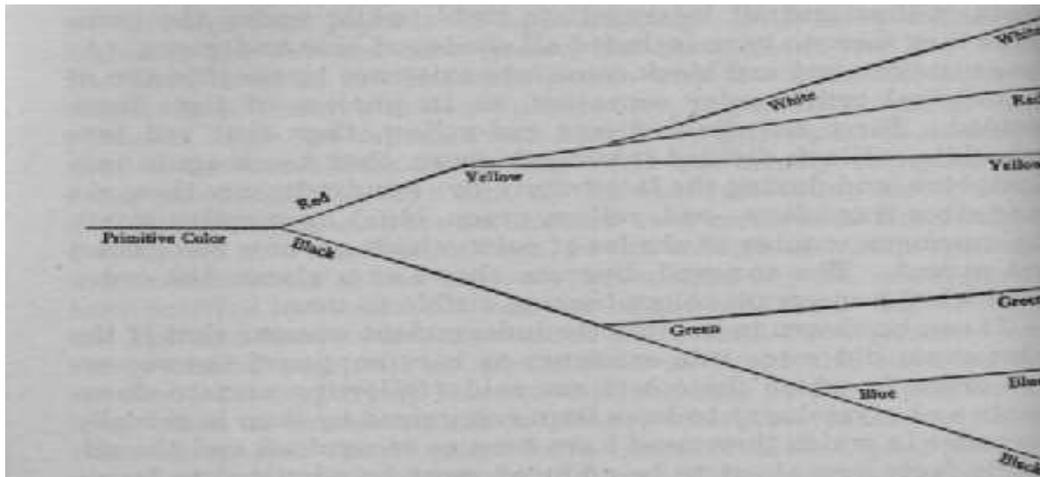
6 ‘Language is the objective of which self consciousness is the subjective. Self Con. and language (two in one, for they are two halves of the same thing) are the *sine qua non* of human social life, of manners, of institutions, of industries of all kinds, of all arts useful and fine.’ [CC p2] ‘No word can come into being except as the expression of a concept, neither can a new concept be formed without the formation (at the same time) of the new word which is its expression. . . .not only does language fit the intellect , covering it in every part . . following all its turnings and windings but it fits it also in the sense of *not going beyond it.*’ [CC p26-7, his italics]

For Bucke conceptualising for a being is a double process [p15] constructing the thought form while simultaneously symbolising - it naming it so to representing it to itself.

7 ‘Much more modern than the birth of intellect was that of the color sense. We have the authority of Max Mueller for the statement “ It is well known that the distinction of color is of late date; that Xenophanes knew of three colors of the rainbow only – purple, red and yellow; that even Aristotle spoke of the tricolored rainbow; and that Democratus knew of no more than four colors – black, white, red and yellow.” . . . And Mueller finds no Sanskrit root whose meaning has any reference to color.

‘ That is to say the primitive Aryan not more than 15 to 20 thousand years agodid not distinguish any difference in tint between the blue sky, the green trees and grass, the brown or grey earth and the golden and purple clouds of sunrise and sunset.’ [CC p33]

8 In the Rig Veda there are ‘hundreds’ of descriptions of the sky and no mention of a colour, in the Zend Avesta the heavens are meticulously described and the colours not mentioned. In the Bible the sky and heaven are mentioned more than 430 times and, as in Greece and Asia Minor, this intensely blue contrasting sky is never mentioned. ‘According to this law the energy – the power of exciting vision – of the red rays is several thousand times as great as the energy of the violet and there is a regular and steady decrease of energy as we pass down the spectrum from red to violet . . . exactly what ancient literature and etymology tell us takes place.’ [CC p36]



II.

The faculty itself has many names, but they have not been understood or recognized. It will be well to give some of them here. They will be better understood as we advance. Either Gautama himself, or some one of his early disciples, called it "Nirvāna" because of the "extinction" of certain lower mental faculties (such as the sense of sin, fear of death, desire of wealth, etc., etc.) which is directly incident upon its birth. This subjugation of the old personality along with the birth of the new is, in fact, almost equivalent to the annihilation of the old and the creation of a new self. The word Nirvāna is defined as "the state to which the Buddhist saint is to aspire as the highest aim and highest good." Jesus called the new condition "the Kingdom of God" or the "Kingdom of Heaven," because of the peace and happiness which belong to it and which are perhaps its most characteristic features. Paul called it "Christ." He speaks of himself as "a man in Christ," of "them that are in Christ." He also calls it "the Spirit" and "the Spirit of God." After Paul had entered Cosmic Consciousness he knew that Jesus had possessed the cosmic sense and that he was living (as it were) the life of Jesus—that another individuality, another self, lived in him. This second self he called Christ (the divinely sent deliverer), identifying it not so much with the man Jesus, as with the deliverer which was to be sent and which had been sent in his person, who was both Jesus (the ordinary self conscious man) and Messiah (the herald and exemplar of the new, higher race). The duplex personality of men having cosmic consciousness will appear many times as we proceed and will be seen to be a constant and prominent phenomenon. Mohammed called the cosmic sense "Gabriel," and seems to have looked upon it as a distinctly separate person who lived in him and spoke to him. Dante called it "Beatrice" ("Making Happy"), a name almost or quite equivalent to "Kingdom of Heaven." Balzac called the new man a "specialist" and the new condition "Specialism." Whitman called cosmic con-

sciousness "My Soul," but spoke of it as if it were another person; for instance:

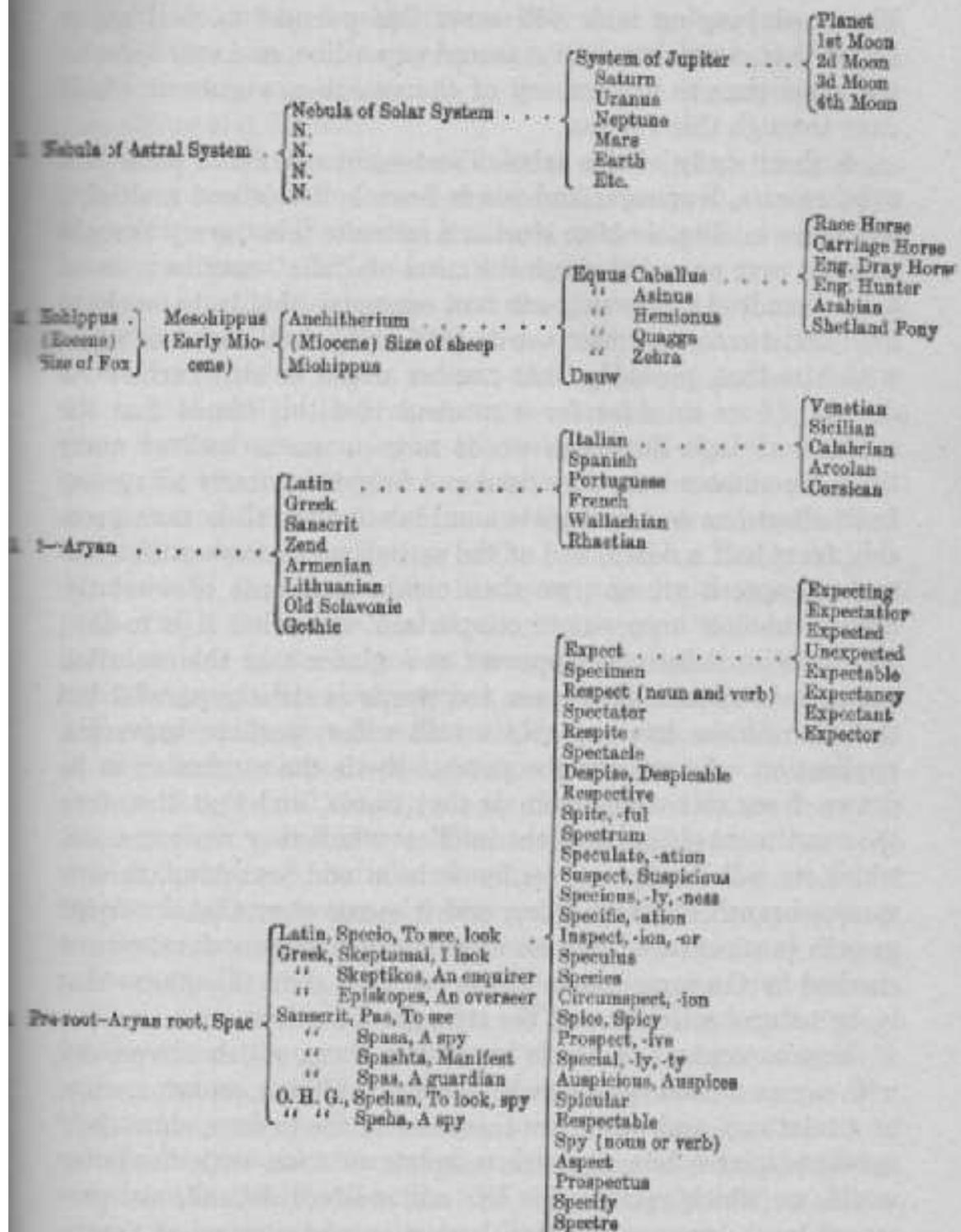
O soul repressless, I with thee and thou with me . . .
 We too take ship O soul . . .
 With laugh and many a kiss . . .
 O soul thou pleasest me, I thee . . .

Bacon (in the *Sonnets*) has treated the cosmic sense so emphatically as a distinct person that the world for three hundred years has taken him at his word and has agreed that the "person" in question (whatever his name may have been) was a young friend of the poet's!

To illustrate the objectification of this purely subjective phenomenon (though it must be remembered that to the person with cosmic consciousness the terms objective and subjective lose their old meaning—and "objects gross" and the "unseen soul" become "one"), it will not be amiss to quote a passage [173: 5] from a poet who, though he is a case of cosmic consciousness, is not included in the present volume for the reason that the present writer has not been able to obtain the details necessary for that purpose.

So mused a traveler on the earthly plane
 Being in himself a type of all mankind.
 For aspirations dim at first possessed
 Him only, rising vaguely in his dreams,
 Till in ripe years his early musings changed
 To inspiration and the light of soul.
 Then vision came, and in the light he saw
 What he had hoped now openly revealed;
 And mirth besides—the innermost soul of things,
 And "beauty" as the crown of life itself,
 Ineffable, transcending mortal form;
 For robed in light, no longer fantasy,
 Before his gaze the true "ideal" stood,
 Sublimely fair, beyond conception, clothed
 In beauty and divinest symmetry.
 Yet pined he not like him of *Lalrune* when
 In dreaming ecstasy, upon the hills
 Beneath the moon, he saw his love unveiled;
 For well he knew the crowning of his life
 Was in that vision and would be fulfilled.

On the Plane of Self Consciousness



a horse's poll, crest, withers, dock, hamstring, cannon, pastern, coronet, arm, jawl and muzzle. Where the literary language speaks of the young of all sorts of animals, farmers, shepherds and sportsmen would be ashamed to use so general a term. The idiom of nomads, as Grimm says, contain an abundant wealth of manifold expressions for sword and weapons, and for the different stages in the life of cattle. In a more highly cultivated language these expressions become burthensome and superfluous. But in a peasant's mouth the bearing, calving, falling and killing

of almost every animal has its own peculiar term, as the sportsman delights in calling the gait and members of game by different names. Thus Dame Juliana Berners, lady prioress of the nunnery of Sopwell, in the fifteenth century, the reputed author of the 'Book of St. Albans,' informs us that we must not use names of multitudes promiscuously, but we are to say: A congregyon of people, a hoost of men, a felyshyppynge of women, and a bevy of ladyes, we must speak of a herde of hartys, swannys, cranys, or wrennys, a sege of herons, or bytourys, a muster of peacockys, a watche of nyghtyngalys, a flyghte of doves, a claterynge of choughes, a pryde of lyons, a slewthe of beerys, a gagle of geys, a skulke of foxes, a sculle of frerys, a pontyfycalate of prelates, a bomynable syght of monkes, a dronkenshyp of cobblers, and so of other human and brute assemblages. In like manner in dividing game for the table the animals were not carved, but a dere was broken, a gose reryd, a chekyn frusshed, a cony unlaeyd, a crane dysplayed, a curlewe unjointyd, a quayle wynggyd, a swanne lyfte, a lambe sholderyd, a heron dysmembryd, a pecocke dysfigured, a samon chynyd, a hadoke sydyd, a sole loynyd, and a bremsplayed" [115. 70].

From Self to Cosmic Consciousness

81

| No. | Name | Date of Birth | Age at Illumination | Sex | Time of Year of Illumination | Age at Death |
|-----|------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Moses | 1650? | | M | | Old |
| 2 | Gideon | 1350? | | M | | |
| 3 | Isaiah | 770? | | M | | |
| 4 | Li R. | 804? | | M | | Old |
| 5 | Gautama. | 580? | 35 | M | | 80 |
| 6 | Socrates | 489? | 39? | M | Summer | 71? |
| 7 | Jesus | 4 | 35 | M | January? | 38? |
| 8 | Paul | 0 | 35 | M | | 67? |
| 9 | Plotinus | 204 | | M | | 66? |
| 10 | Mohammed | 570 | 39 | M | May? | 62 |
| 11 | Roger Bacon | 1214 | | M | | 80? |
| 12 | Dante | 1265 | 35 | M | Spring | 56 |
| 13 | Las Casas | 1474 | 40 | M | June | 92 |
| 14 | John Yopes | 1542 | 30 | M | Early Summer | 49 |
| 15 | Francis Bacon | 1561 | 30? | M | | 66 |
| 16 | Behmen | 1575 | 35 | M | | 49 |
| 17 | Pascal | 1623 | 31½ | M | November | 39 |
| 18 | Spinoza | 1632 | | M | | 45 |
| 19 | Mde. Guyon | 1648 | 33 | W | July | 69 |
| 20 | Swedenborg | 1688 | 64 | M | | 84 |
| 21 | Gardiner | 1688 | 32 | M | July | 58 |
| 22 | Blake | 1759 | 31 | M | | 68 |
| 23 | Balzac | 1799 | 32 | M | | 51 |
| 24 | J. B. B. | 1817 | 38 | M | | |
| 25 | Whitman | 1819 | 34 | M | June | 73 |
| 26 | J. B. | 1821 | 38 | M | | 73 |
| 27 | C. P. | 1822 | 37 | M | | |
| 28 | H. B. | 1823 | | M | | |
| 29 | R. R. | 1830 | 30 | M | Early Summer | 69 |
| 30 | E. T. | 1830 | 30 | M | | |
| 31 | R. P. | 1835 | | M | | |
| 32 | J. H. J. | 1837 | 34 | M | Late Spring | |
| 33 | R. M. B. | 1837 | 35 | M | Spring | |
| 34 | T. S. R. | 1840 | 32 | M | | |
| 35 | W. H. W. | 1842 | 33 | M | | |
| 36 | Carpenter | 1844 | 36 | M | Spring | |
| 37 | C. M. C. | 1844 | 49 | W | September | |
| 38 | M. C. L. | 1853 | 37 | M | February | |
| 39 | J. W. W. | 1853 | 31 | M | January | |
| 40 | J. William Lloyd | 1857 | 29 | M | January | |
| 41 | P. T. | 1860 | 35 | M | May | |
| 42 | C. Y. E. | 1864 | 31½ | W | September | |
| 43 | A. J. S. | 1871 | 24 | W | | |