

# Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work

## Part 9 of 15

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For the present interlude, we have turned from the immediate discussion of the symbolism of the *stupas* to the subject matter of the generation of the mandala which is predominant in the book *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*. I will recall to your mind the circumstances that led to the generation of that mandala.

I was standing, sometime, I believe, in the early part of 1936 or the latter part of 1935, on the banks of El Dorado Creek in northern California looking at the sky, as I remember, when suddenly it dawned upon me that there in space, as I was looking at the sky, there seems to be nothing at all there really is substantial fullness, and that in the objects about, such as the walls of the canyon, and the trees, and so forth, were relative absences of substance. At that time I had not remembered a statement in *The Voice of the Silence*, which nonetheless was very pertinent. This statement is, "...study the emptiness of the seeming full, and the fullness of the seeming void."<sup>1</sup> But what had dawned on my consciousness was a reaffirmation of this statement.

Now, the statement in *The Voice of the Silence* is in a simple form. It considers merely fullness on one side and voidness on the other; it's a very abstract statement. But if we consider the degree of density, as it were, of the seeming objects of consciousness, that they are not all equally dense, that therefore the degree of voidness in an object is not always absolute, that it varies, in fact, in degree. Thus at the most extremely dense object of which we have any knowledge, such as a nuclear sun, which consists of stripped nuclei and is so dense that the whole mass of a star as large and massive as our sun would be contained in an object not more than ten or twelve miles in diameter, and yet the mass would remain the same. That is probably the most massive thing of which we have any knowledge. Now, at the other extreme of a very subtle object, that is almost not an object at all, this would be found in the *Dharmakaya* vesture, which is said to be scarcely more than a breath. In other words, it is differentiation from the pure essence of things in a minimal degree imaginable. The degree of voidness in these contrasting extremes of objects would not be the same. That was evident to me. Therefore, I stated it in the form of a more complex formula, namely, *ponderability is inversely proportional to substantiality*. Ponderability represents the "seeming full" of the quotation from *The Voice of the Silence*. Substantiality represents the "seeming void" from that same quotation. Maybe that will clarify the meaning of this formula: *substantiality is inversely proportional to ponderability*. The world, the stars, the galaxies are relative voids. The space in which they abide is fullness, or at least relative fullness since there seems to be a very slight dissemination of matter throughout our space.

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<sup>1</sup> H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1928), 61: "... study the voidness of the seeming full, the fullness of the seeming void."

I reduced this formula to a mathematical form using the initial letters of the words ponderable and substantial so that  $S$ , substantiality, equals  $1/P$ . The  $1/P$  is a mathematical way of stating that it is inversely proportional, so  $S = 1/P$ . Now we have a formula to which we can apply our algebraic rules. Multiply both sides of the equation by  $P$  and we get  $PS = 1$ . If one will check in his coordinate geometry, he'll find that this is the formula, or algebraic expression, which means the equilateral hyperbola referred to its asymptotes as bases of reference. It was very easy to apply certain mathematical manipulations so that we could establish our rectilinear Cartesian coordinates in the usual form so that the asymptotes would be at an angle with respect to the coordinates rather than being the coordinates themselves. In other words, I rotated the hyperbola through  $45^\circ$  and got the equation  $P^2 - S^2 = 2$ , or using the usual letters,  $x^2 - y^2 = 2$ . The asymptotes in that case are at an angle of  $45^\circ$  with respect to each of the coordinate axes. And that is the form in which the mandala is portrayed.

The discussion upon which we are now entering will be mathematical in form. It would be well if each individual had a sheet of paper and a pencil to aid him in the visualization that will be required. It would be very good if we had a blackboard that was marked with coordinate squares for presenting this part of the discussion. But at any rate, proceed as follows and do what I indicate in the imagination, at least.

First, lay out a coordinate system. We'll use the simplest form, the Cartesian rectilinear coordinates, which consists of two lines of infinite length drawn at right angles to each other. Now, instead of using the usual  $x$  and  $y$ , we will use the  $S$  and  $P$ , meaning substantiality and ponderability respectively. The horizontal line we will call the  $P$ -axis and the vertical line we will call the  $S$ -axis. Now a word it needs to be said about the asymptotes which were referred to earlier. The asymptotes are lines which pass through the center of the hyperbola and to which the curve of the hyperbola approaches ever closer and closer until it becomes tangent at infinity. Bear in mind that the hyperbola is the one conic section that has two branches corresponding to the cut by the plane which passes through the two nappes of our cone. The curve has an apex, as we may call it, which however is not a sharp point, but a portion of the curve that is nearest to the origin. The origin is the point of intersection of the vertical and horizontal lines. This point also is called the center of the hyperbola, but it is not a center in the same sense as that which we refer to when we speak of the center of the circle. The latter is on the concave side of the curve. It is inside the curve and the circle is a closed curve. The hyperbola is not a closed curve, but ever expands as it reaches toward infinity. The center, therefore, of the hyperbola may be said to lie outside the hyperbola or on the convex side of the curve. Now, in our first construction of the hyperbola we will treat the asymptotes as the axes of reference, and they are at right angles in the case of this hyperbola so that the  $P$ -axis and the  $S$ -axis will be the asymptotes.

Now, think of the coordinate system as dividing into four quadrants the space represented by the plane on which it is drawn, the first quadrant being the one that is above the line and to the right of the vertical line, and from that we number them in the counterclockwise direction, 1, 2, 3, 4, the same as in the case of our discussion of periodicity when we drew the mathematical equivalent of a Tibetan prayer wheel.<sup>2</sup> One

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<sup>2</sup> See the audio recording, "Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work, part 1.

of the branches of the hyperbola will lie in the first quadrant. The curve will have its apex a short distance from the origin, or the zero point, or the center, and the arms of each branch will extend outward approaching the axes closer and closer, for the axes are here the same as the asymptotes, becoming tangent at infinity. The second branch will lie in the third quadrant.

Now, our equation for this curve is  $PS=1$ . Now, if you give any value to  $P$ , for instance, a corresponding value for  $S$  can be calculated from our equation. Thus, if we give  $P$  the value of 1, then we have  $S=1$ , so that point which is 1 unit above the horizontal line and also 1 unit to the right of the vertical line will be a point on the curve and, indeed, will be the vertex of the curve. Now, as we give greater values to  $P$ , such as 100, then we have  $100S=1$  or  $S=1/100$ . And in general, if we give to  $P$  the value  $n$ , the value of  $S$  will be  $1/n$  so that the product of  $PS$  is always equal to 1. What you'll note now is this, that as the ponderability increases, in other words, as density increases, as determinateness increases, the amount of substantiality decreases proportionately, so that if we take a point far to the right on the  $P$ -axis, the distance vertical to the curve will become shorter and shorter and will touch the curve when  $P$  becomes infinity and  $S$  correspondingly will become or approach zero as a value.

Strictly speaking, we do not use the form of zero over infinity; we rather think in this way: that as  $P$  becomes greater than any assigned quantity however large,  $S$  becomes less than any quantity however small. We thus have a new way of thinking in which we conceive of not a fixed value but of a growing or diminishing value towards a limit. This is a feature in thought that has been introduced into modern thinking. It was not present in Greek thinking and I've found no evidences of it in my readings of Oriental thought. Whether the ancients of which we have no record had such conceptions, I do not know. At any rate, I have not seen any record indicating that such forms of conceptuality ever existed. It is known that Archimedes, who was by far the greatest of the Greek mathematicians and may indeed be the greatest mathematician of all time, did have more than intimations of thinking in terms of a limit which is never reached but is approached beyond all limits. This is the kind of thinking that rendered the differential and integral calculus possible. And this calculus is the basis of the greatest part of our mathematical control of processes such as the construction of all kinds of equipment, of buildings, of bridges, and of navigation, particularly navigation in space as in the case of a device being made to sail toward the moon. It is a matter of estimating where the moon will be at a certain point in the future and to have the device following a course so that it will reach that same point at the same time in the future. All of this calls for the kind of calculation which is rendered possible by the calculus which in turn is based upon the capacity to think in terms of limits which are never actually attained. This is an important point. It will have bearing upon some later applications of our figure. Out of the calculus has grown the great mass of mathematics that has practical utility, such as differential equations, the theory of the functions of a complex variable, and theoretical mechanics.

Now, direct your attention to the branch of the hyperbola which lies in the first quadrant. You will notice that as ponderability increases, substantiality decreases. Now, this means that as an object becomes more and more determinate, more and more a concentrated mass, or more completely defined, the less substantial it is. In other words, it tends to become void. On the other hand, as we reduce the ponderability, and this will

lead us to the particular arm of the branch which moves vertically upward and approaches the *S* asymptote, the numbers of ponderability will be less than 1. As they become smaller and smaller, the greater becomes the substantiality, which means that as ponderability approaches voidness, the substantiality becomes maximal. This reverses our ordinary system of valuation and indicates the inversion of consciousness that must be achieved if one would make the breakthrough to Fundamental Realization, or to the liberating Consciousness. The principle of inversion is very important in the whole principle or movement toward Liberation. If you'll note, Sri Aurobindo has often referred to this principle of inversion. In this case, it's the inversion of values. The high valuation of the object is a barrier to Realization. It carries one towards real emptiness, real valuelessness. Movement in the other direction leads to ascension into a consciousness that progressively becomes less and less determinate, and yet along with that, more and more full, more and more filled with value.

Another thing that the curve suggests to our consciousness is this: that there is no end to the process, that there is no such thing as a final Realization beyond which there is no more possible progress, because the curves continue on to infinity. This would deny the truth of any assertion that an individual has attained, actually, the highest of all possibility. On the contrary, the highest possibility is ever beyond. There is no end to the process of inward penetration. There is the implication that the Beyond is an inexhaustible field, or an inexhaustible wilderness, of unexhausted possibility; that the paths which have been marked out in the past delimit only a portion of the total possibilities which lie before mankind; that beyond the furthest point that has been reached and recorded, there lie other domains that may be explored in the future; that, indeed, there lies before us an endless adventure. And it also implies that we never lose, in finite time, some degree of possible articulation. The ultimate represented by the tangent point, where the hyperbola becomes tangent to the asymptote at infinity, is the only place where articulation ceases completely. But all the way there, articulation, or in other words, formulation or manifestation, in some measure or some degree, however subtle it may be, still remains possible.

It is said of the Buddha, who is the most advanced human being known to us, that he was a "Sixth-Rounder."<sup>3</sup> That implies that there is a step beyond in the evolution of this world, for there are those who would be "Seventh-Rounders," and that therefore the

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<sup>3</sup> H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Press, 1893), 185-186:

To this day it is evident that the latter have utterly failed to understand the meaning of the term "Fifth and Sixth-Rounders." But it is simply this: every Round brings about a new development, and even an entire change, in the mental, psychic, spiritual and physical constitution of man; all these principles evolving on an ever ascending scale. Hence it follows that those persons who, like Confucius and Plato, belonged psychically, mentally and spiritually to the higher planes of evolution, were in our Fourth Round as the average man will be in the Fifth Round, whose mankind is destined to find itself, on this scale of evolution, immensely higher than is our present humanity. Similarly, Gautama Buddha—Wisdom incarnate—was still higher and greater than all the men we have mentioned who are called "Fifth-Rounders," and so Buddha and Shankaracharya are termed "Sixth-Rounders," allegorically. Hence again the concealed wisdom of the remark, pronounced at the time "evasive"—"a few drops of rain do not make a monsoon, *though they presage it.*"

Enlightenment of the Buddha is not the final step upon the ascending scale. And then, it is also said that beyond the evolution of the human being *qua* human, there is the evolution of those who are *ex-men*, called generally as *Dhyan Chohans*, and that these have different orders in the scale of development beyond man. So, we cannot envisage a final step in the ascension. And this would be quite in line with the information that this branch of our equilateral hyperbola has indicated to us.

Now, let us give brief attention to the opposed branch, the branch which lies in the third quadrant. Here the movement is in an opposite direction. It is toward the  $-P$  and the  $-S$ . What is implied here is that for every development in one direction there is a counter development in the opposite direction and that the combination of these two maintains eternal balance. There is not such a thing as an exclusive movement in one direction alone, but a balancing movement in the opposite direction. What the meaning of this is on this high level is not at present clear at all to my mind, only it emphasizes the principle of balance or equilibrium. Nothing is more fundamental than the principle of equilibrium. It is the primary meaning of the law which governs all.

For the discussion of further features that are indicated by the mandala, I found it expedient to rotate the system of coordinates through  $45^\circ$  or, contrawise, to rotate the hyperbola through  $45^\circ$  with its asymptotes. In this case, the coordinates will pass through the vertices of the hyperbola, or rather the  $P$  coordinate will pass through the vertices and the asymptotes will pass through the center, making an angle of  $45^\circ$  with both the abscissa, or  $P$  ordinate, and  $45^\circ$  with the  $S$ -axis, which is the ordinate. Now, a further step is involved, and that is the introduction of the conjugate hyperbola. This is a precise duplication of the hyperbola with its two branches along the  $S$ -axis, the substantiality axis. One branch will point upward and one branch will point vertically downward; while our original branches, one will curve toward the right and the other will curve toward the left. This is the usual form in which the discussion of the curves is usually handled. We introduce the conjugate hyperbola to complete the figure. What this means in terms of the equations is as follows: the original equation, you will remember, was  $SP = 1$ . It now becomes  $P^2 - S^2 = 2$ . That gives us the hyperbola that lies, we might say, horizontally, that is bisected by the  $P$ -axis, and the coordinate one would be  $P^2 - S^2 = -2$  or  $-P^2 + S^2 = 2$ .

We thus have two hyperbolas, each with two branches, so we have a fourfoldness, which is characteristic of most mandalas as Dr. Jung has pointed out, a fourfoldness or a multiple of four involved. We can determine where the vertex of the hyperbola is by a very simple process. Remembering that the horizontal axis is  $P$  and the vertical axis is  $S$ , we put  $S$  equal to zero and we get the equation  $P^2 = 2$ , or  $P = \pm\sqrt{2}$ . This means that the vertices of the two branches of the hyperbola are at the distance the  $\sqrt{2}$  from the origin, or the intersection point of the two vertices. And the same would be true of the vertically oriented branches of the conjugate hyperbola. We thus have a central region where there are four vertices at the distance from the origin of the  $\sqrt{2}$ . We draw a square tangent to these four vertices. Inside that, we draw a circle which is circumscribed by the first square and is also tangent to the branches of the two hyperbolas at the vertices. And then we draw an inscribed square within this circle with its lines vertical and horizontal. This gives the completed figure as it appears in the volume *The Philosophy of Consciousness*

*Without an Object.* Now, we have certain facts we can deduce about these figures that have been introduced into the finite space immediately surrounding the center.

Now, note that the point of intersection of the two coordinate lines which is usually or typically designated as zero is the center of the two squares, the circle, and the two conjugate hyperbolas. This will be of some importance. Now, the small square, the one inscribed within the circle, represents the cube in the *stupa*, the part that is on the ground. It represents or symbolizes the squaring of the circle, but it is not actually the square of equal area, otherwise it could not be inscribed within the circle. It simply represents that square. The circle represents the sphere on top of the cube, having its center as the point which is the common point to the two axes. The second square I'll explain later. The hyperbola corresponds to the cone on top of the sphere.<sup>4</sup>

Now, the *stupa* is a figure in three dimensions; only so could it be an actual physical construction. The mandala that I have produced, and which appears in *The Philosophy*, is not the complete form. The complete form would also be three-dimensional. The hyperbolas would be rotated on their axes producing hyperboloids; and there would be a third axis, the one that is usually called *z*, and there would be another hyperboloid centering around that coordinate. We would thus have a three-dimensional figure which would be the completed formulation of it.

And now here is an interesting correspondence. We would, in that case, have a figure which points to the six points as they appear in Hopi mysticism: the four points of the compass and the direction that is vertical towards the zenith and the direction which is also vertical towards the nadir. We thus would have represented the six directions that have played an important part in various primitive symbolisms, as we call them. This is the completed figure, but it is developed into a degree of complexity that I have not so far attempted to handle; and, so far as I can see, will not attempt to handle in what is left of this incarnation. Perhaps in the other domain or in a later life, I will complete the mandala.

Let us now consider the symbolism of the two squares and the circle. Beginning with the inmost square, the one inscribed within the circle, this represents determinateness. It represents the becoming manifested of the unmanifest in its most definitive form. This we can realize by considering the length of the side of this square, and to get that we'll have to consider the dimensions of the three figures—the two squares and the circle. Since the distance from the origin to the apex of the hyperbola is  $\sqrt{2}$ , it follows that the length of the side of the outermost square is  $2 \times \sqrt{2}$ ; and, obviously, the diameter of the circle is also  $2 \times \sqrt{2}$ ; also the diagonal of the outermost square is 4; then one side of the inmost square is exactly 2 and the diameter is  $2 \times \sqrt{2}$ . The calculation of this is very simple, and I'll leave it to you to work it out. But the outstanding fact that we note here is that 2 recurs again and again in various forms: in its own native simple form as 2, in the form the  $\sqrt{2}$  and  $2 \times \sqrt{2}$ , and in the form  $2 \times 2$  or  $2^2$ . It is, as it were, a monument to the number 2 in a series of relationships. Two symbolizes dualism. Now, dualism is fundamental to any manifestation whatsoever. In the

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<sup>4</sup> See the audio recording, "Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work," part 8, for a more complete elaboration of the symbolism of the Buddhist *stupa*.

manifested order, we cognize by reason of contrast. We know *up* by contrast with *down*; we know *good* by contrast with *evil*; and so on through all dualities whatsoever. Ultimate duality is represented by the inmost square—the most determinate aspect of the manifestation. It represents complete determination by a finite number of specifications. It is the kind of knowledge with which we are concerned in this world. It is the basis of the possibility of our sciences.

The circle represents that consciousness which is oriented to centeredness; in other words, the consciousness which is oriented to the *Atman*. The inmost square consciousness, on the other hand, could represent the orientation to bodies, to objects, and leads to those philosophic positions which are called realistic, and in their extreme form, materialistic. It represents peculiarly the consciousness of those who place all their trust in the object, in the thing, in the supposed self-existent thing, and try to interpret all values from that point of view. It is the figure that represents gross earthiness, as it were. The circle, in contrast, represents the consciousness attained when one has achieved identification with the *Atman* represented by the center of the circle. It is a very important stage of Liberation. In fact, it represents the goal outlined by Shankara. The *Atman* is the big fact in the consciousness represented by the circle.

The outermost square, the one that circumscribes the circle, and which is tangent to the apexes of the four branches of the two hyperbolas, carries a subtler meaning. The side is represented by the number  $2 \times \sqrt{2}$ . The principle of dualism is manifested here also, but modified by being a product of 2 and the  $\sqrt{2}$ . Two represents determinism, complete determinism by itself; but the  $\sqrt{2}$  represents the indeterminate since its value can never be completely ascertained. It involves a decimal which is non-terminating and non-repeating. And another thing we may say about the  $\sqrt{2}$ , it is the discovery of Pythagoras—something that was far beyond his time and certainly could not be assimilated by the Greek world. It is even said that he was somewhat ashamed at having made this discovery, but he need not have been. It was a monument to his own essential greatness. It's the first inkling of the irrational number, which in later days in our own mathematical thinking has achieved an honored place in our thought. So, we'll say that the side of this outside square is the Pythagorean number multiplied by the Pythagorean number, the  $\sqrt{2}$ .<sup>5</sup> We have here a place where thought and a kind of manifestation is possible which is not completely determinate, but is in part indeterminate. Because it is in part determinate, it is thinkable; but because it is in part indeterminate, it is not completely thinkable. We're getting into the zone of authentic metaphysical thinking where complete determination is no longer possible.

Beyond this lie the four branches of the two conjugate hyperbolas which represent the movement into the consciousness which lies beyond—a consciousness which is no longer oriented to the center, but oriented to space, and may be called absolute Consciousness, or Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject.

Again, we may say that since the arms of the hyperbola spread outward and ever become more and more inclusive and reach toward infinity, they represent that

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<sup>5</sup> Wolff clearly misspoke here and meant to say, “. . . the side of this outside square is the *number* 2 multiplied by the Pythagorean number, the  $\sqrt{2}$ .”

Consciousness which is called *Rig-pa* in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, absolute Consciousness in *The Secret Doctrine*, and Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject. On the other hand, the zone near the center which is tangent to the apexes of the four branches of the two conjugate hyperbolas is a zone that symbolizes consciousness as *shes-rig*, consciousness which is aware of phenomena. But it also says in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, that *Rig-pa* and *shes-rig*, these two are inseparable, and the union of these two is the *Dharmakaya* of the Great Liberation.<sup>6</sup> It is a Consciousness that permits centered consciousness, meanwhile being oriented to the non-centered, spatial Consciousness; and thus it would imply that it is only part of the truth to say that the *Dharmakaya* is the enrobement only of the *Nirvani*. But the whole truth is that the *Dharmakaya* embraces both the *nirvanic* and the *sangsaric*, the completed picture. So, this mandala is oriented to the *Dharmakaya* in this ultimate understanding of its meaning.

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There is a further point in the symbolism of the mandala that I failed to bring out in the preceding discussion. In some Buddhist *sutra*, I think it is in the collection that was gathered together by Paul Carus in his volume *The Gospel of Buddha*, where the Buddha is represented as discussing the place of the Self.<sup>7</sup> The Self is central in the thought of Shankara, but in this discussion the Self was viewed as a sort of epiphenomenon upon the back of the aggregates. The figure sometimes is employed of a candle that is burning—the candle representing the aggregates and the flame the Self. The flame is dependent upon the candles and the flame can be blown out but the candles remain. There seems to have been a tendency in early Buddhism to formulate their philosophy in terms which would call realistic, that is, with an orientation to what we would call the content of consciousness rather than to the Self. In Stcherbatsky's book *Buddhist[ic] Logic*, it is stated that a later stage of Buddhism was idealistic, however, was non-rational, and that the third stage is the stage of the logical Buddhists.<sup>8</sup> I would be more closely oriented to these latter two forms of Buddhism than to the earlier realistic form. But in the earlier realistic form there was great emphasis of the principle of *Anatman*, that is, that the reality of the Self was derivative and, in fact, in the ultimate sense only apparent.

Now, if we consider the center with respect to the hyperbolas, you'll note that the center in that case is external, not internal as in the case of the circle. And the idea that the Self was a sort of epiphenomenon riding upon the back of the aggregates would be in conformity with the notion of the center being external rather than internal and primary. This is a further implication of the figures that I thought might be of interest, so I add this as a kind of footnote.

With this we close our rather long parenthetical statement and will return to a further discussion of the purpose of this work.

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<sup>6</sup> W. Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 96.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1909), 36.

<sup>8</sup> Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), 3-14.