

Did Unconsciousness Evolve from Consciousness?

Vijay Srinath Kanchi

The debate as to whether Consciousness created the unconscious inanimate world, or the unconscious inert physical world evolved over a million years into life and subsequently into consciousness is a dilemma that puts the scientists and spiritualists at loggerheads. The irrefutable evidence, science points out, that is unmistakably apparent from the geological history of the earth as well as planetary evolution across the cosmos clinches the argument in favor of the unconscious material world being the cause of the consciousness. The events mapped on the geological timescale of earth point to the inhospitable conditions that existed for about two billion years on planet earth before they finally evolved into an environment that is conducive to the occurrence of life. According to current scientific theory, this earliest life form culminated into the present day human beings, the most advanced of the sentient beings, over a course of evolution that has been perpetuating for over three billion years on this planet.

On the contrary, the spiritual schools, particularly of India, assertively argue that consciousness predates the unconscious *prakirti*.¹ These schools point to the logical necessity, a kind of compulsion the reason imposes on us, that calls for admitting consciousness as the cause of the inert *prakirti*. How can the unconscious *prakirti* produce a feature called consciousness that is diametrically opposed to it? A cause cannot produce an effect which is not inherent in it. A neem seed cannot produce a mango tree. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*.² According to the spiritual philosophical schools of India, consciousness is the essential feature of existence, and unconsciousness is only an anomaly. To the counter question of how consciousness could produce unconscious *prakirti*, a state that is in complete contradiction to its essential nature, the aforementioned schools generally

keep mum or call existence a mere appearance and not real transformation, as is the case in *Advaita Vedānta*.

With the mounting proofs from the multiple disciplines of the science, it seems the spiritual schools are losing the battle and are forced to concede to the idea of the unconscious physical world as the cause and consciousness as its effect. But these apparently contradictory views can be reconciled with a different approach.

Let's assume that consciousness sprouted from the unconscious world of inanimate objects and evolved to the present level of human consciousness. Human beings are endowed with the capacity to meditate upon themselves and unfurl their dormant dimensions. This meditative focus on the Self is called *yoga*, which is extolled as capable of hastening the process of evolution of consciousness within. According to the yogic schools, some human beings called *yogis* developed and devised yogic practices that hasten this process of evolution so that the consciousness reaches its highest state within one's lifetime, a claim attested by Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Even many Gnostic and esoteric schools with allegiance to the Abrahamic religions also vouchsafe to this idea. It is logically deducible that consciousness, when it reaches its pinnacle, transcends temporal and spatial limitations, and experiences what is called non-locality. Now, even if the consciousness of one person had attained that transcendental supreme conscious state,

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which is highly eulogized as enlightenment, and which the Buddha and others are claimed to have attained, it would imply that consciousness would have reached all the past and future states, finding its presence even at the very verges of time-scale, even before the unconscious world was created. This means, since conscious is already there before the advent of the unconscious inanimate world, that it is the unconscious that was produced from the consciousness and not vice versa. In other words, the conscious state that was produced from the unconscious physical world (as claimed by the science)

transcends its very cause and attains a state that precedes its very causal agency. Several Vedic passages seem to allegorically point to this. In the Upanishads, we find for instance, Indra credited with the miracle of generating from his own body his own father and mother (x.54.3); or Aditi spoken of as producing Daksha, and being herself in turn produced by him (x.72.4). This seemingly enigmatic Vedic conception of being the producer of the causal agency of the self was later explained away as *bijānkura-nyāya* or the maxim of the seed and the sprout.³

Another corollary that can be drawn from this view is that consciousness attained the state of transcendence only because it was already inherent in it, as that which is not latent cannot be produced. That is to say that consciousness, which transcends time and space limitations, was already present *before* time and space evolved, thus becoming the causal agency for the physical unconscious world. This dormant lying of consciousness with all its infinite potential as the unconscious material world is termed in philosophical parlance as *Māya* and *avidya*.

How can the unconscious prakriti produce a feature that is diametrically opposed to it? A cause cannot produce an effect which is not inherent in it. A neem seed cannot produce a mango tree. . . . According to the spiritual philosophical schools of India, consciousness is the essential feature of existence, and unconsciousness is an anomaly.

Thus, if attainment of transcendence by consciousness can be admitted, it would imply that consciousness is the cause of the unconscious *prakriti* and not vice versa. *Nyāya*, the Indian system of logic and argumentation gives several logical arguments that necessitate admission of the possibility of spatial and temporal transcendence. Since such transcendence can be proved, at least theoretically, it is logically valid to argue that consciousness precedes unconsciousness. The experiential wisdom of yogis and even logical reasoning also point out to the precedence of consciousness to that of unconsciousness and as the cause and *not* as the effect.

When we begin to recognize consciousness as the essential feature of existence, this enigma gets resolved.

¹ Prakriti (Sanskrit: “nature,” “source”) is the primal material energy of which all matter is composed. It is matter in its germinal state, eternal and beyond perception.

² The Latin *Ex nihilo nihil fit* is translated as: “Out of nothing, comes nothing.”

³ “The maxim of the seed and the sprout takes its origin from the relation of mutual causation (which subsists between the seed and the sprout (seed being the cause of the sprout, which in turn is the cause of the seed); and is used in those cases where two things stand to each other in the relation of both cause and effect.” From *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Vaman Shivram Apte (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 306.

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Great Esotericists

Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983)



Geoffrey Hodson in 1953

Arguably, the most accomplished clairvoyant of the twentieth century, Geoffrey Hodson also made major contributions to multiple areas of esoteric philosophy. During his ninety-six years he authored more than fifty books and gave lectures on every continent. His mild manner and unpretentious lifestyle, free from the controversies that rocked the careers of some other leading esotericists, commend him as a role model for all disciples.

Hodson was born on March 12, 1886, under the sign of Pisces, an influence that explains much about his life's work and demeanor. The eldest of five children, he grew up in "a family of landowners and gentlemen farmers" in Wainfleet-St-Mary's, Lincolnshire, England, and enjoyed "a happy and wholesome childhood" on a large estate that afforded "peace, beauty, and happiness."¹ Geoffrey attended Bishop's Stortford Grammar School in Hertfordshire,² but at age fifteen the family fortunes collapsed, forcing him to drop out and find a job.

Hodson's clairvoyant gifts first became apparent when he was five or six years old; he had a

frightening encounter with an entity, which he later determined to be a kundalini deva. Sporadic experiences of etheric or astral vision continued throughout his childhood and teens. In his twenties he gained a theoretical understanding of his experiences from the teachings of Annie Besant, president of the Theosophical Society, Adyar. At one of Besant's lectures in Manchester in 1912, Hodson saw the several auras surrounding her body. He was inspired to join the Theosophical Society and was admitted to the Manchester City Lodge. Besant and Charles Leadbeater had already introduced clairvoyant research into the Theosophical Society, sadly resulting in the decision by William Q. Judge and his followers to secede from the Adyar branch and form their own American Theosophical Society.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 put Hodson's esoteric work on hold. He enlisted in the Army and, since he could ride a horse, joined the Cavalry Regiment. Later he was selected for officer training and was commissioned as a tank commander. Deployed to the front lines in 1918, he and his tank crew distinguished themselves in heavy fighting in Belgium and

France. For battlefield skills and bravery Lieutenant Hodson was recommended for the Military Cross.

Following demobilization in 1919, Hodson married the former Jane Carter, and the couple settled in Preston, Lancashire. Geoffrey worked for the YMCA and took on the task of rehabilitating boys discharged from Borstal institutions—detention centers for delinquent minors. Civilian life also enabled him to resume his esoteric work.

On their vacations Geoffrey and Jane Hodson toured the back roads of England on a motorcycle. Those trips provided opportunities for Geoffrey to make clairvoyant studies of the nature spirits in rural areas. His early books: *Fairies at Work and Play* (1925) and *The Kingdom of Faerie* (1927), present the results of those studies. The former book contains this description of brownies on the beach:

Playing on the shore, amongst the seaweed and the stones, are queer little elf-like forms. They have large heads, elfish faces, large ears, little rounded bodies, and short, thin legs ending in a foot which appears almost web-like. They are from three to six inches in height. They are familiar with human beings, and are in no way disturbed by their presence. They do not appear to go into the sea.³

In 1925, Geoffrey Hodson was contacted by an angelic being who offered to provide information on the higher ranks of the deva evolution and their relationship with humanity. Hodson gave voice to the telepathic impressions he received, and Jane wrote down what he said. The work resulted in several books, including *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men* (1927), *The Angelic Hosts* (1928), *Angels and the New Race* (1929), and parts of the much later *The Kingdom of the Gods* (1952). This last, one of Hodson's most influential books, elaborates on the forms taken by nature spirits:

On the lower rungs of the ladder of the Angelic Hierarchy are to be found the nature spirits of the four subtle elements of earth, water, air and fire.... My observations suggest that nature spirits use two distinct forms. One of these is the permanent astral

body and the other a temporarily materialized etheric vehicle.⁴

The angelic being, later identified as the Archangel (or Maha Deva) Bethelda,⁵ communicated with Hodson for many years. But he also received communications from the Masters Morya, Kuthumi, Rakoczy, Serapis Bey, and Polidorus Isurenus, and other sources. To judge by the number of encounters, he had a special relationship with Polidorus, a third-ray master of the Brotherhood of Luxor. Hodson's willingness to name the sources, at least after his death, was intended to reassure the esoteric community "that the Great Masters of the Wisdom have not withdrawn Their interest in the profoundly important movement established under Their Adeptic inspiration" [i.e., the Theosophical Society].... May it not reasonably be presumed that this will be continued for the 'amelioration of the condition of man.'"⁶ Hodson never wavered in his belief that the Theosophical Society remained the favored channel for the revelation of esoteric knowledge.

In the late 1920s, Geoffrey Hodson was invited to use his clairvoyant abilities to study a variety of other phenomena, including the subtle workings of the human body. Observations of the formation of a human embryo were reported in his book *The Miracle of Birth* (1929). To illustrate, the child's mental body was constructed during the fourth month of pregnancy by devic builders working under the direction of the Solar Angel:

The whole phenomenon was surrounded by dazzling and blazing light which increased in intensity towards the centre of the causal body. The down-poured force kept the atoms of the mental body in constant motion, and as it struck the matter of which the mental body was composed, it formed a vortex into and through which the rest of this matter was continually being drawn. This movement, however, did not affect the general shape, which remained ovoid, as previously described. Although the human form was visible within the ovoid it must not be thought of as hollow, but rather as a solid though translucent mass of rapidly moving matter.⁷

Hodson also provided insights into certain medical pathologies in *New Light on the Problem of Disease* (1930). These latter studies stimulated an interest in spiritual healing, which would expand in later years.

The Kingdom of the Gods includes profound esoteric teachings as well as a wealth of information about the deva evolution. For example, Hodson commented on the role of sound in the cosmic creative process:

True music is a temporary, physical expression of the sound of the ever-uttered “Word.” Throughout creative Day, the Great Breath is breathed upon the Great Deep, which responds as an aeolian harp of myriad, vibrant strings. As creative Night draws near, the Great Breath is breathed in.... When at the dawn of Creative Day the Voice first speaks, the innumerable lesser breaths contribute the component notes of the creative chord, which is the “Word.” When at creative Eve the Voice is stilled, the lesser voices die away. Thereafter silence broods over the face of the Deep.⁸

Other notable works on esoteric philosophy and the path of discipleship are *The Soul’s Awakening: Talks on Occultism and the Occult Life* (1963), *Man’s Supersensory and Spiritual Powers* (1964), and *The Call to the Heights* (1975). In this last, he offered another sweeping view of the creative work of the Solar Logos and his angelic assistants:

The Lord of the universe, the Solar Logos, together with choirs and orchestras of angels and archangels, cause to sound forth from the heart of existence the divine theme and all its variations. In terms of human consciousness, these may justly be regarded

as proclamations of the beauty and the power of love—the one great theme.⁹

Hodson’s only controversial book was *The Seven Human Temperaments* (1952), which, in the view of some commentators, may have plagiarized material from Alice Bailey’s more-extensive work on the seven rays.¹⁰

In addition to his work in the church, Hodson attained the 32nd degree in the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry, in which both Besant and Leadbeater had played leading roles. The EOICF, still in existence, is a worldwide body of men and women who profess to “work the traditional rights of Freemasonry with a conscious awareness of their spiritual content.”

Geoffrey Hodson visited South Africa in 1937, and in due course Australia, New Zealand, and many other countries. He remained active in the Theosophical Society throughout his adult life. He served as Director of Studies of the School of the Wisdom at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, India, for two sessions in 1953–1955, and again in 1961. In 1954, Hodson was awarded the Subba Row Medal for his contributions to Theosophical literature.

Hodson, whose mother had been organist and choir director at the local church, was brought up in the Anglican tradition. His early devout faith was shaken in early adulthood, but he found answers in Besant’s landmark book *Esoteric Christianity or the Lesser Mysteries* (1902), which had ushered in the “christianization movement” in the Theosophical Society. In 1913, Theosophists James Wedgwood and Charles Leadbeater, both former Anglican clergy, founded the Liberal Catholic Church, which served as a kind of religious subsidiary of the Theosophical Society. Hodson joined the church and in due course was ordained a priest. The high-church liturgy provided new opportunities for clairvoyant observations. In *The Inner Side Of Church Worship* (1930) he described the transformations associated with the Eucharist:

From the moment of the Consecration His [the Lord’s] Presence descends closer and

closer into the church. A marvelous change takes place in the Host, which is visible to any who have even the slightest extension of vision. The Host becomes glowing and wonderful, and the matter of which it is composed seems but the finest of films, enclosing the radiant, golden splendor of the Christ-life which is manifest within. And then, at the act of communion, it seems as if, in a way that is indescribable down here, the Christ and His devotee become one. Transubstantiation seems to occur in the communicant himself as the spiritual body and blood of Christ is received.¹¹

Hodson's ongoing commitment to Christianity was expressed in the four-volume book: *Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible* (1963–1980). No scriptural literalist, he viewed the texts in allegorical terms whose value extends beyond the historical context in which they were written:

The authors of the scriptures saw eternal truths mirrored in events in time. For them, illumined as they were, every material event was alight with spiritual significance. They knew the outer world for what it was—the shadow of a great reality.... The spiritual teachers of long ago, by using historical events as well as allegories and symbols, proved themselves able to overcome the limitations of time [and reveal] the deeper truths of life.¹²

In addition to his work in the church Hodson attained the 32nd degree in the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry, in which both Besant and Leadbeater had played leading roles. The EOICF, still in existence, is a worldwide body of men and women who profess to “work the traditional rites of Freemasonry with a conscious awareness of their spiritual content.”¹³ Hodson wrote of Masonic symbolism in *At the Sign of the Square and Compasses* (1976).

Hodson never lost his interest in studying and communicating with the devas. But over time his focus changed from lowly nature spirits to mighty archangels. Following is his description of “the Golden Deva” seen over Mount

Tongariro, in the North Island of New Zealand:

I am aware of the presence nearby of a very remarkable golden Deva which hovers near a fellow student and myself. At the formless levels it pours into us a force resembling liquid sunlight and also focuses a special ray upon the centers of solar power in the middle of our physical and superphysical heads, causing them to glow as if on fire. The Deva's form appears as molten gold, and rays of life-force and light flow out beside and behind it. The whole of the Deva's aura is formed of pointed beams or tongues of out-flowing One Life.¹⁴

Hodson's descriptions of angelic beings were translated into iconic paintings by various artists, including Ethelwynne Quail and Frank Eden.

Not surprisingly, given his comments about “true music” and “choirs and orchestras of angels and archangels,” Hodson was interested in devas' response to sound. Of special interest were the Gandharvas, or music devas; and we recall that the epic poem, the *Mahabharata*, relates that the Gandharva king taught Arjuna to sing and dance. Hodson explained that devas of various orders are drawn to familiar melodies like “Greensleeves” and to the sacred music of the Christian liturgy. For instance, he observed their attraction to the Agnus Dei (“Lamb of God”) in the Mass:

Some time after the singing ceases, I become aware of the presence and attention of an order of Devas almost entirely of the same shade of blue.... They also are chanting, notably at the higher mental and upper subplanes of the formal mental level, and not much lower. One angel is attracted almost immediately by the chanting. It is located some forty feet up in the air, a little to the right of one of the singers. In some way this particular chant is related to this angel and the order of Gandharvas or music angels to which it belongs. The work of this order is almost entirely devotional, having been associated with such music in ancient days.¹⁵

Hodson's wife Jane had suffered from multiple sclerosis from 1929 onward, and her condition progressively worsened. While in Australia, Geoffrey hired Sandra Chase to look after her. Chase accompanied the Hodsons when they relocated to New Zealand in 1940. Although Jane was paralyzed, her condition stabilized when she moved into a nursing home. Under Geoffrey's and Sandra's care she lived another two decades. After Jane passed away in 1962, Hodson married Sandra Chase, and Sandra supported his work, as Jane had been able to in the early days of their marriage.

Geoffrey Hodson made his transition in Auckland, New Zealand, on January 23, 1983—under the sign of Aquarius. Sandra published two books based on notes left by her husband: *Light of The Sanctuary* (1988) and *Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition* (1992). The former, subtitled *The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson* is undoubtedly the most important of Hodson's works.

Among the many topics covered in *Light Of The Sanctuary* are insights into the nature and work of the World Mother. He affirmed that a number of individuals have held that exalted office over the millennia. Currently the office is held by Mary, whom we know as the mother of Christ. But Mary “did Herself attain to Adeptship, took the Fifth Initiation in the Egyptian Mysteries, having also been trained in their Chaldean form as a woman.”¹⁶ As World Mother Mary now pursues a ministry of compassion and love:

The Blessed Lady Mary, incarnation of the Maternal Spirit of the Godhead, moved by purest compassion and love, holds the whole of humanity in Her arms and at Her breast, nourishing it with spiritualizing life for the purpose of quickening the evolution of all sentient beings. . . . The World Mother shares Herself with every mother—human and animal—throughout the period of gestation and delivery of her offspring. . . . Impersonally, She also is present and helps to bring about the mystical “birth” of the Christ consciousness within the Inner Self of every initiate when admitted to membership of the Great White Brotherhood.¹⁷

Hodson would not permit *Light Of The Sanctuary* to be published during his lifetime, no doubt because it revealed too much about his spiritual status. Very revealing is the record of an encounter in 1975 in which Mary addressed Hodson:

I knew you in Nazareth when you came with your servant to visit My Son, Jesus. . . . I heard My Son's promise and saw you as a young boy, departing dutifully for your home and duties awaiting you there. In this present life, I first knew you as an infant baptized in the church dedicated to Me at Wainfleet-St-Mary; next, in that small church in the little square in Manchester, where you used to come to meditate and where I caused you to see My aura shining through and around My statue.... Now in your ninetieth bodily year we have communed, you have opened the mental lines of communication by your talk with its reverent references to Me. This has drawn Me much closer to you.¹⁸

Writing a few months after Hodson's death, Joy Mills, director of the Krotona School of Theosophy (an Adyar affiliate), California, commented on what motivated his work:

[H]is search and study were centered on a profound conviction of the unitary nature of all existence. The concept of an ‘Absolute, Unknowable, Infinite and Unchanging Source and Foundation’ ... was no mere concept to him, but a conviction deeply rooted in his own perception of life. His intuitive vision an Ultimate Reality was always grounded in a logic derived from his own clairvoyant investigations.¹⁹

While Mills attached greatest importance to his clairvoyant research, she also described him as “one of the finest exponents of the theosophical philosophy which the Theosophical Society has ever known.”²⁰

Christian esotericist, Freemason, clairvoyant, writer, lecturer, and amanuensis for the receipt of Hierarchical teachings, Geoffrey Hodson clearly was an initiate of some standing. It is not our place to speculate on what level of initiation he had attained by the time of his death

in 1983, but we rejoice that he lived, served, and shared his wisdom with us for nearly a century. Of no small significance, his most recent incarnation began in the sign of Pisces and ended on the cusp of Aquarius. We can be assured that his work is not yet finished; he remains with us and will be back, perhaps to play an even bigger role as the Aquarian Age unfolds.

Contributed by John F. Nash
Johnson City, Tennessee

¹ Hodson's early reminiscences were recorded before his death and published posthumously as "A Life Remembered" in Sandra Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson* (Manila, Philippines: The Theosophical Publishers, 1988), 1-10.

² In Britain a "grammar school"—a term originally implying the study of Latin and Greek grammar—is equivalent to an American high school, or perhaps more closely to a charter school because of selective admission policies.

³ Geoffrey Hodson, *Fairies at Work and Play* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925/1982), 33.

⁴ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Kingdom of the Gods* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House 1952), 98.

⁵ S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, 16.

⁶ Geoffrey Hodson, "Introduction," S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, xxiv.

⁷ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Miracle of Birth* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1929/1981), 30.

⁸ Hodson, *The Kingdom of the Gods*, 231.

⁹ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Call to the Heights: Guidance on the Pathway to Self-Illumination* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House 1975), 50.

¹⁰ Although his work overlapped with Bailey's, Hodson—like many other Theosophists—never acknowledged her writings. Nor, to our knowledge, was he ever contacted by the Master Djwhal Khul.

¹¹ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Inner Side Of Church Worship* (London: St Alban Press, 1930), 81.

¹² Geoffrey Hodson, *Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, vol 1 (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1963/1993), 8.

¹³ Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry Online at: <http://comasonic.net/>.

¹⁴ Geoffrey Hodson, *Clairvoyant Investigations* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1984), 61.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 90-91. Misspelled word corrected.

¹⁶ S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, 267. It is unclear whether Mary attained the fifth initiation during the lifetime in Palestine or in another.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 414-415.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 266. Mary also contacted him in 1945; see pp. 115-116.

¹⁹ Joy Mills, Foreword to *Clairvoyant Investigations*, ix-x. The Krotona School is allied with the Adyar branch of the Theosophical Society.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, x.