

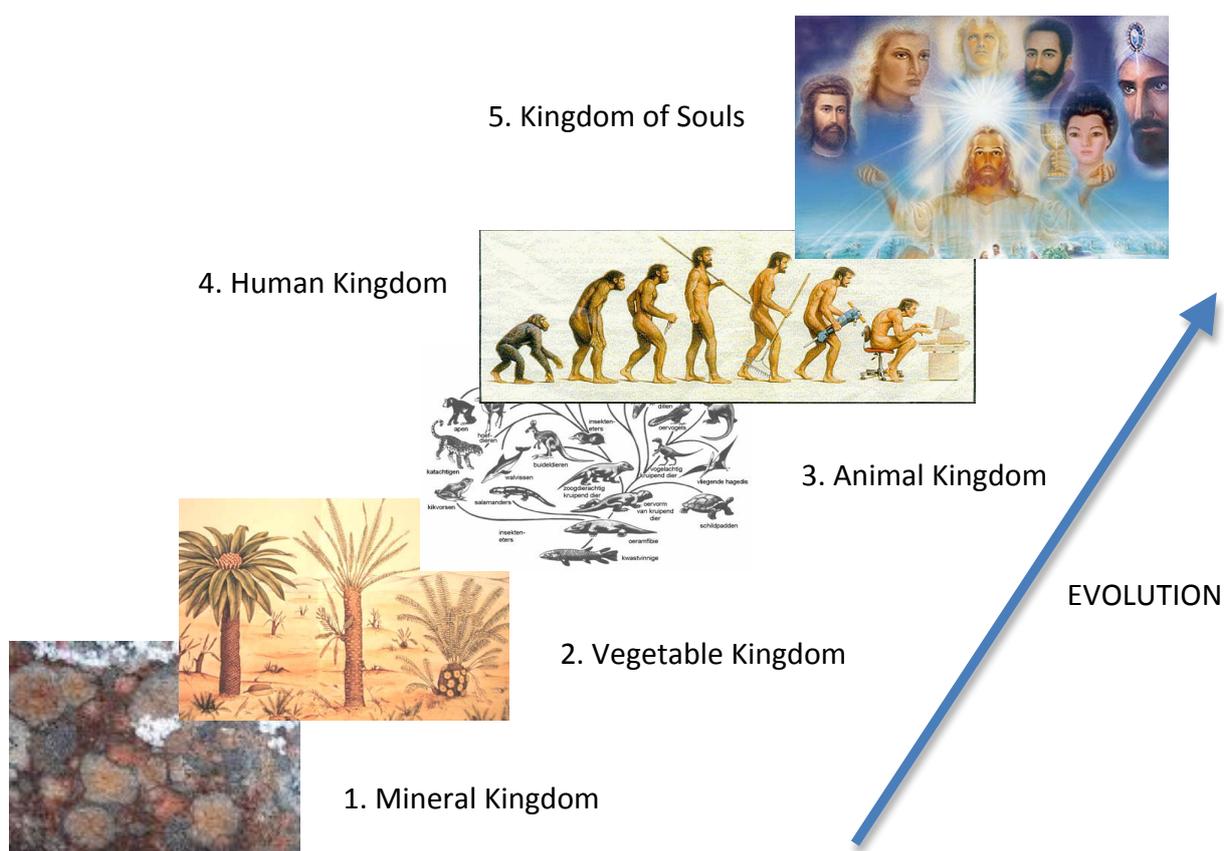
THE FIVE KINGDOMS OF NATURE

“Consciousness sleeps in the stone, dreams in the plant, awakes in the animal and slowly becomes aware of itself in man.” (Pythagoras)

INTRODUCTION

In nature we can distinguish five kingdoms: the three subhuman kingdoms – the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom; the human kingdom; and the kingdom of the souls.

All these kingdoms are expressions of the soul of all things, or the soul of matter, or the Soul of the World, also called the Anima Mundi. This Anima Mundi is expressing itself in ascending levels of form, energy, intelligence and consciousness in the five kingdoms of nature, and further on in still higher kingdoms or unities on higher scales of consciousness. The latter will be no subject of this paper however. This ascending of a chain of kingdoms is called the process of evolution.



In this paper I will first explain the relation between time and states of consciousness, after which I will give an overview of the five kingdoms of nature with their different levels of consciousness and their respective processes, secrets and purposes.

TIME IS A SUCCESSION OF STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Time can simply be perceived as a succession of states of consciousness. In essence a moment of time is the same as an atom. An atom (esoterically understood, so not the material atom) is the smallest particle of substance where a moment is the smallest particle of time. In *Light of the Soul* (LOS) Alice Bailey formulates this truth as follows on page 362:

"As an atom is a substance in which minuteness reaches its limit, so a moment is a division of time in which minuteness reaches its limit. Or a moment is that much of time which an atom takes in leaving the position in space it occupies and reaching the next point. The succession of moments is the non-cessation of the glow thereof."

This realization that an atom and a moment are identical gives us the clue to all states of consciousness, to the nature of energy, and to an understanding of the Eternal Now and the past, present and future. We can reach a just appreciation of this by concentrated meditation. Just as atoms are particles in space, moments are particles in time. The chain of atoms, one following the next and so on, and the chain of moments both are in essence the same and both are the succession of states of consciousness in evolving forms in space and time.

"When we can realize that an atom and a moment are one and the same, and that back of these lies the Realizer or Cognizer of both, we have got the clue to all states of consciousness itself, and to the nature of energy. We shall also have reached a true understanding of the Eternal Now, and a just appreciation of the significance of the past, the present, and the future. This, we are told here, can be gained by concentrated meditation upon time and its units." (LOS, p. 362)

To evolve consciousness needs forms or bodies. It cannot evolve in a vacuum. It evolves in a seemingly endless chain of forms. As consciousness evolves the forms it inhabits evolve as well and take more complex shapes as time proceeds. In the long process of evolution the root form of consciousness, the monad, evolves in different kingdoms. In nature we can distinguish five kingdoms: the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms and the kingdom of the soul. There is also the devic kingdom, but this will be no subject of this paper.

1. THE MINERAL KINGDOM

Consciousness

The first kingdom is the mineral kingdom. Even in this kingdom there are symptoms of awareness of reaction to stimuli. It may seem a strange concept to the beginning student of occultism that a stone possesses (***passive and slumbering***) consciousness, but it should become clearer when one thinks of the facts that stones erode or explode from external stimuli like water, pressure and heat, and that minerals are poisoned and even murdered by toxic waste of chemicals.

In *Consciousness of the Atom* (COA) Alice Bailey writes on page 102 about minerals:

“that they manifest signs of fatigue, and that it is possible to poison a mineral and to murder it, much as you can murder a human being.”

Process

Before the process of evolution a reverse process of involution takes place. This means a downward process of higher frequencies to lower frequencies, or of lower density to higher density. The mineral kingdom is the lowest and most dense part of the world of material forms, or *“the densest expression of the life of God in substance”* (Esoteric Psychology I, EP I, p. 228). Here the process of **condensation** or externalisation of the etheric planes takes place. Minerals are a precipitation of etheric substance.

Secret

The secret of this kingdom is **transmutation**. This is the process wherein the atom transmutes from a primitive form via external heat and moisture to elemental lives, after which – with the cooperation of the devas who use order and sound – the internal heat increases which surpasses the external heat of its environment by which the atom starts to radiate. This breaks its spheroidal wall which prompts the electrons (or negative units) to seek a new centre. Then the central life merges with its polar opposite and becomes negative itself, seeking the positive. In the end the light goes out temporarily (which is called obscurity) until it again emerges and blazes forth.

There are two aspects to this: one is where an atom becomes an isotope (the addition of neutrons but the same protons and electrons, such as hydrogen, deuterium, tritium, etc) and the other is transmutation to another atom, such as hydrogen to helium (adding another proton and electron).

Purpose

The purpose of this kingdom is **radiation**, or to demonstrate the radioactivity of life. The two extremes of this kingdom are its static inert nature on one side and its quality of radioactivity, or of brilliant radiation on the other. By radiation the minerals liberate themselves from their fixed passive forms, which is a process of initiation.

“The goal for all mineral atomic forms is this radio-active condition, the power to pass through all limiting and environing substances. This is initiation, or the entering into a state of liberation, for all mineral appearances, and the organising of all forms in this kingdom...” (EP I, p. 197)

2. THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM

Consciousness

The second kingdom is the vegetable kingdom. Flowers and plants have higher, or more active consciousness than minerals, although it still is in a **dreamy** state. They

react for example to sunlight by bending towards it; they respond to water with growing and flowering and to the absence of this stimulus by drying and dying; and they have seasonal cycles of budding, growing, flowering and dying. In COA (p. 102) is written:

“The fact that flowers have consciousness is being more readily recognised, and articles of very deep interest have been published on the consciousness of plants, opening up a very wide range of thought. (...) In the vegetable kingdom another quality appears, that of sensation or feeling of a rudimentary nature. It is responsive in a different way to the mineral.”

Process

Where in the mineral kingdom there is a process of condensation which goes blindly forth, in the vegetable kingdom there is the process of **conformation** which is more refined. Vegetables have *“the power to “conform” to the pattern set in the heavens and to produce below that which is found above.”* (EP I, p. 233)

Secret

Its secret is that of **transformation**. Plants are able to transform sunlight and the energies of the soil into form and colour.

Purpose

Its purpose is **magnetisation**. Plants magnetically attract with their beauty and loveliness the higher life forms, such as the animals to consume them for food and human beings to draw from them inspiration, comfort and satisfaction. (*Derived from EP I, p. 233*)

3. THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Consciousness

The third kingdom is that of the animals. Here the level of consciousness is stepped up again to a higher level than in the preceding second kingdom of the vegetables. Now consciousness starts to awake and **becomes active** as animals are starting to become able to act by themselves, independent from external stimuli. Of course this is most clearly shown in the higher levels of the animal kingdom, for example with species that can acquire their own food by eating vegetables or by hunting on other animals.

Alice Bailey calls this in COA (p. 102-103) the faculty of “instigation” and the “embryo mentality”:

“In the animal kingdom a third reaction appears; not only is the animal showing signs of sensation in greatly increased degree to the similar response in the vegetable kingdom, but it also shows signs of intellect, or embryo mind. Instinct is a recognised faculty of all animal units, and the word comes from the same root

as the word "instigate." When the power to instigate begins within any animal form it is a sign that an embryo mentality is beginning to manifest."

Process

In this kingdom we see for the first time a true organisation of the etheric body into intricate nerves, sensory force centres and channels, with a spinal column and a rudimentary brain. This organisation of a sensitive response apparatus is called the process of **concretisation**, or the densification of the subtle etheric body. (*Derived from EP I, p. 252*)

Secret

Its secret is that of **transfusion** which expresses a process of life giving, of intelligent integration and of psychological unfoldment in the animal, which precedes the process of individualisation in the Human kingdom. (*Derived from EP I, p. 252*)

Purpose

Its purpose is **experimentation**. Life is a great experiment of the planetary logos (and no mistake or error of God!) to initiate and activate a psychological condition of 'divine lucidity'. This means seeing life clearly as it is. This process starts in the animal kingdom and will be mastered in the human kingdom. (*Derived from EP I, p. 252-253*)

4. THE HUMAN KINGDOM

Consciousness

The fourth kingdom is the kingdom of man. Here the first symptoms of **self-consciousness** are shown. This means man is becoming aware of being a separated identity, and an indwelling impulse or soul within a body or form. Bailey writes in COA (p. 103):

"...in man you have the first symptoms of self-consciousness, or the faculty in man whereby he becomes aware that he is a separated identity, that he is the indwelling impulse within the body, and the one who is in process of becoming aware by means of these bodies."

The **mind**, or the human mentality, distinguishes man from the animals. A human being has the capacity to think and create with the use of his mind or intellect where the animals are only driven by their instinct. "*Mind produces the power to analyse and observe, to differentiate and to distinguish.*" (*From Bethlehem to Calvary, FBC, p. 192*) It also brings the capacity to become aware of wrongdoing, or of sinfulness, an awareness animals don't possess.

Process

In this kingdom the process of **adaptation** of the individual to his environment takes place. In the beginning this is an unconscious process, which is evolving to (**from?**) a conscious but selfish adaptation at first and later on to the work of the aspirant to adapt his personality to group work which is beneficial for all. (*Derived from EP I, p. 323-324*)

Secret

The secret of the human kingdom is the **translation** of the three lower bodies (physical-etheric, astral and mental) into another dimension, state of consciousness or "caste" by the alignment between:

- a. *The physical body and the emotional body.*
- b. *These two and the mental body.*
- c. *These three and the soul.*
- d. *These four and the group of World Servers.*

"It is when the third alignment has been truly accomplished and when the light of the fourth constituent to the relationship dominates the inherent light of the other three, that the objective of man's evolution is reached." (EP I, p. 328)

Purpose

The purpose of the human kingdom is **transfiguration**. Man finds himself in the process of redemption, or salvation from his sins through the transfiguration of his personality into the eventual manifestation as expression of divinity. **This is the cause and reason of his suffering!** Through this redemption process he transmits higher spiritual energies, forces, life and inspiration to the three lower subhuman kingdoms and thereby raises them to higher levels of consciousness.

So, in other words, the human kingdom came into being to carry forward the science of redemption. In *Discipleship in the New Age II* (DINA II, p. 386) is written:

"... a great redemptive experiment is going forward; its prime implementing factors and its scientific agents are the "sons of mind who choose to be the sons of men and yet for all eternity remain the Sons of God." These "sons of mind" were chosen, in that far distant time when the fourth kingdom in nature came into being, to carry forward the science of redemption. There is a true historical and spiritually esoteric significance in the words in The New Testament that the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God." St. Paul is there referring to planetary purpose and to the determined insistence of the Sons of God that eventually—as they brought about the redemption of substance, of matter and form, and thus proved the possibility of that redemption through their own transfigured personalities—their reward should be their eventual manifestation as expressions of divinity."

The fourth kingdom of man is closely related to the fourth ray of Harmony and Conflict, and to the Law of Sacrifice. The suffering and strife of man is his sacrifice

that will eventually lead to harmony, peace and unity for all kingdoms of nature, and to the uplifting into the fifth kingdom of the souls!

“It must never be forgotten that this fourth ray of conflict is the ray whose energies, rightly applied and understood, bring about harmony and at-one-ment. The result of this harmonising activity is beauty, but it is a beauty that is achieved through struggle. This produces a livingness through death, a harmony through strife, a Union through diversity and adversity.” (Esoteric Psychology II, EP II, p. 92)

5. THE KINGDOM OF SOULS

Consciousness

The fifth kingdom of nature is the Kingdom of Souls, also called the Egoic Kingdom. *“Of this fifth kingdom, the Hierarchy is the dynamic and living nucleus”* (DINA I, p. 117). It can also be called *“the Kingdom of God on earth”* (DINA I, p. 2). This kingdom will consist of these people that are able to become **group-conscious** and who can work in a group. They did achieve this property by arriving at love for their fellowmen.

“It is of importance that you realise that today something new is happening. There is the emergence of a new kingdom in nature, the fifth kingdom; this is the Kingdom of God on earth or the kingdom of souls. It is precipitating on earth and will be composed of those who are becoming group-conscious and who can work in group formation. This will be possible, because these people will have achieved a self-initiated perfection (even if relative in nature) and will be identified with certain group expansions of consciousness. It will also be because they have arrived at love of their fellowmen, just as they have loved themselves in the past.” (DINA I, p.2)

So the consciousness to be developed in the fifth kingdom is that of the group. This will be enabled by initiation. The Hierarchy is working on group initiation **and it is this that will lead humanity as a group into the fifth kingdom eventually!**

*“Initiation may be regarded as indicative of successive planetary consummations marking, for instance, the birth of each of the kingdoms in nature; initiation is, par excellence, a series of graded steps or awakenings which enable the human being to become eventually a member, or a point of light, in the Kingdom of God. When an adequate number of members of the fourth kingdom have undergone the process of initiation (technically understood), then the fifth kingdom will come into exoteric manifestation. The method of making this hitherto subjective kingdom a factual entity is rapidly nearing, and the proof of this is—for the first time in history—**group initiation**. This can now be undertaken, and it is for this that the Hierarchy is working today, where aspirants and disciples are concerned.”* (DINA I, p. 381)

Process

The process of the Egoic Kingdom is the playing of the egoic or soul ray on the astral body externally; stimulating it internally to greater size, colour and quality; and bringing it into activity and under control (*derived from EP I, p. 406*). This could be named the process of **externalisation** of the astral body. This is bringing forth group consciousness and detachment from external forms, with attachment to the internal life side of the forms, or the soul, as its consequence.

“The egoic ray induces group consciousness and detachment from external forms, causing attachment to the life side of manifestation and to the subjective whole.” (EP I, p. 407)

Secret

Its secret is the mystery of the conscious **manifestation** of divine powers, of raising matter up into the heaven, of revealing the nature of divine consciousness.

Humanity, and humanity alone, can reveal the nature of the Godhead and of eternal life. To man is given the privilege of revealing the nature of the divine consciousness, and of portraying before the eyes of the assembled sons of God (at the final conclave before the dissolution) what has lain hidden in the Mind of God. Hence the injunction before us today (in the words of the great Christian teacher) to possess in ourselves “the mind of Christ.” This mind must dwell in us and reveal itself in the human race in ever greater fullness. To man is given the task of raising matter up into heaven, and of glorifying rightly the form side of life through his conscious manifestation of divine powers. (EP I, p. 312-313)

Purpose

The purpose of the Egoic Kingdom is the **realisation** of the truth that there is only **unity** and that we, humans, and all other life forms are part of that same unity. All of life started as one explosion of energy with the Big Bang and will eventually unify again into that refined and unifying substance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The process of evolution is an ascending chain of developing consciousness in ever finer and more complex forms through the kingdoms of nature. In this paper I gave an overview of the five kingdoms of nature with their respective levels of consciousness, their processes, secrets and purposes, in which a summary is given in the table below.

Kingdom	Consciousness	Process	Secret	Purpose
1. Mineral	Passive	Condensation	Transmutation	Radiation
2. Vegetable	Dreamy	Conformation	Transformation	Magnetisation
3. Animal	Active	Concretisation	Transfusion	Experimentation
4. Human	Self	Adaptation	Translation	Transfiguration
5. Egoic/Soul	Group	Externalisation	Manifestation	Realisation

I think it is safe to say that the quote from Pythagoras at the beginning of this paper can be complemented as follows:

Consciousness sleeps in the stone, dreams in the plant, awakes in the animal, slowly becomes aware of itself in man and eventually becomes divine in the kingdom of souls.

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October 27, 2014

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