

## Chapter 43

### Neville Longbottom (2)

#### The Three Magic Spheres

How are the three births symbolised in *Harry Potter*? How does Neville Longbottom personify the medulla oblongata?

**The birth of the seeker** is shown by the events which lead Harry (literally) to become a seeker. In Chapter 9 of Part 1 the children come to their first flying lesson. Flying itself is a symbol of searching for spiritual heights.

Neville Longbottom brings to the lesson a sphere called a *Remembrall*. This symbolises an unconscious force within the human being. It is a pre-memory or pre-remembrance which gives the person a feeling that long ago he came from a kingdom; that he is of royal blood and is special. It is the unconscious memory of the descent from David, the Divine Human Being, the Son of the Lord of Hosts.

Neville unknowingly drops the Remembrall and it is picked up by Draco Malfoy, the old serpent-fire in the spinal column which is opposed to the birth of the Seeker. He flies away with it, intending to get rid of it. But Harry, although never having flown before, jumps on to his broom and to his amazement finds out that he has a natural talent for flying. Draco throws the sphere high up in the air and to everyone's amazement, including Harry's, Harry catches the sphere and brings it back to Neville.

The result of this is that instead of being expelled by Professor McGonagall, who sees Harry catching the little sphere, he is made a Seeker in the Quidditch team.

#### **The birth of the New Soul:**

Just before Harry is born Sibyl Trelawney makes a prophecy to Albus Dumbledore. The prophecy boils down to the prediction that a child who is about to be born on July 31<sup>st</sup> will ultimately defeat Voldemort. The Ministry of Magic is aware of all prophecies, and a copy of it is made and stored in a glass sphere which is kept in the Hall of Prophecy.

Severus Snape at this stage is working for Voldemort and hears part of the prophecy. He tells Voldemort about it. The latter makes up his mind to eliminate this enemy before he can become powerful.

There is only one problem: *two* boys are born on July 31<sup>st</sup>! And both satisfy the other conditions stated in the prophecy. They are Harry Potter and Neville Longbottom. Both the Ministry of Magic and Voldemort are uncertain who

the right boy is. However, Voldemort decides it must be Harry and so the prophecy sphere in the Ministry is labelled with Harry's name.

In Part 5, Voldemort succeeds in luring Harry into the Hall of Prophecy to get him to find the glass sphere and hand it to Voldemort, so he can hear the complete version of the prophecy. As Harry's close friend, Neville accompanies Harry, but because of a curse by a vassal of Voldemort, Neville kicks the sphere out of Harry's hand and the sphere is broken.

As we can see here, the birth of the New Soul is very closely linked in the Septology to the working of the medulla oblongata. Just as the medulla oblongata becomes active ("is born") and allows the second ray of spiritual energy, - the Son - to enter the heart, the Lily in Godric's Hollow gives birth to a son. And a sphere is linked to the second birth just as it was to the first. And just as Neville lost the first sphere, the Remembrall, so he loses the second sphere, the prophecy.

### **The birth of the New Consciousness:**

In *Harry Potter* this most holy event is described at the end of Part 7. Harry has voluntarily accepted the killing curse from Voldemort and has returned from King's Cross. Voldemort faces the defenders of Hogwarts to demand their surrender. Neville Longbottom runs forward to defy Voldemort who summons the Sorting Hat and puts it on Neville's head. The hat bursts into flames, and Neville's head is covered in flames, just like the apostles on Pentecost.

The Sword of Gryffindor comes out of the hat and Neville grabs it. He uses it to slice off the head of Voldemort's last Horcrux, Nagini, the great snake. Voldemort is now mortal.

The sphere this time is the protective sphere which Voldemort has cast around Nagini. This sphere is destroyed only a few minutes before Neville kills the snake. This magical sphere is broken by Voldemort himself when he thinks he has won the battle. If he had not done so Neville would have been unable to kill the snake.

This scene symbolically describes exactly what happens in real life when the Holy Spirit enters a pilgrim. His head is filled with the new, divine consciousness, symbolised by the flames around his head, and the old serpent fire is decapitated. The serpent-fire is the force which fills the spinal cord from the brain to the sacral plexus. The old soul has died completely, and the New Soul has achieved consciousness. The pilgrim is liberated for eternity.

Finally, two questions:

Why is a sphere connected to each event in Neville's life? I think the sphere symbolises the idea of birth, just as the egg does.

Why is Neville at first shown as a forgetful, bumbling and 'bottom of the class' child? I think there are several reasons. One is that the author has always insisted that people in minority groups can be heroes: Harry with his cheap glasses, Hermione with her bushy hair and know-it-all attitude, Ron with his red hair. However, as the story develops we see that Harry always supports Neville, and issues advice to him. Neville really listens to this advice and puts it into practice! In that respect Neville is the perfect example of the alchemist who follows the advice of the New Soul in his heart! Another reason is that the author loves surprising her readers, and just as Snape surprises us with his fearless self-sacrifice and love for Lily in Part 7, so does Neville with his fearless heroism.