

30 May 1960

READING 4

All Groups

THE OCTAVE OF AIR

PART 1

We come now to what is perhaps the most fascinating part of the whole story of human energy, though it is elusive and difficult to describe with precision. Practically nothing is known about it scientifically except the first step.

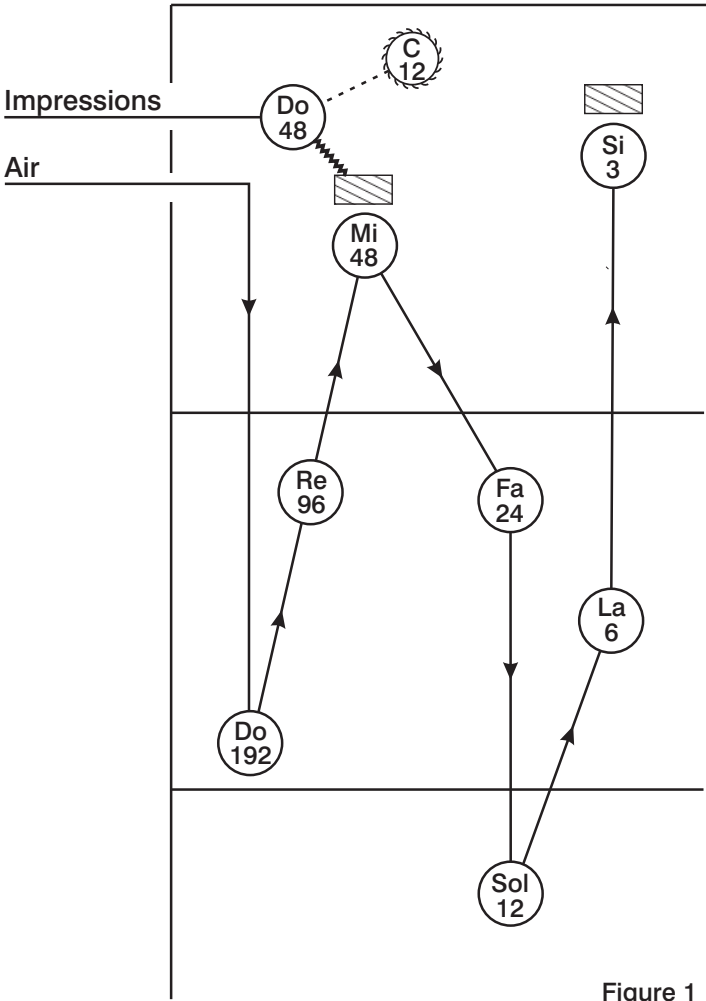


Figure 1

When air enters the lungs, at each breath it meets with a very thin layer of venous blood which is spread out over a vast surface in capillaries of the lungs, so that every blood corpuscle can absorb the life-giving Oxygen through its thin membrane. The blood corpuscle is not really a cell but a small sac to carry molecules of the pigment haemoglobin which is hungry for Oxygen. Remember it is absurd to think of air itself circulating in the blood vessels – Harvey got rid of that idea once and for all.

Even a drop of air getting into a vein can kill a man. So the whole of the Air Octave is a matter of organic chemistry, the first step being perhaps: (a)

Material 96 was (if you remember) labelled as ‘Hormones’, so it is interesting to find in this week’s *Lancet* a discussion about the facts proving that it is Oxygen in the blood stream which plays the chief part in the entry of hormones into tissue cells. Well then, all the cells, including brain cells, have to breathe and this is done through pigments (cytochromes) which are derivatives of haemoglobin with a very complicated structure.

So it may be that the second step (b) represents this process of the breathing of brain cells. Thereafter, of course, we are able only to follow the further processes psychologically – it feels as if some sort of invisible alchemy takes place. Self-remembering provides the shock to carry on the Octave of Air which (as Figure 1 shows) can then proceed to La 6 and even to Si 3 before the Second Interval is reached. In doing so it sends on the *Impressions Octave* past its interval at Mi 12, providing the shock for its transformation into Fa 6 and further still. That is how the First Conscious Shock (Self-remembering) provides the basis for the Second Conscious Shock – namely the transformation of negative emotions into positive.

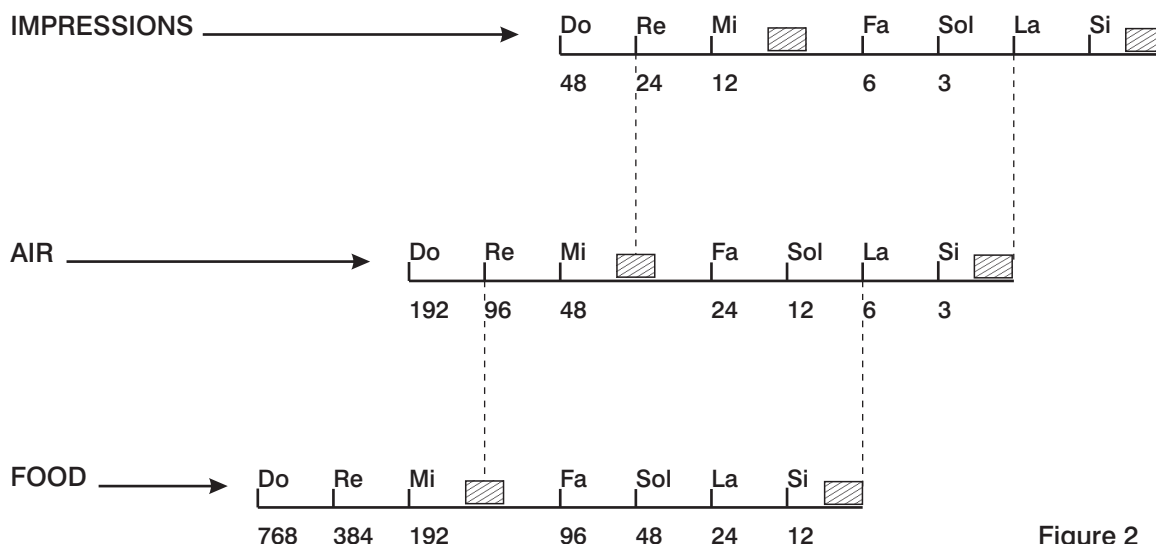
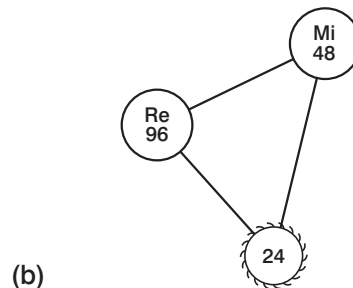
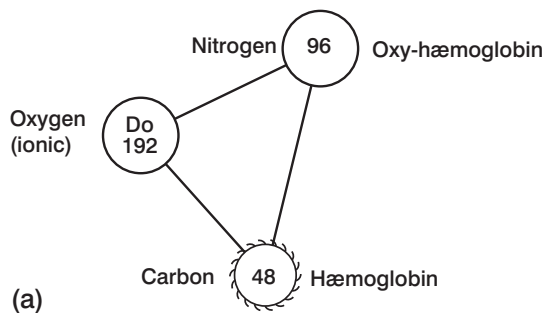


Figure 2

We have to keep making certain small efforts all included in the words ‘remembering ourselves’. The alchemy of the Air Octave goes on imperceptibly until a certain saturation point is reached. We know nothing about it until suddenly and unexpectedly the change comes. Since ‘Time is breath’, and the rhythm of breathing is an inner clock which keeps time for us, the change in the Air Octave is often signalled by a change in our Time-sense.

The above processes are well illustrated in the writings of Jacob Boehme. The sort of efforts he was used to making, he describes in words like this:

Blessed art thou therefore if that thou canst stand still from self-thinking and self-willing and canst stop the wheel of imagination and the senses.

The results he achieved came in three major illuminations and each began unexpectedly; once when sitting in his room his eyes fell upon a burnished pewter dish which reflected the sunshine, and another time 'going abroad to a green before Neys Gate at Goerlitz, he then sat down and viewing the herbs and grass of the field in his inward light, he saw into their essences, use and properties.' He uses words like these: 'In one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years at a University,' and 'Suddenly... my spirit did break through...'

But it is the expectation of results that is as fatal as the 'standing still from self-thinking and self-willing' is essential.

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PART 2

Let us quote from the original description of the Food Table:

It is necessary to understand what this (the continuation of the Air Octave) means. We all breathe the same air. Apart from the elements known to our science the air contains a great number of substances unknown to science, indefinable for it and inaccessible to its observation. But exact analysis is possible both of the air inhaled and of the air exhaled. This exact analysis shows that although the air inhaled by different people is exactly the same, the air exhaled is quite different. Let us suppose that the air we breathe is composed of twenty different elements unknown to our science. A certain number of these elements are absorbed by every man when he breathes. Let us suppose that five of these elements are always absorbed. Consequently the air exhaled by every man is composed of fifteen elements; five of them have gone to feeding the organism. But some people exhale not fifteen but only ten elements, that is to say, they absorb five elements more. These five elements are higher 'hydrogens'. These higher 'hydrogens' are present in every small particle of air we inhale. By inhaling air we introduce these higher 'hydrogens' into ourselves, but if our organism does not know how to extract them out of the particles of air, and retain them, they are exhaled back into the air. If the organism is able to extract and retain them, they remain in it. In this way we all breathe the same air but we extract different substances from it. Some extract more, others less.

NOTE

It is easy to understand what this means if one thinks of it in terms of perfume – the various chemicals in the air to which the very complicated nervous mechanism underlying the sense of smell (olfactory sense) responds. This has a much wider range in terms of 'hydrogens' than the other sense, since it can include not only 48, but 24, 12 and 6. We all know what vivid memories are aroused – often after many years – by some such scent as thyme or lilac. Moreover, it is highly specific, the scent of one kind of rose may arouse it in a given person but not another kind. Attempts are made in many religious rituals to connect scent (like incense) with higher states of consciousness and much more can be done in this way.

(Pause)

In order to extract more, it is necessary to have in our organism a certain quantity of corresponding fine substances. Then the fine substances contained in the organism act *like a magnet* on the fine substances contained in the inhaled air. We come again to the old alchemical law: 'In order to make gold, it is first of all necessary to have a certain quantity of real gold.' 'If no gold whatever is possessed, there is no means whatever of making it.'

The whole of alchemy is nothing but an allegorical description of the human factory and its work of transforming base metals (coarse substances) into precious ones (fine substances).

We can sum up our study so far (Figure 3) by showing the position after the First Conscious Shock. The Food Octave has reached Si 12, the Air Octave has reached Si 3, and the Impressions Octave Mi 12.

Thus the first and third octaves stop at notes which are unable to pass to the following notes.

For the two octaves to develop further, a *Second Conscious Shock* is needed at a certain point in the machine, a new conscious effort is necessary which will enable the two octaves to continue their development. The nature of this effort demands special study. From the point of view of the general work of the machine it can be said in general that this effort is connected with the emotional life, that it is a special kind of influence over one's emotions. But what this kind of influence really is, and how it has to be produced, can be explained only in connection with a general description of the work of the human factory or the human machine.

The practice of not expressing unpleasant emotions, of not 'identifying', of not 'considering inwardly', is the preparation for the *second effort*.

If we now take the work of the human factory as a whole, we shall be able to see (at the moments when the production of fine substances is arrested) by what means we can increase the productivity of the factory. We see that, under ordinary conditions and working with one mechanical 'shock', the factory produces a very small quantity of the fine substances, in fact only Si 12. Working with one mechanical and one conscious 'shock' the factory now produces a much greater quantity of the fine substances. Working with two conscious 'shocks' the factory will produce a quantity of the fine substances such as, in the course of time, will completely change the character of the factory itself.

The three storey factory represents the universe in miniature and is constructed according to the same laws and on the same plan as the whole universe.

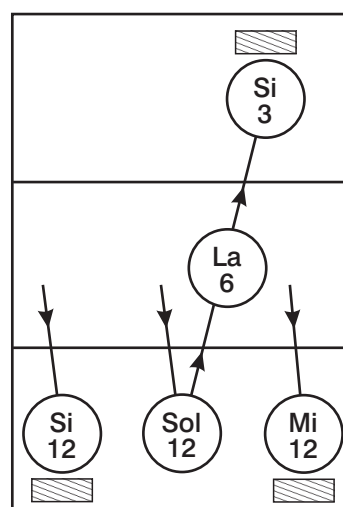


Figure 3

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