

March 1961

## READING 6

### ALL GROUPS

#### THE SIX ACTIVITIES OF MAN

Being a special case of the System axiom that there are six possible orders of action of three forces on each space-time scale and that these give rise to all events in the Universe.

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#### INTRODUCTION

**Order of Action:** By this is meant that there are three possible places that the constituent forces in any event can occupy:



that is, the inception of an event, its inner nature and connections, and what emerges and passes into the next triad. From every example we can learn *something*, but no one example shows *everything*.

**Examples:** In the neurological study of a nerve cell or any unit, these are thought of as excitation, conduction and emergent impulse; in optics an example is 1) a beam of white light, 2) a prism, 3) the emergent spectrum. We usually regard these as succeeding one another in time, but in reality they are completely predetermined by the nature of the forces and of the matter conducting them in a given triad. It is important to realise that an event may not have what we call a 'result' – as, for instance, a shout may not be heard, a decision not carried out, an order not obeyed; what we see *as results* are the succeeding triads or chains of events that may, or may not, be set up by the particular event in question.

The problem, then, will consist in determining the difference between events depending on whether Carbon, Oxygen or Nitrogen occupy the first place, and then by which of the remaining forces in each case the second place is filled. With these preliminaries we now set out to consider human actions as closest to hand, realising that we need to go about this slowly, deliberately collecting clear examples, rather than by slap-dash methods and guesswork. For this is itself an example of how we have to pick the right kind of activity to get the desired result.

#### PART 1

Now forgetting about the three forces for a moment, let us consider human actions once again. Let us consider, for instance, various functions of the *moving centre* which do not require special intelligence but which are orderly, directed, and constructive. In this category belongs physical work to which the person has been previously trained so that it has become automatic – such as gardening, typing, interior decorating. Here effort is needed at every step – stop the effort and the action ceases.

Consider, in contrast, certain operations of the moving centre which, though automatic, are not directed or constructive – talking for talking’s sake, spreading rumours, dropping lighted matches or cigarette ends. In this second category of action the passage of one triad into the next can proceed with great speed and force and entirely unpredictably. No effort; once initiated the train of actions goes by its own momentum. Destruction, as contrasted with construction, plays a big part in human affairs and mostly depends on *absence of mind*. On the other hand, of course, if a violent action could be accompanied by knowledge and intelligence it also could play an important and beneficial part in human activity. It may be necessary to shout at a man who does not obey you; or to stamp out of a room and bang the door in order to terminate some unsatisfactory conversation; but I have seldom met the man (except on the stage) who could do this dispassionately, have you? It is also necessary to burn rubbish, to demolish old houses and cars; in fact, in the whole of Nature there can be no construction without removal of waste, no survival of the fittest without elimination of the unfit.

Now ask yourselves, in the light of the description of the six triads above, how you would relate these examples just cited?

[ 1st category C - O - N ]

[ 2nd category C - N - O ]

## PART 2

Now consider those actions which start with the intellect and depend upon the intellect all the time. On the one hand there is all the inventiveness which enables a man to get over difficulties arising in the course of some operation, labour-saving devices, the ability to turn some material into a commercial product. These are natural abilities inherent in some people more than in others, but quite a variety of such ability is acquired by education, long study for one of the professions, training in a laboratory, and so on. We might call it, in general, *professional work*. It is noteworthy that no amount of physical energy *per se* will ever give rise to inventiveness; the two are quite different in kind.

Are you beginning to see that there is a difference between those actions described in Part 1 which are initiated by physical activity (Carbon in the first place of the triad), and those actions now described where the intellect has to be marshalled first, training undergone, plans made (Oxygen in the first place of the triad)?

[ 3rd category O - C - N ]

There is also another kind of activity beginning with the intellect but much more high-powered and bringing much greater effects for good or evil – *a great scientific discovery*, for instance, Pasteur’s discovery of bacteria or Fleming’s of penicillin, the invention of gunpowder or of jet propulsion. Inventiveness is met with every day of the week but great discoveries are the product of genius and cannot be produced to order.

[ 4th category O - N - C ]

### PART 3

No amount of inventiveness or science can, however, produce a *great work of art*, though the artist may have had to use inventiveness, just as he has had to use physical skill. In the same way, School work must have something different *in kind* about it to achieve its results, though it may marshal these other kinds of action in its service. Just cast your mind back on ‘operation Albert Hall’. Though good professional work and much physical labour were necessary, what was it that inspired the whole thing and enabled the impossible to be achieved? This *fifth kind* of activity begins in the heart.

[ 5th category N - O - C ]

The reason that this is so rarely to be seen in ordinary life is that there is ‘no Nitrogen where it is needed’. There are special methods for this purpose – namely to bring a gentle glow to the heart. For the Monk there is the method of continuous internal prayer so fully described in the *Philokalia*; but for the Householder we have only recently been taught the perfect way whereby the mind is dipped in gold several times during two half-hours each day until it permanently takes on that colour.

But, finally, there is the *sixth kind* of activity which opposes all that, which begins in the heart, but in a heart poisoned with negative emotion.

[ 6th category N - C - O ]

We also saw examples of this activity at the Albert Hall, and if they had been more organised they might have brought the whole thing to a stop. It is highly important for any people taking responsibility in School work to be able to detect the beginnings of this process, which Mr Ouspensky used to call ‘crime’, and which the Maharishi has recently referred to as ‘shameful’, in order to obliterate it before it gathers force.

The switch between the fifth and sixth category of action takes place deep in the nature of man, and often with lightning rapidity as the Zen story called ‘The Gates of Paradise’ shows. (See Appendix)

(**Note:** This is familiar to some of you; there may be no need to read it again.)

### PART 4

In conclusion, it is easy to appreciate that the six activities change their significance in human life according to the *Level of Being* of this life. Take the familiar four ‘kinds of Life’ named by the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the Common, the Special, the Unified and the Perfect. In the *Common Life* the activities of physical work, destruction, professional work, scientific discovery, artistic creation and crime, do not fall into sharp categories; for everything is under the law of accident and in a state of perpetual change. In the *Special Life* the differences begin to have significance in relation to School work; all the activities take on their distinctive features and, particularly the last one, crime; which comes to mean crime against the School or people who might enter a School eventually – destruction, in fact, of people’s possibilities, distortion of the teaching, and so on. In the *Unified Life* things change again, and about that we know very

little at this stage; but as regards the *Perfect Life*, we have beautiful descriptions in the Gospels, where all the acts of Christ have an utterly different meaning. The cursing of the barren fig tree, the casting out of devils, the drama of Christ's suffering are to be seen as completely devoid of negative emotion or identification; they are symbolic expressions of cosmic laws. Think about that at Easter time; and if you read the Gospels you will realize that each *type of person has to perform a certain kind of action at a particular moment*. A particular woman touches the hem of His garment; only one of the 10 lepers turns back to thank Him; Judas betrays Him, Pilate washes his hands; and the members of the crowd shout 'Hosanna' one day and a week later they shout 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' So *types of people* are also defined by the six triads. And one fine morning you will wake up and realise that all these types are in yourself.

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#### APPENDIX

'The Gates of Paradise' (*101 Zen Stories*, Rider, p.79)

A soldier named Nobu-Shige came to Haku-In, and asked,

'Is there really a paradise and a hell?'

'Who are you?' inquired Haku-In.

'I am a Samurai,' the warrior replied.

'You, a soldier!' exclaimed Haku-In. 'What kind of ruler would have you as his guard? Your face looks like that of a beggar.'

Nobu-Shige became so angry that he began to draw his sword when Haku-In continued, 'So you have a sword! Your weapon is probably much too dull to cut off my head.'

As Nobu-Shige drew his sword Haku-In remarked, 'Here open the gates of hell!'

At these words the Samurai perceiving the master's discipline sheathed his sword and bowed.

'Here open the gates of paradise,' said Haku-In.

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### ‘OPERATION ALBERT HALL’

About last November, just before he left England, the Maharishi asked me to come and see him to tell me of his plans. He was getting a big response in the chief cities of Europe but felt that the whole movement needed a big demonstration both as an encouragement for future work and in order to get picked people to go to his centre in the Himalayas to be trained to give and guide meditation. He wanted representatives from abroad to come to a conference in London, of which the climax should be the biggest meeting which could possibly be held. The Festival Hall was booked for the whole of 1961 but the Albert Hall was available, with accommodation for about five thousand people. He wished me to be responsible for the whole thing, and as I was grateful to him and felt it would be good for us to attempt this vast undertaking, I accepted. He himself was to be away until the opening of the Conference, which was planned for 11th March with the meeting at the Albert Hall on the 13th.

The first thing was to get together a small syndicate with trustees and chief operatives whose experience in different aspects of this kind of undertaking would be effective. This we called the Congress Subscription Syndicate; after much difficulty a first-rate office was secured with the address ‘4 Albemarle Street, Piccadilly’, and this was used in all the publicity. Five thousand letters were sent out to prominent people in all branches of life; posters and a booklet were designed and printed; and the press, radio and television approached to try to get the most favourable reception.

The Maharishi had expressed a hope that world-famous figures would be present on the platform, but of course although a number were approached no one in that category would undertake it. Actually, on the night of the meeting, Pundit Nehru and the higher officials of the Government of India were all due to be at a dinner with the Queen at the Guildhall.

The Maharishi duly arrived on March 10th and a few of the organisers were able to consult him about plans, but it was not until we all met on the stage of the Albert Hall between 11 am and 1 pm on the morning of the day that final arrangements could be made. These included the playing of a violin solo while people were awaiting the Maharishi; the silent unveiling by the Maharishi of a portrait of his Master and an invocation to his tradition; then a speech of welcome by a barrister member of the School to the Maharishi and the delegates from foreign countries; an address of an hour and a half by the Maharishi; the reading of a resolution put together by the Delegates’ Conference by Henry Nyburg, the only other man on the platform; and finally a speech of thanks together with directions for those who wished to be given the method or to enquire further.

About 150 people took part in the arrangements in the hall and in the marshalling of the many applicants who came forward after the meeting. The hall was very early full, two thousand members of the general public having been brought by the publicity, about equalling the numbers of the members of our organisation and their friends; and seven hundred of the cards placed on each person’s seat were filled in asking for interview – an exceedingly high proportion. There was some opposition by two disgruntled people followed by some sporadic demonstrations at the back of the hall, but this was effectively dealt with.

It was amazing that apart from those 'in the know' nobody, even from other groups, knew who was organising the meeting. It was a complete vindication of the idea of the anonymous role that could be played by a School. Following the meeting, the office at Albemarle Street has been busy all day and every day; a shift service has been working full time at the Maharishi's residence at Prince Albert Road for checking the meditation following the 230 interviews and 163 initiations given by the Maharishi and his assistant. He left for the continent on Sunday 19th, well pleased. Following this, appointments for initiation and checking are actively proceeding, those from the general public being given by the staff at Prince Albert Road and those directly connected with us at a house specially lent for the purpose.

The Maharishi found time to spend an evening with us at Colet Gardens, described by him as a family chat, which between three and four hundred of our members greatly enjoyed, and at which he gave many valuable answers to questions, all of which have been recorded.

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