

16 July 1962

**PART I**

Among last week's quotations occurred the following, which will need amplification:

It is necessary, further, to remember that the sex centre works with 'hydrogen' 12. This means that it is stronger and quicker than all other centres. Sex, in fact, governs all other centres. The only thing in ordinary circumstances, that is, when man has neither consciousness nor will, that holds the sex centre in submission is 'buffers'. 'Buffers' can entirely bring it to naught, that is, they can stop its normal manifestation. But they cannot destroy its energy. ...

These buffers or shock absorbers are a characteristic of the 'Second Room' in all ordinary people. They are like strong wooden partitions which have been built up by a kind of protective thinking process to protect us from the suffering occasioned by our contradictory emotions. Life for ordinary people would be quite impossible if they felt these contradictions; if they realised that from one minute to another they think and feel and do entirely contradictory things. Sometimes when one is talking, a sentence begins in one direction and ends in an opposite one. In order to protect ourselves we say to ourselves, 'I am not the sort of person who...'; 'I always do so and so'; 'I never do so and so'. Mr. Ouspensky used to quote the man who had a buffer which prevented him seeing that he was always late for an appointment. He used to say with conviction, '*I am never late*', and then he could be late as often as he liked! These buffers are the framework on which the false picture of ourselves – which is called 'False Personality' – is built.

Before development can proceed any distance they have to be knocked down. A good chopper or bill-hook is necessary, and this is furnished by the School. Other people in the School with the same aim as oneself do not set much store by these portentous stock expressions. They sound strangely hollow, and quite naturally a lot of them disappear, so that the chopper is only necessary for some of them.

The importance to us lies in the fact that, at a certain stage in development, the awakening and liberation of *Conscience* becomes essential, and conscience is too unpleasant to live with without buffers. With the new ideas and interests of the School, a fire is lit which burns up the negative influences, the fears and glooms; subjective things like remorse and the concept of original sin; and conscience becomes a boon and a blessing instead of a curse.

In the excitement, perhaps, of a new method or of a new idea, people without a School become carried away, and conscience may even be put permanently to sleep or killed. No School which has not as its central feature the awakening of conscience can take people to the desired end.

When asked what enabled people to be successful outwardly in the common life, Mr. Ouspensky would reply, 'Good buffers. Then a politician can change his party each year without noticing it!' But to be successful outwardly and belong to a School, it is necessary to find a way of doing it without buffers. One faces up to the contradictions bravely and quite free from any feeling of remorse or despair; one cultivates the attitude that moments of Conscience, though a shock, are the beginning of a new state of Consciousness with infinite possibilities.

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## PART 2

The diagram shows the relation of the first, second and third 'bodies' to the three Higher Centres:

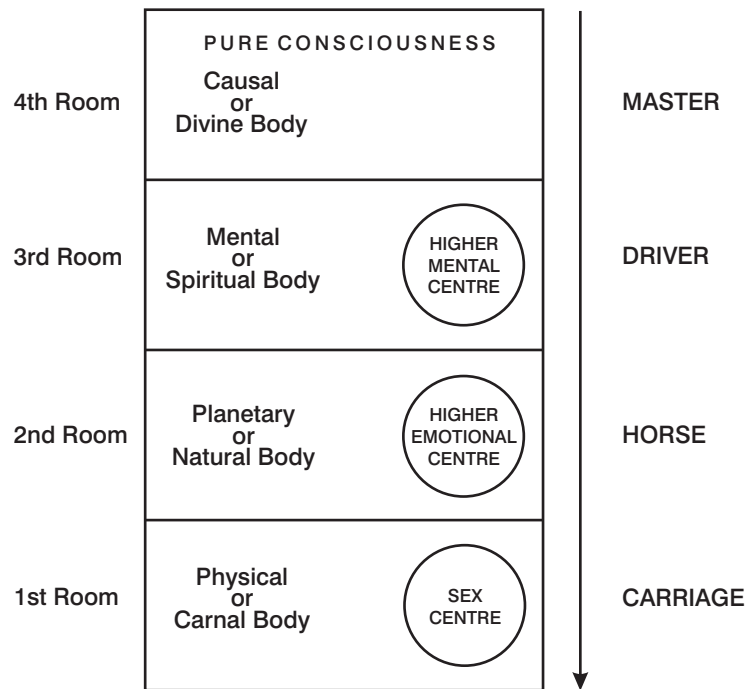


Figure 1

Quotation from the original account:

All that has been said before about work on oneself, about the formation of inner unity and of the transition from the level of man number one, number two, and number three to the level of man number four and further, pursues one and the same aim. What is called according to one terminology the 'astral body', is called in another terminology the 'higher emotional centre', although the difference here does not lie in the terminology alone. These are, to speak more correctly, different aspects of the next stage of man's evolution. It can be said that the 'astral body' is necessary for the complete and proper functioning of the 'higher emotional centre' in unison with the lower. Or it can be said that the 'higher emotional centre' is necessary for the work of the 'astral body'.

The 'mental body' corresponds to the 'higher thinking centre'. It would be wrong to say that they are one and the same thing. But one requires the other, one cannot exist without the other. One is the expression of certain sides and functions of the other.

The fourth body requires the complete and harmonious working of all centres; and it implies, or is the expression of, complete control over this working.

What is necessary to understand and what the 'table of hydrogens' helps us to grasp, is the idea of the complete materiality of all the psychic, intellectual, emotional, volitional, and other inner processes including the most exalted poetic inspirations, religious ecstasies, and mystical revelations.

The materiality of processes means their dependence upon the quality of the material or substance used on them. One process demands the expenditure, that is, as it were, the burning, of hydrogen 48; another process cannot be obtained with the help of hydrogen 48; it requires a finer, a *more combustible* substance – hydrogen 24. For a third process hydrogen 24 is too weak; it requires hydrogen 12.

## COMMENT

Both the sex centre and the Higher Emotional Centre work with Hydrogen 12. The Higher Mental Centre uses Hydrogen 6, and 'Pure Consciousness' as manifested in the Complete Human Being can be thought of as Hydrogen 3.

(Pause for discussion)

## CONCLUSION

In relation to the functions of a man of physical body only, the automaton depends upon external influences, and the next three functions depend upon the physical body and the external influences it receives. Desires or aversions – 'I want', 'I don't want', 'I like', 'I don't like' – that is, functions occupying the place of the second body, depend upon accidental shocks and influences. Thinking, which corresponds to the functions of the third body, is an entirely mechanical process. 'Will' is absent in ordinary mechanical man, he has desires only; and a greater or lesser *permanence* of desires and wishes is called a strong or a weak will.

In the case of fully developed man, that is, in relation to the functions of the four bodies, the automatism of the physical body depends upon the influences of the other bodies. Instead of the discordant and often contradictory activity of different desires, there is *one single I*, whole, indivisible, and permanent; there is *individuality*, dominating the physical body and its desires and able to overcome both its reluctance and its resistance. Instead of the mechanical process of thinking there is *consciousness*. And there is *will*, that is, a power, not merely composed of various often contradictory desires belonging to different 'I's, but issuing from consciousness and governed by individuality or a single and permanent I. Only such a will can be called 'free', for it is independent of accident and cannot be altered or directed from without.

An Eastern teaching describes the functions of the four bodies, their gradual growth, and the conditions of this growth, in the following way:

Let us imagine a vessel or a retort filled with various metallic powders. The powders are not in any way connected with each other and every accidental change in the position of the retort changes the relative position of the powders. If the retort be shaken or tapped with the finger, then the powder which was at the top may appear at the bottom or in the middle, while the one which was at the bottom may appear at the top. There is nothing permanent in the position of the powders and under such conditions there can be nothing permanent. This is an exact picture of our psychic life. Each succeeding moment, new influences may change the position of the powder which is on the top and put in its place another which is absolutely its opposite. Science calls this state of the powders the state of mechanical mixture. The essential characteristic of the interrelation of the powders to one another in this kind of mixture is the instability of these interrelations and their variability.

It is impossible to stabilise the interrelation of powders in a state of mechanical mixture. But the powders may be fused; the nature of the powders makes this possible. To do this a special kind of fire must be lighted under the retort which, by heating and melting the powders, finally fuses them together. Fused in this way the powders will be in the state of a chemical compound. And now they can no longer be separated by those simple methods which separated and made them change places when they were in a state of mechanical mixture. The contents of the retort have become indivisible, 'individual'. This is a picture of the formation of the second body. The fire by means of which fusion

is attained is produced by 'friction', which in its turn is produced in man by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no'. If a man gives way to all his desires, or panders to them, there will be no inner struggle in him, no 'friction', no fire. But if, for the sake of attaining a definite aim, he struggles with desires that hinder him, he will then create a fire which will gradually transform his inner world into a single whole.

Let us return to our example. The chemical compound obtained by fusion possesses certain qualities, a certain specific gravity, a certain electrical conductivity, and so on. These qualities constitute the characteristics of the substance in question. But by means of work upon it of a certain kind the number of these characteristics may be increased, that is, the alloy may be given new properties which did not primarily belong to it. It may be possible to magnetise it, to make it radioactive, and so on.

The process of imparting new properties to the alloy corresponds to the process of the formation of the third body and of the acquisition of new knowledge and powers with the help of the third body.

When the third body has been formed and has acquired all the properties, powers, and knowledge possible for it, there remains the problem of fixing this knowledge and these powers, because, having been imparted to it by influences of a certain kind, they may be taken away by these same influences or by others. By means of a special kind of work for all three bodies the acquired properties may be made the permanent and inalienable possession of the third body.

The process of fixing these acquired properties corresponds to the process of the formation of the fourth body.

And only the man who possesses four fully developed bodies can be called a 'man' in the full sense of the word. This man possesses many properties which ordinary man does not possess. One of these properties is *immortality*. All religions and all ancient teachings contain the idea that, by acquiring the fourth body, man acquires immortality; and they all contain indications of the ways to acquire the fourth body, that is, immortality.

In this connection certain teachings compare man to a house of four rooms. Man lives in one room, the smallest and poorest of all, and until he is told of it, he does not suspect the existence of the other rooms which are full of treasures. When he does learn of this he begins to seek the keys of these rooms and especially of the fourth, the most important, room. And when a man has found his way into this room he really becomes the master of his house, for only then does the house belong to him wholly and forever.

The fourth room gives man immortality and all religious teachings strive to show the way to it. There are a great many ways, some shorter and some longer, some harder and some easier, but all, without exception, lead or strive to lead in one direction, that is, to immortality.

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