

27 October 1969

READING 2

Now perhaps we are ready to proceed on our way toward the 'Food Table'.

SECTION 1. AIM

The figure shows again the 3 Octaves of Radiations as seen in perspective from the point of view of man living on this earth. The first Triad refers to the Absolute – the Creator of the whole Universe and called in the Shankaracharya's terminology Brahma. The second triad which we can label 'Hydrogen 1', he calls 'Param-Atman', the Universal Atman experienced in Cosmic Consciousness. The third triad labelled 'Hydrogen 6' is the Individual Atman. In the Gospels two expressions are used to distinguish these – 'The Lord God' for the Universal and 'The Lord *Thy* God' for the individual; and we are told (Luke 10: 27) in order 'to inherit Eternal life'.. 'to love the Lord *thy* God with all thy heart and with all thy Soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.' The more devoted one is to this single aim, the quicker one gets along. In *A New Model*, Mr. Ouspensky explains that the word 'neighbour' (which Christ illustrates with the story of the Good Samaritan) stands for the man or the 'School' that helps you on the way to Self-realization until you realise that it is your own Self which is rescuing you constantly.

(Discussion)

SECTION 2. 'FOOD'

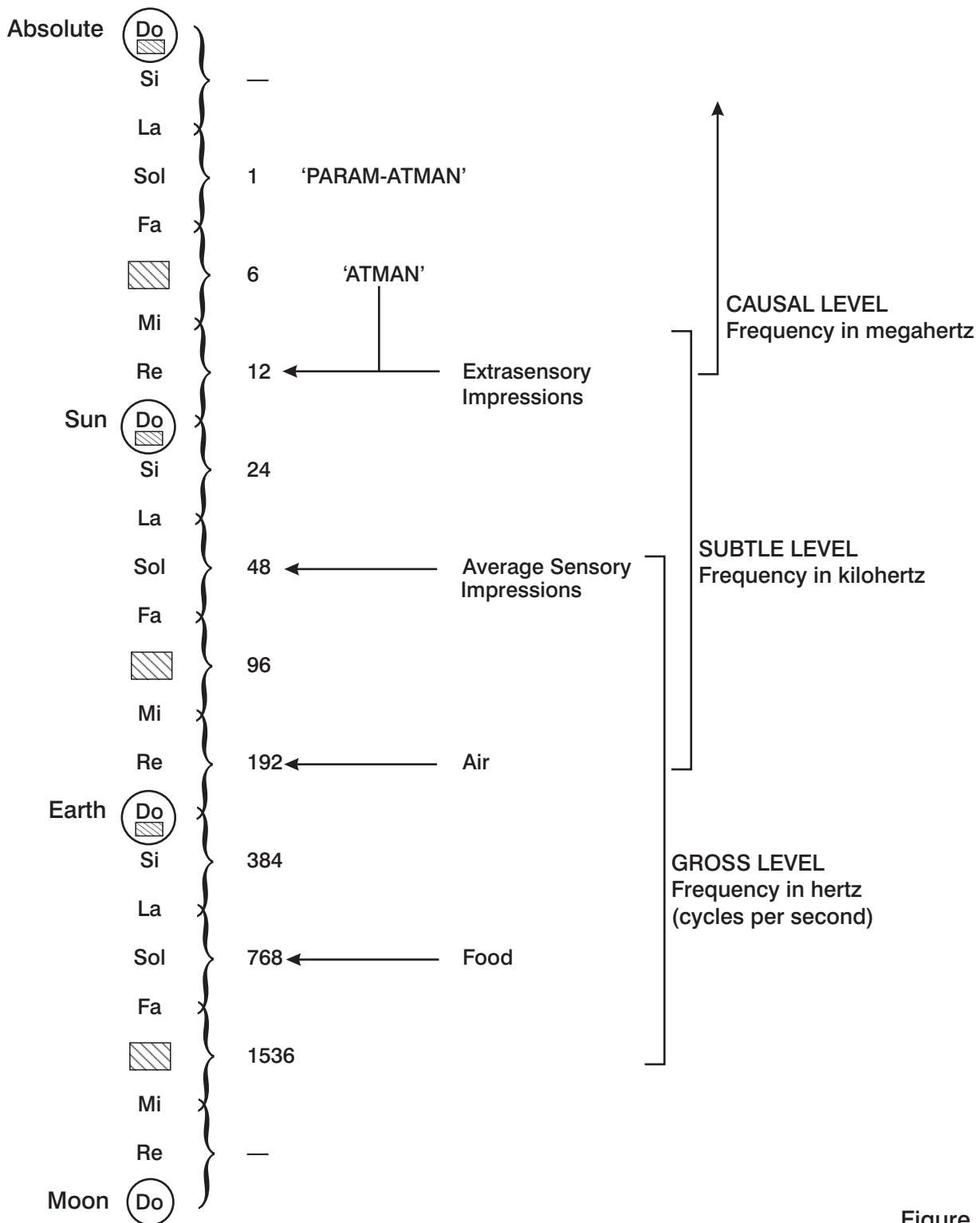
Our System says that the gross physical bodies in organic life need three kinds of food to keep them alive – the food they eat, the air they breathe, and the sensory impressions they receive (which can come from outside or from inside the body). Man's body eats H768, breathes H192 and has average sensory impressions H48. But later, the System goes on to say that every kind of organic life can be classified in this way:

'Animals such as a dog (or pig) can feed on 768 but they can also feed on a lower 'hydrogen', not 768 but approaching 1536 – food of a kind impossible for man. A bee feeds on a hydrogen much higher than 768 (i.e. nectar, which is around 192), but it lives in a hive in an atmosphere where man could not live... A fish feeds on 1536, lives in 384, and 'breathes' 192. A tree feeds on 1536, breathes partly 192 and partly 96, and lives partly in 192 and partly in 3072 (soil).'[†]

More immediately important for us, however, is the realisation that the Subtle body (our Psychological processes) also requires three kinds of food, for as Christ said to the devil in the wilderness after his 40-day fast: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Causal level)'. In the Lord's Prayer we ask to be given our 'supersubstantial bread', that is impressions from Higher Centres.

In order to be able to consider this matter more precisely, we can see from the right-hand side of the diagram that our scale enables us to demarcate these three levels (gross, subtle and Causal)

[†]*In Search of the Miraculous*, p.320



Figure

quite easily. Obviously they overlap; because, for instance, with regard to 'Air', while we can study the movements of the lungs and chest in the gross body, the chemistry of tissue respiration and the control of breathing by centres in the brainstem belong to the Subtle level.

As a way to think about the different space-time of these levels, I have suggested that while in the gross body only single events tend to happen in a second, on the subtle level a thousand events, and on the Causal level a million events can enter Consciousness in a single second as a single experience. Those equipped to collect the evidence would find it interesting to do so. In fact the range is even greater, but it certainly includes long and even shortwave radio.

It is interesting to think also about what *actually happens to the air we breathe*. Harvey disproved Galen's supposition that the air itself circulated in the blood vessels, and we now know that atoms of oxygen in loose combination with haemoglobin molecules are carried round by myriads of those tiny sacs called red blood corpuscles through capillary channels (only one cell thick) which permeate all the tissues; much as motor vehicles convey goods or people through the narrow streets of a big city. In both there is similar congestion in much-used areas, whereas there are many 'empty streets' in other parts. Muscles which we don't use are almost devoid of blood flow; but far more important from our point of view is that all those areas of brain and spinal cord through which Hydrogens above 48 should circulate are similarly starved. Without adequate blood supply no amount of stimulation would be likely to cause those centres to work; in fact it is changes in the circulation that enables the given tissue to get more air.

Since the blood flow through the capillary channels is under the control of the autonomic division of the nervous system, it is outside the direct control of our will, so it is emotional drive, not intellectual exercises that is required. Unaccustomed physical movements and postures, such as those of the Dervish turning and our 'Movements to Music', are a great help in bringing blood flow to little-used areas. But if our Meditation becomes emotional, if the recommended posture and other instructions are patiently followed over some time, this also can succeed; for we have ample evidence of the subtle changes in circulation and breathing which our System of Meditation produces. Of major importance in all techniques intended for Self-realization is that traffic should be diverted from its main thoroughfares and habitual channels in the brain; those functions which are continuously active must be rested; and other more delicate functions can then come into play when better nourished and released from outside dominance.

SECTION 3. 'FASTING'

In order to do that effectively we must understand the technical meaning of this word. Much confusion has always been caused by taking figurative language literally. 'Fasting' means abstinence from food; but there are three kinds of 'food', as we have seen, and the most important kind of abstinence is *fasting from the stream of habitual impressions*. It must be realised that instructions about 'fasting' refer to the *subtle*, not the physical body. When Christ was 'led of the Spirit into the wilderness', it meant that He went for a time to lead a special kind of life which allowed Him to 'fast' for forty days and forty nights from the impressions received in ordinary human life. The restriction of 'food' and the change of 'air' were included, but were not paramount. Since the time-scale of the Subtle world is very different from that of the gross physical world, *we* are only required to 'fast' for two half-hours a day! The prophet Isaiah had expressed this quite different meaning of the word with characteristic force:

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his Soul? To bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?...

Then shall thy light break forth in the morning, and thine health shall spring forth rapidly...

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry and He shall say,
Here I am...

And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy Soul in drought... and
thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

(Isaiah 58: 5–9)

A rigid rule of abstinence from gross food, he implies, is only prison; abstinence from
unwanted impressions leads to liberation.

In summary the true significance of 'Fasting' is that, in order to enjoy extrasensory impressions
(through Higher Centres), we must regularly abstain for a short while and as far as possible from
sensory impressions – those 'soft-tongued voices of illusion'.

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