

2 June 1975

READING 4

THE HUMAN ORGANISM AS A CHEMICAL FACTORY

We now come to what can be called the '3rd Scale'; the first, on the scale of the big universe, is our Ray of Creation; and the second, starting in the 'Unmanifest Sun', is on the scale of our solar system and the origin and maintenance of organic life on earth. The 3rd Scale is that of an individual human being with his inherent possibilities, most of which remain latent.

PART 1. THE PHYSICAL BODY

Taking the human organism as a chemical machine which converts three kinds of intake – the food we swallow, the air we breathe, and the sensory impressions from our environment, we can relate them in their simplest form to eight levels of matter in order of density from the most complex, 7, to the indivisible energy at the Centre which we can call 0. We express them clockwise as an ascending octave from do to Do, on the six points of the circle with the three 'intervals' filled by the entry of the food swallowed (7), the air breathed (5), and the sensory impressions received (3). (see Figure 1)

We can describe them in some detail so that we can see what is meant by 'density of matter', 'intervals' in an octave, and the additional impulses or 'shocks' which are needed to fill these

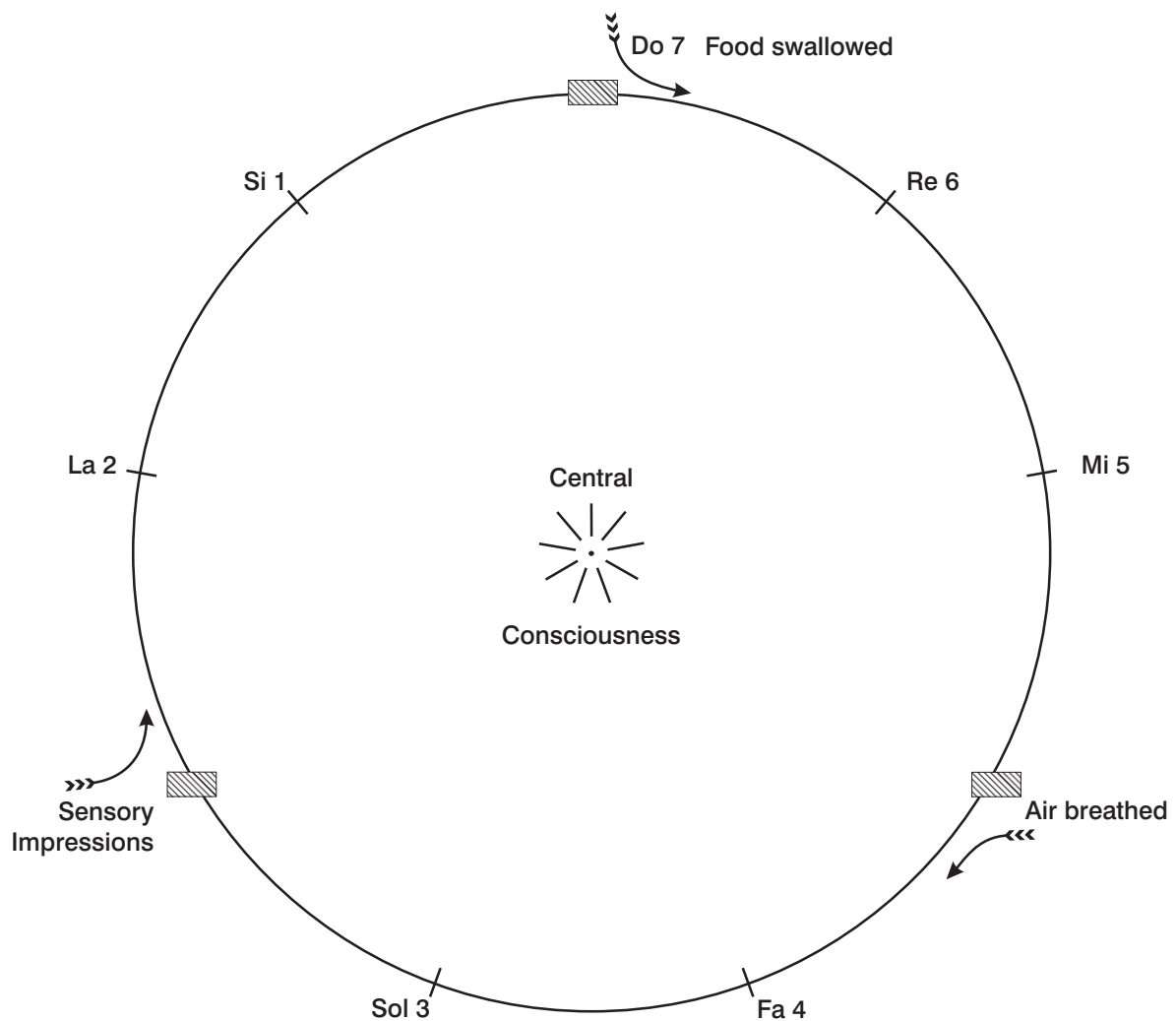


Figure 1

intervals. This single circle is the physical body, and the matters can all be studied to a greater or less extent by the physical sciences.

The lowest levels of matter can be studied by physiology down to the smallest details: First, matter 7, the food swallowed. We do not eat living creatures – even fresh fruit and salads have ceased to live after separation from the parent stem. The food we eat is carefully and attractively prepared and cooked, so that the sight and smell of it makes ‘the mouth water’ – that is, excites the flow of saliva and gastric juice so that when it is chewed and swallowed the enzymes of saliva and stomach, and later of the intestinal juice, are all there ready to digest it. Re 6 is food fully dissolved into its primary ‘building stones’ (salts and vitamins, sugar, fatty acids and amino acids from protein) which altogether are of the consistency of water and are conveyed by the lymphatics of the small intestine to the portal vein where it joins the flow of *venous blood* that will undergo the second

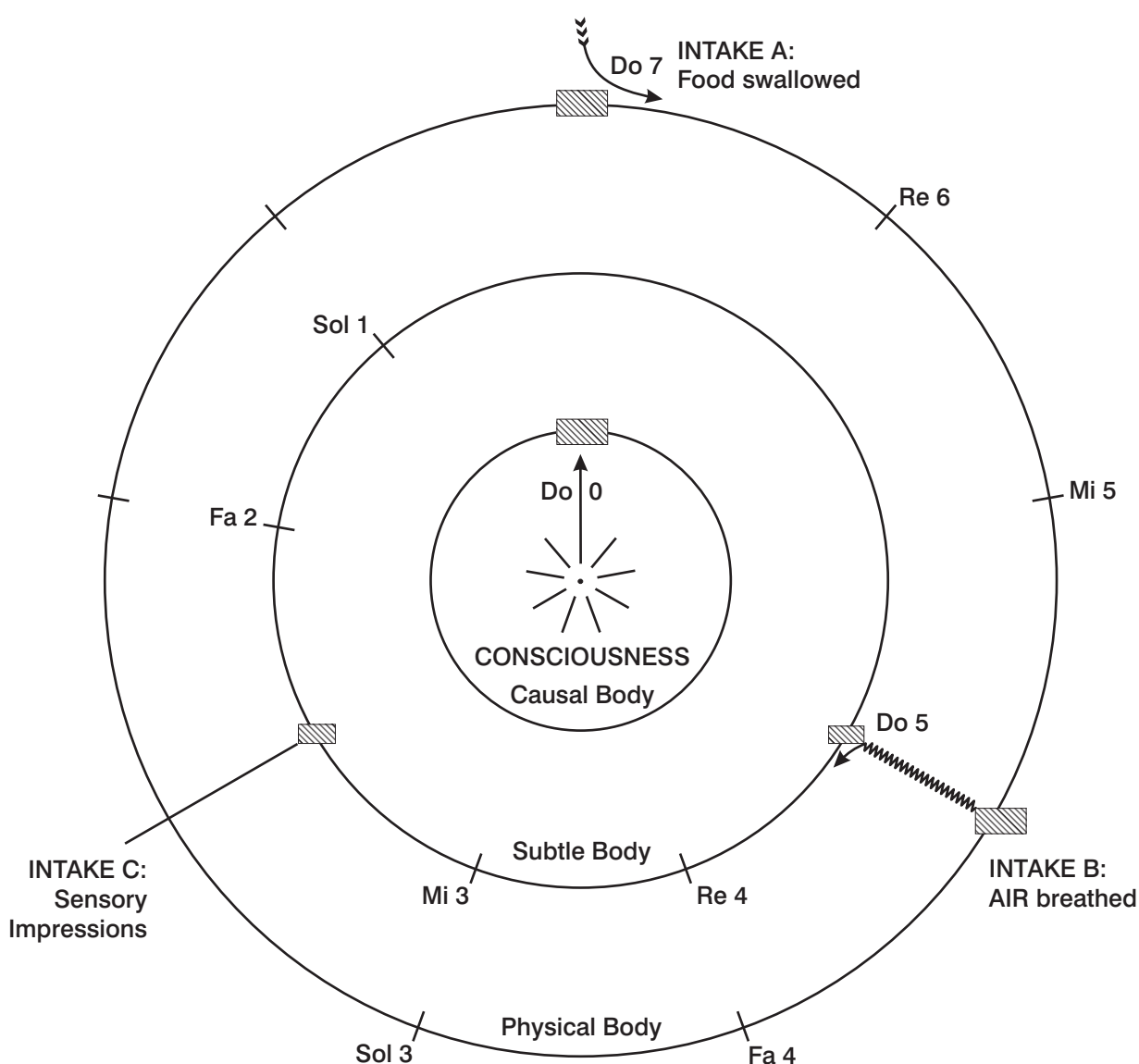


Figure 2. Chemical Factory: Stage 1. Ignorant and Undisciplined Man
Scale as in Figure (Reading 3) (middle circle or solar system)

The outer octave maintains the ordinary life of the physical body;
the metabolism of Air (subtle octave) proceeds only as far as the first interval;
the Impressions octave only sounds its ‘do’ and proceeds no further.

stage of digestion in the liver. From the liver it joins the venous blood (Mi 5) from all the other organs of the body (including the hormones of the endocrine glands) in the right side of the heart. At this point it meets an 'interval' at point 3 where the process of digestion would stop if a 'shock' were not provided. This shock is given by the entry of the air breathed, which instantaneously oxidises the products of digestion as the blood is spread out over a vast surface (like the leaves of a tree) throughout the myriad air sacs of both lungs. Returned to the left side of the heart as *arterial blood* (Fa 4) it is pumped by the aorta and its main branches to all the organs of the body so that all the cells and tissues receive a supply of food products and oxygen. The brain (Sol 3) is no exception, and for it to carry on the vital functions and to receive and sort the incoming sensory impressions (3), it needs an adequate quota of the food and oxygen that the nerve cells and centres require. The octave can then continue through La 2 and Si 1, where it comes to an end at the top 'interval'. This is all that is necessary to maintain the physical body from the first breath at birth to the last breath at death, the process being repeated every day for an average of 70 years. Most of the teeming masses of humanity may have lived and died with nothing more.

We know that human beings deprived of food can continue to live for several weeks provided they have only a little water to sip; we know that divers can exist without breathing air for two or three minutes; but there is also evidence from the rare cases where *all* sensory impressions have ceased owing to an accident or large haemorrhage into the centre of the brain, that a man dies instantly. There is, therefore, a great difference in the time units required by those three foods; a fact that is explained (Figure 2, facing page) by saying that air and sensory impressions are metabolised in the *subtle body*, whereas higher or supra-sensory impressions form the basis of the Causal body – the Antahkarana or 'inner organ' in the Shankaracharya's terminology.

But as *people interested in Self-realization*, we are not very interested in the metabolism of food and air provided it is balanced and regulated; we need to be interested only in taking the *octave of impressions* to its full potential, for then the physical and subtle bodies will function beautifully as designed by Nature. This cannot be studied by the physical sciences, since it is felt psychologically and related to the direct experience of Consciousness. We will describe how this is to be done (in Part 2 next week), but for now we need to realise that all errors and tragedies on the part of would-be teachers of Self-realization, without the help of a fully Realized man, arise from taking it all on the level of the physical body only.

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PART 2. OCTAVE OF IMPRESSIONS: THE INFLUENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

But the coming of the Meditation in 1960 and the guidance of the fully Realized man ever since, has completely changed that primitive outlook for us.

Man is not just a physical body of flesh and bones; he consists also of a subtle body of mind and emotions and dreams; and within that again he has a Causal body or 'inner organ' ('Antahkarana') and a central Consciousness. All our troubles come from ignoring this.

The entry of Air not only keeps the physical body alive, but it has its own octave of metabolism in the subtle body. Moreover, while the physical body depends for its life on the continuous intake of sensory impressions during the daytime, and the previous impressions reverberating in dreams, both by night and by day; yet man can also receive extra-sensory impressions which enter the causal body and have their own octave of metabolism there. All this

depends upon the Conscious introduction of special influences at two points – the first of these concerns the sensory impressions: for example, the introduction of a certain *sound* which is designed to reach, and work on, the Causal level. When this has operated successfully for some time, the organism is ready to receive the Conscious influence at the final interval so that full Realization can take place.

The first of these, called the '*First Conscious Shock*', concerns the *intellect*, and consists in arranging it to work as it would do in moments of Full Consciousness. It means knowing what one ought to do. But to realize its Knowledge the '*Second Conscious Shock*' is required, and this depends on the purification of the *emotion* so that it can receive direct guidance from the Pure Consciousness Itself (see Figure 3 which can be superimposed on Figure 2).

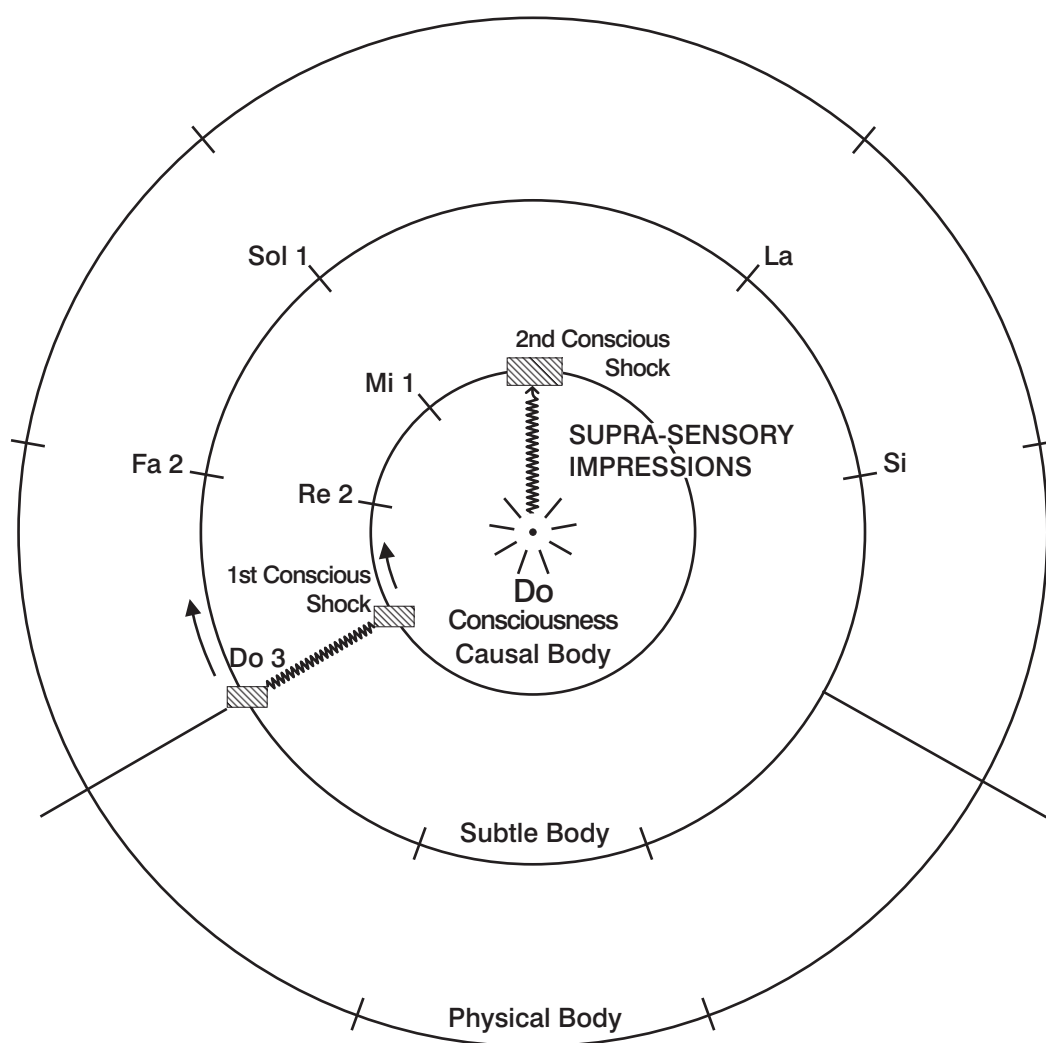


Figure 3. Stage 2. First and Second Conscious Shocks

The Christian Gospels are full of hints about different kinds of food. In the Lord's Prayer, for example, we ask: 'Give us today our super-substantial bread', and in the 'Temptations in the Wilderness' Christ said: 'Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

One of the most remarkable Christian descriptions of the two Conscious Shocks was given by St. Hildegard of Bingen[†] around 1100 AD (found for us by William Anderson):

From my infancy up to the present time, I being now more than seventy years of age, I have always seen this light in my spirit and not with external eyes, nor with any thoughts of my heart, nor with any help from the senses. But my outward eyes remain open and the other corporeal senses retain their activity. The light which I see is not located but yet is more brilliant than the sun, nor can I examine its height, length, or breadth, and I name it 'the cloud of the living light'. And as sun, moon, and stars are reflected in water, so the writings, sayings, virtues and works of men shine in it before me. And whatever I thus see in vision the memory thereof remains long with me. Likewise I see, hear and understand what I thus learn...

But sometimes I behold within this light another light which I name 'the Living Light itself'... and when I look upon it every sadness and pain vanishes from my memory, so that I am again as a simple maid and not as an old woman.

And now that I am over seventy years old, my spirit, according to the will of God, soars upward in vision to the highest heaven, and to the farthest stretch of the air, and spreads itself among different peoples to regions exceeding far from me here; and then I can behold the changing clouds and the mutations of all created things; for all these I perceive not with the outward eye or ear, nor do I create them from the cogitations of my heart... but with my spirit, my eyes being open so that I have never suffered any terror when they left me.

(Quoted by Charles Singer in *From Magic to Science, Essays on the Scientific Twilight* [1928] Kessinger Publishing 1995)

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[†]**NOTE:** St. Hildegard (1098–1179), visionary, seer, and writer on mystical, medical and social subjects, was called the 'Sibyl of the Rhine'; Abbess of a nunnery in Loraine, and later founded the Abbey of St. Rupert near Bingen.

