

9 May 1977

READING 2

First let me thank you for the valuable suggestions which reached me by post from groups as near as Baron's Court, Paddington or Holland Park, and as far away as Somerset, East Africa, Australia and New Zealand, with verbal messages from New York where Fleming spent last week. It doesn't seem to matter where people are, they all want the same and ask the same basic questions. There was surprising agreement expressed everywhere. For example, Rosemary Farley wrote: 'The diagram of the three octaves derived from the Ray of Creation would be most helpful and, in general, diagrams are invaluable because they become fused in the memory as a kind of pattern which is easy to recall'. Dr. Connell's new group also expressed that in no uncertain voice! To everyone interested I would say, 'Learn to construct it for yourselves,' which is very easy – you just need a piece of lined paper and a pencil! The circular diagram – the Enneagram itself – is more difficult; to do it properly you need geometrical instruments and that's not within everyone's compass! But those who want to can try provided they don't introduce any ideas of their own.

For this term I would like to adopt Gay Burdett's summary in her own words: 'To use the Table of Hydrogens to define qualities and levels of energy in relation to: 1) escaping from the 'personal element', 2) avoiding pointless repetition, 3) gaining a deeper understanding of a Fourth Way School, and 4) purifying emotions.'

PART 1

Here goes then! Both our teachers have stressed that to get away from the *personal element* it is useful to study the interaction of the two great cosmic laws, the Law of Octaves and the Law of Three (or Trinity in Unity). Though both are implicit in inspired writings like the Upanishads, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and above all, in the Gospels, I've never known any teaching that adequately described both of those sets of laws *and their interaction*. Yet in this *diagram of 3 Octaves* the chief aspects of that interaction are expressed in a nutshell universally true for all times and in all places. [See Figure 2, 1977/6, p.29]

Just look at it first from that point of view – *look* at it, without thinking, but just quietly absorbing it. Every succession of events by itself is bound to lose energy, change direction and finally stop, like a spinning top or a discharging battery. *Three octaves*, however, in action simultaneously, will keep any process going for ever. You can recall examples like the 3 foods (solid food, air and impressions) which keep both the physical and subtle bodies going from our first breath to our last. We shall be hearing about another example, the 'three lines of work' which are needed to maintain the original energy and direction of a Fourth Way School.

Next, look at the table without any idea of 'good and bad' or 'like and dislike'. Each hydrogen has its own place and its own function in relation to the whole; and the only evil in the world is 'a hydrogen in the wrong place, or at the wrong moment' – religion for instance, masquerading as commerce or politics; or a personal slant in theoretical physics, artistic creation or religious belief. The table helps one to see things as they really are, and see the good in everything.

A Zen student overheard a conversation in a butcher's shop. When a customer said 'Give me the best piece of meat you have'; the butcher replied 'Everything in my shop is the best; you will not find a single piece of meat here which is not the best.' Hearing this, the student attained instant enlightenment ('Satori') – he was ready for it!

We heard H.H. say to the crowds:

'God, (Param-Atman) pervades all objects whether 'living' or 'non-living'. Therefore everything is Chaitanya (Consciousness) and nothing is Jada (lifeless, senseless) – a natural object like a tree can teach you so much, that you find yourself face to face with the ultimate reality of the Absolute.'

PART 2

Then about the *Table of Hydrogens*. Bridget Hall, with her laudable dislike of woolly thinking, remarked at a new group: 'No one has yet explained what a Hydrogen is!' The chemical concept 'Hydrogen' as used in our System defines the 'essence' (what the Zen masters called the 'Is-ness') of anything – whether it be a chemical element, a kind of matter however complex, a situation, or an event. The simplest and most universal element in the material world, is a *Hydrogen atom* which consists of a basic unit of matter carrying three different kinds of energy – the positively charged nucleus, a negatively charged electron, and a third element (the neutron) which is different from either. What is called the 'atomic number' is the number of charges on the nucleus. In essence this is the basis of the 3 Gunas (Rajas, Tamas and Sattva) as universally occurring throughout the manifest universe, though by nature we are blind to that third and all-important element, until its presence in any interaction is pointed out to us. The brackets in the table show this 'Threeness' in any kind of matter ('Hydrogen'); but as there are only 12 Hydrogens for the whole inner and outer worlds that can be known by man, the hydrogen level is a very broad division and so is quite simple! We know what water (liquid) is, and how it differs physically from ice (solid) on the one hand, and steam (gas) on the other. Proceeding from the known to the unknown – from the physical to the subtle – we need to acquire the same clarity of perception in distinguishing the dream-state (96) from the daytime state ('vigilance', 48) and this again from the rare moments of 'Self-remembering' (or awareness, 24). However different in appearance are its forms and shapes gold is always gold, sugar is always sweet, light is always light and Truth is always Truth.

Finally, remember that this table describes the '*Way of Liberation*'. To get on to the next step we must become 'detached' from everything that lies below. To get from the level of Hydrogen 48 we need the sharp-edged sword of discrimination (Carbon 12) to reject all indiscriminate impressions for just one – the Good Impulse here and now; in Meditation, to reject everything but the Mantra. That is the true meaning of *detachment* namely detachment from all levels below the desired one.

[FOR MEETING TAKERS: PRACTICAL

Please encourage everyone to begin by giving their own simple descriptions of how those three states – (96, 48 and 24) have felt to them in day-to-day living, at a Meeting, in the 'Turning' or the 'Movements,' or *after* half-an-hour's Meditation.]

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