

28 February 1977

READING 4

You will, I hope, have heard at the Monday meeting about the next step in the framework which can unite all knowledge into a simple whole and provide a universal language by which we can communicate.

A table was given which defines in three 'octaves of radiations' all those forms of matter which have a function in the human organism. In order to get used to this language (which requires a little patience and experience), those who want to, can this week interest themselves in the only part of that table which immediately concerns us – namely the top of it; (see Figure) and, especially in the fate of those sensory impressions (point 48) which we are absorbing all through the day and without which a man cannot exist and function. He can live without solid food for a month or two; can be without air for two or three minutes; but he cannot live without impressions for a single instant.

Just take a look at the Figure (overleaf) and try to ask some preliminary questions about it.

(Pause)

The most important question of course is: 'What do we stand to gain by doing this?' Keeping to our Western tradition in Europe we can quote the poet Pindar who flourished about twenty five centuries ago (roughly contemporary with the first Shankara). He wrote:

Man's life is a day. What is he?
 What is he not? A shadow in a dream
 Is man, but when God sends a brightness,
 Shining light is on the earth
 And life is sweet as honey.

(Tr. Maurice Bowra, *Inspiration and Poetry* p.11)

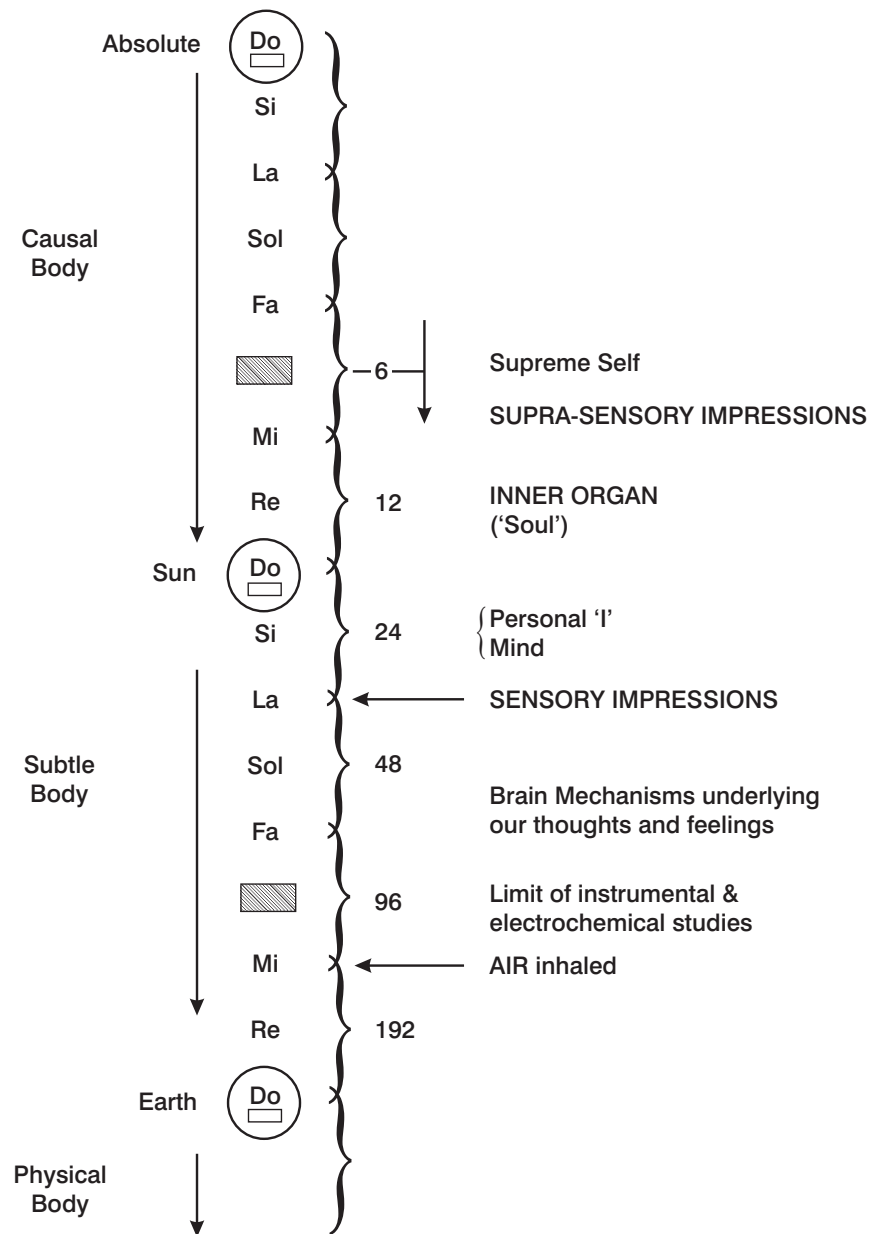
That describes those supra-sensory experiences which we and all creative people long for. When we get one of those, we want to have it longer and more often; and to do that we need to have already prepared some simple self-discipline which can be applied instantaneously. That is what our Society is for.

And with some patient practice (well within each person's capacity) we can eventually enjoy a union with that 'shining light' and share with many others the supreme experience – say for half-an-hour!

The shoemaker Jacob Boehme who had three such experiences in his life, wrote (around 1600 AD)

Suddenly... my spirit did break through... and there I was embraced with love, as a bridegroom embraces his dearly beloved bride. But the greatness of the triumphing that was in the spirit I cannot express either in speaking or writing; neither can it be compared to anything but that wherein life is generated in the midst of death, and it is like the resurrection from the dead.

We can assure you that we are equipped today to achieve that much sooner and with far less effort than he had to make, once we understand exactly what is required.



So why hesitate to 'go to school' again when: 'Such a light affliction shall win so great a prize?' It just means putting the 'personal I' (at point 24) in its right place as one of the servants, and longing for a breath of *grace* from the supreme spirit as one would long for a breath of air with one's head held under water.

By 'going to school again' we mean three things in relation to the particular school: 1) Constantly seeking help to understand and put its teaching into practice; 2) getting to know and abide by a few basic rules of conduct required for work with other people; and 3) acquiring a special relationship with them and with the leader to enable the school to receive and transmit the good influences constantly coming from the great Tradition to which we belong. More will be said about these 'three lines of School work' – work for oneself, work with other people in a small group, and work for the School as a whole.

Then we shall come to understand the meaning of that strange expression: 'A School of the Fourth Way'.

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