

INTERVALS

TO BE AWARE OF THE WAY EVERYTHING, INCLUDING ONESELF, IS ALWAYS RELENTLESSLY CHANGING IS THE PRACTICAL STARTING POINT TO A STUDY OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE LAWS OF THREE AND SEVEN. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD, OFTEN ENOUGH, HOW THE INTERACTION OF THESE TWO UNIVERSAL LAWS IS THE SOURCE OF ALL CREATION ON ALL SCALES, SO THAT THEIR STRUCTURE AND INTERPLAY CAN BE STUDIED ON THE HUMAN SCALE AND THEREFORE CAN BE SEEN WORKING DIRECTLY IN ONESELF. THAT THIS SHOULD BE SO, THAT EACH OF US, AS INDIVIDUALS, COULD BE TAKEN AS SOME SORT OF SCALE MODEL OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE, SEEMS SO UNLIKELY AS TO BE ALMOST MEANINGLESS. BUT WE MUST TAKE IT THAT SUCH A DULL REACTION TO SUCH EXTRAORDINARY INFORMATION IS BUT AN EXAMPLE OF OUR ORDINARY STATE AT LEVEL 48, WHICH ENSLAVES US TO AN UNDERSTANDING BASED ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SENSES. FOR THIS INFORMATION IS AN EXAMPLE OF 'HIGHER KNOWLEDGE'—THAT IS, KNOWLEDGE FORMULATED BY HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAVE REACHED FAR HIGHER LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS THAN WE HAVE OURSELVES, AND HAVE LEFT THE KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE SO ACQUIRED IN A FORM WHICH MAY BE UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHO CAN MAKE USE OF IT.

IT IS FROM SUCH A HIGH LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS THAT THE GREAT RELIGIONS AND PATHWAYS OF KNOWLEDGE HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN TO US AND WHICH HAVE BEEN PRESERVED THROUGH THE AGES BY THE ACTIVE PRACTISE AND WORK OF SCHOOLS, RELIGIOUS ORDERS AND SOCIETIES IN THEIR SEARCH FOR TRUTH; EACH EVENTUALLY FINDING THE SAME TRUTH, BUT FORMULATING IT IN THEIR OWN WAY, FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY AS A WHOLE. TO TAKE THE PRACTISE OF OUR OWN CASE AS A SOCIETY; WE WERE ORIGINALLY ORGANIZED SO THAT THE LAW OF THREE WAS REPRESENTED BY THE 'THREE LINES OF WORK', WITH EACH LINE—WORK ON ONESELF, WORKING WITH OTHER PEOPLE, WORKING FOR THE ORGANIZATION—BEING SEEN AS ONE OF THE FORCES IN THE VARIOUS COMBINATIONS OF TRIADS NEEDED FOR THE GROWTH AND WELFARE OF THE WHOLE SOCIETY—BUT ALSO AS FOSTERING THE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW OCTAVES EITHER FLOURISH OR FAIL THROUGH THE RECOGNITION OF INTERVALS.

IF THERE IS ONE FACT THAT THE COMBINATION OF THE TWO UNIVERSAL LAWS ENSURES, IT IS THAT NO PROCESS CAN EVER REMAIN STATIONARY, BEING EITHER IN A STATE OF INCREASE OR DECREASE, ASCENT OR DESCENT, GROWTH OR DECLINE; AND THE ONLY LEVEL FREE FROM THIS CONSTANT CIRCULAR MOVEMENT, SO FRUSTRATING AND BEWILDERING TO LEVEL 48, IS THE ABSOLUTE ITSELF, CONTAINING ALL—AND WE ARE ALL PART OF THIS ETERNAL FOUNTAIN OF LIFE FOREVER RENEWING ITSELF. IF WE WERE REALLY TO APPRECIATE THE RAY OF CREATION WE SHOULD FIND IT ON SUCH AN AWE-INSPIRING AND COMPELLING

SCALE THAT IT WOULD COMPLETELY DOMINATE OUR LIVES AND MAKE THE ATMAN A REALITY.

THE DIAGRAM OF THE RAY OF CREATION SHOWS ONE RAY—OUT OF AN INFINITE NUMBER OF RAYS COMING FROM THE ABSOLUTE, THE SOURCE OF ALL ENERGY, SPREADING ITS CREATION BY MEANS OF THREE SEPARATE FORCES COMPOSED OF VIBRATIONS—FORMING AN OCTAVE TO DESCEND FROM THE PUREST, MOST POWERFUL LEVEL OF CREATION AT LEVEL 1, THE ‘DO’ ITSELF, TO THE MOST INERT AND LEAST FERTILE, ‘RE’, THE MOON, AT LEVEL 96, HAVING PASSED THROUGH THE FIVE INTERMEDIATE NOTES OF INCREASING DENSITY AND BRIDGING THE TWO INTERVALS. BUT THE PROGRESS OF THESE VIBRATIONS FROM THEIR DIVINE ORIGIN TO THE INERTIA OF THEIR FINAL DESTINATION, WHICH ITSELF BECOMES THE STARTING POINT OF RECREATION, THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE SOURCE, DOESN’T FOLLOW A UNIFORM PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT, FOR THEY ALTER THEIR RATE OF DEVELOPMENT AT TWO SPECIFIC POINTS—THE INTERVALS—LIKE ALL OCTAVES ON WHATEVER SCALE, BE THEY ASCENDING OR DESCENDING.

This is how Mr Ouspensky describes the nature and structure of vibrations and octaves in his *Third Cosmological Lecture*:

IN THIS INSTANCE THE VIEW OF ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE IS OPPOSED TO THAT OF CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE, BECAUSE AT THE BASE OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF VIBRATIONS IS PLACED THE PRINCIPLE OF THE *DISCONTINUITY OF VIBRATIONS*. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE *DISCONTINUITY OF VIBRATIONS* MEANS THE DEFINITE AND NECESSARY CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL VIBRATIONS IN NATURE, WHETHER ASCENDING OR DESCENDING, TO DEVELOP *NOT UNIFORMLY* BUT WITH PERIODICAL ACCELERATIONS AND RETARDATIONS.

THIS PRINCIPLE CAN BE FORMULATED STILL MORE PRECISELY IF WE SAY THAT THE FORCE OF THE ORIGINAL IMPULSE IN VIBRATIONS DOES NOT ACT UNIFORMLY BUT, AS IT WERE, BECOMES ALTERNATELY STRONGER AND WEAKER. THE FORCE OF THE IMPULSE ACTS WITHOUT CHANGING ITS NATURE AND THE VIBRATIONS DEVELOP IN A REGULAR WAY ONLY FOR A CERTAIN TIME DETERMINED BY THE NATURE OF THE IMPULSE, THE MEDIUM, THE CONDITIONS, AND SO FORTH. BUT AT A CERTAIN MOMENT A KIND OF CHANGE TAKES PLACE IN IT AND THE VIBRATIONS, SO TO SPEAK, CEASE TO OBEY IT AND FOR A SHORT TIME THEY SLOW DOWN AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT CHANGE THEIR NATURE OR DIRECTION; FOR EXAMPLE, ASCENDING VIBRATIONS AT A CERTAIN MOMENT BEGIN TO ASCEND MORE SLOWLY, AND DESCENDING VIBRATIONS BEGIN TO DESCEND MORE SLOWLY. AFTER THIS TEMPORARY RETARDATION, BOTH IN ASCENDING AND DESCENDING, THE VIBRATIONS AGAIN ENTER THE FORMER CHANNEL AND FOR A CERTAIN TIME ASCEND OR DESCEND UNIFORMLY UP TO A CERTAIN MOMENT, WHEN A CHECK IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT AGAIN TAKES PLACE. IN THIS CONNECTION IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE PERIODS OF UNIFORM ACTION OF THE MOMENTUM ARE NOT EQUAL AND THAT THE

MOMENTS OF RETARDATION OF THE VIBRATIONS ARE NOT SYMMETRICAL. ONE PERIOD IS SHORTER, THE OTHER IS LONGER.

IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THESE MOMENTS OF RETARDATION OR RATHER. THE CHECKS ON THE ASCENT AND DESCENT OF VIBRATIONS, THE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT OF VIBRATIONS ARE DIVIDED INTO PERIODS CORRESPONDING TO THE *DOUBLING* OR *HALVING* OF THE NUMBER OF VIBRATIONS IN A GIVEN SPACE OF TIME.

LET US IMAGINE A LINE OF INCREASING VIBRATIONS. LET US TAKE THEM AT THE MOMENT WHEN THEY ARE VIBRATING AT THE RATE OF ONE THOUSAND A SECOND. AFTER A CERTAIN TIME THE NUMBER OF VIBRATIONS IS DOUBLED, THAT IS, REACHES TWO THOUSAND.

IT HAS BEEN FOUND AND ESTABLISHED THAT IN THIS INTERVAL OF VIBRATIONS, BETWEEN THE GIVEN NUMBER OF VIBRATIONS AND A NUMBER TWICE AS LARGE, THERE ARE TWO PLACES WHERE A *RETARDATION IN THE INCREASE OF VIBRATIONS* TAKES PLACE. ONE IS NEAR THE BEGINNING, BUT NOT AT THE BEGINNING ITSELF. THE OTHER OCCURS ALMOST AT THE END.

THE LAWS WHICH GOVERN THE RETARDATION OR THE DEFLECTION OF VIBRATIONS FROM THEIR PRIMARY DIRECTION WERE KNOWN TO ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE. THESE LAWS WERE DULY INCORPORATED INTO A PARTICULAR FORMULA OR DIAGRAM WHICH HAS BEEN PRESERVED UP TO OUR TIMES. IN THIS FORMULA THE PERIOD IN WHICH VIBRATIONS ARE DOUBLED WAS DIVIDED INTO *EIGHT* UNEQUAL STEPS CORRESPONDING TO THE RATE OF INCREASE IN THE VIBRATIONS. THE EIGHTH STEP REPEATS THE FIRST STEP WITH DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF VIBRATIONS. THIS PERIOD OF THE DOUBLING OF THE VIBRATIONS, OR THE LINE OF DEVELOPMENT OF VIBRATIONS BETWEEN A GIVEN NUMBER OF VIBRATIONS AND DOUBLE THAT NUMBER, IS CALLED AN *OCTAVE*, THAT IS TO SAY, COMPOSED OF EIGHT.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVIDING THE PERIOD IN WHICH THE VIBRATIONS ARE DOUBLED INTO SEVEN UNEQUAL PARTS IS BASED UPON THE OBSERVATION OF THE NON-UNIFORM INCREASE OF VIBRATIONS IN THE ENTIRE OCTAVE, AND SEPARATE 'STEPS' OF THE OCTAVE SHOW ACCELERATION AND RETARDATION AT DIFFERENT MOMENTS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.

IN THE GUISE OF THIS FORMULA IDEAS OF THE OCTAVE HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM TEACHER TO PUPIL. FROM ONE SCHOOL TO ANOTHER. IN VERY REMOTE TIMES ONE OF THESE SCHOOLS FOUND THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO APPLY THIS FORMULA TO MUSIC. IN THIS WAY WAS OBTAINED THE SEVEN-TONE MUSICAL SCALE, WHICH WAS KNOWN IN THE MOST DISTANT ANTIQUITY, THEN FORGOTTEN, THEN 'INVENTED' OR 'FOUND' AGAIN.

THE SEVEN-TONE SCALE IS THE FORMULA OF A COSMIC LAW WHICH WAS WORKED OUT BY ANCIENT SCHOOLS AND APPLIED TO MUSIC. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, IF WE STUDY THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE LAW OF OCTAVES IN VIBRATIONS OF OTHER KINDS, WE SHALL SEE THAT THE LAWS ARE EVERYWHERE THE SAME, AND THAT LIGHT, HEAT, CHEMICAL, MAGNETIC AND OTHER VIBRATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO THE SAME LAWS AS SOUND VIBRATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, THE LIGHT SCALE IS KNOWN TO PHYSICS; IN CHEMISTRY, THE PERIODIC SYSTEM OF THE ELEMENTS IS WITHOUT DOUBT CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF OCTAVES, ALTHOUGH THIS CONNECTION IS STILL NOT FULLY CLEAR TO SCIENCE.

A STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE SEVEN-TONE MUSICAL SCALE GIVES A VERY GOOD FOUNDATION FOR UNDERSTANDING THE COSMIC LAW OF OCTAVES.

LATER IN THE SAME LECTURE HE ALSO TELLS US:

IN THE STUDY OF THE LAW OF OCTAVES IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT OCTAVES IN THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER ARE DIVIDED INTO *FUNDAMENTAL* AND *SUBORDINATE* OCTAVES. THE FUNDAMENTAL OCTAVE CAN BE LIKENED TO THE TRUNK OF A TREE GIVING OFF BRANCHES OF LATERAL OCTAVES. THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL NOTES OF THE OCTAVE AND THE TWO 'INTERVALS', *THE BEARERS OF NEW DIRECTIONS*, GIVE ALTOGETHER NINE LINKS OF A CHAIN, THREE GROUPS OF THREE LINKS EACH.

THE FUNDAMENTAL OCTAVES ARE CONNECTED WITH THE SECONDARY OR SUBORDINATE OCTAVES IN A CERTAIN DEFINITE WAY. OUT OF THE SUBORDINATE OCTAVES OF THE FIRST ORDER COME THE SUBORDINATE OCTAVES OF THE SECOND ORDER, AND SO ON. THE CONSTRUCTION OF OCTAVES CAN BE COMPARED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TREE. FROM THE STRAIGHT BASIC TRUNK THERE COME OUT BOUGHS ON ALL SIDES WHICH DIVIDE IN THEIR TURN AND PASS INTO BRANCHES, BECOMING SMALLER AND SMALLER AND FINALLY ARE COVERED WITH LEAVES. THE SAME PROCESS GOES ON IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LEAVES, IN THE FORMATION OF THE VEINS, THE SERRATIONS AND SO ON.

THIS PASSAGE LEADS ON TO HIS DESCRIPTION OF 'INNER OCTAVES', THE SUBJECT OF OUR LAST PAPER, BUT IT IS HIS DESCRIPTION OF INTERVALS AS BEING 'THE BEARERS OF NEW DIRECTIONS', WHICH SHOULD NOW CATCH OUR ATTENTION, FOR INTERVALS ARE THE LINCH-PINS OF ALL OUR ENDEAVOURS.

THE WAY WE HANDLE INTERVALS IS ALL-IMPORTANT; BUT, FIRST AND FOREMOST, ARE WE AWARE OF THEM AS A CONDITION OF LIFE? AWARE OF THEM OR NOT, THE WAY WE DEAL WITH THEM DETERMINES THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF ALL OUR UNDERTAKINGS OF WHATEVER SORT AND ON WHATEVER SCALE. HOW MANY OF

THE UNDERTAKINGS THAT WE START EVER GET FINISHED—OR FINISH AS WE WOULD LIKE?

PERHAPS IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE WESTERN SYSTEM—BASED AS IT WAS ON ‘FRAGMENTS OF AN UNKNOWN TEACHING’—CENTRE AROUND THE HANDLING OF INTERVALS, OF TRYING TO SELF-REMEMBER (WHAT SORT OF SELF?) ON THE SAME LEVEL AS THE RESISTANCE TO IT, AND REMAINING ‘THIRD FORCE BLIND’ BECAUSE WE FAILED TO LOOK FOR IT ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL.

BUT NOW THAT WE HAVE THE MEDITATION TO TURN TO, WITH A COMPLETE TEACHING IN SUPPORT, THE MEDITATION CAN BECOME THE ‘TREE TRUNK’ OF OUR LIVES, AND AS COLIN LUCAS SHOWED US IN HIS PAPER. IT IS CLEAR THAT EACH TIME WE EMBARK ON A ‘HALF-HOUR’, WE ARE STARTING AN ASCENDING OCTAVE, CLEAR THAT TO BRING STILLNESS TO THE PHYSICAL LEVEL DEMANDS INFLUENCES FROM THE SUBTLE LEVEL, AND HOW THE INTERVALS ON THAT LEVEL, WHICH KEEP ON MANIFESTING AS TURNING THOUGHTS AND VISUAL IMAGES, CAN ONLY BE OVERCOME BY APPEALING FOR HELP TO THE CAUSAL LEVEL.

IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THE MORE CONSCIOUSNESS WE CAN BRING TO OUR ‘HALF-HOURS’—THE MORE WE ARE AWARE OF WHAT WE ARE DOING AND WHY WE ARE DOING IT—THE MORE WILL OUR WHOLE TREE, COMPLETE WITH ALL ITS BRANCHES, LEAVES, FLOWERS AND FRUITS, FLOURISH. FOR AS BOTH OUR TEACHINGS STRESS, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE AN INTELLECTUAL ARMATURE TO SUPPORT THE EMOTIONAL REALIZATION OF TRUTH, SO PAVING THE WAY FOR THE ULTIMATE UNION OF CONSCIENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS.

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