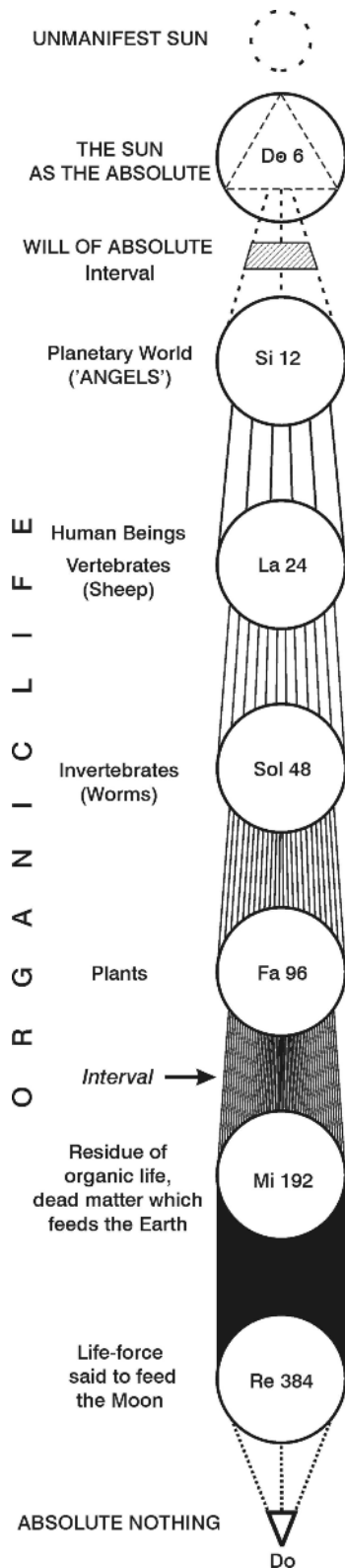


The Ray of Creation 4 — The Lateral Octave

This week we will look at the Ray of Creation from a different perspective. Here is a question and an answer from the Shankaracharya that we can relate to the same diagram.



Q: The idea of survival after death whether in the form of rebirth or in other forms, remains an enigma. Is it true that the invisible threads that bind human beings to creation – the Absolute – are eternal for everyone, or does their eternity depend on the achievements of souls during cycles of existences? To put it differently, does the soul that moves upwards become eternally integrated or united to the Creator, whereas vegetating souls are inevitably separated from Him, and that would be their kind of eternity, unless or until they come to find a way out to escape?

H.H. The idea of survival after death in any form would not remain an enigma if one understood the true meaning. According to our system this is known as the “appearance of a form in time”. It can be easily verified in the phenomenal world of manifest forms that nothing disappears. One always finds that a form either transforms into finer substance or disintegrates into coarser substances. This is governed by the law which states that every manifest form is running to meet its cause and during this chase it reflects many forms.

The whole creation has two predominant factors which are called matter and consciousness. The material world owes its existence to consciousness and consciousness can only be and always is manifested by matter. Each supports the other. On the basis of these the whole of creation is takes its measured manifestation and after fulfilling its destiny it goes back to its cause. This is what one calls the law of Cause and Effect. Every cause produces the inherent effect and every effect conceals its cause within it.

Behind the Law of Cause and Effect there are two stages, One is the stage of true reality where only consciousness is experienced, and which results in happiness, and the other is the stage of complete dissolution where all forms are still and without any experience. These two are known as Turiya and Laya. The substance of the creation proceeds between Turiya and Laya and all the manifest forms arise in between. This “in-between” is the movement in eternity. Eternity is one, and on this underlying thread of eternity consciousness takes manifold forms through changes. Thus the point of appearance of a form which in substance exists in eternity is called birth, and the point of change appreciated by consciousness is called death.

Once this idea of birth and death is understood, it becomes easy to appreciate the idea of rebirth which is based on this continuous movement.

The other two points were about integration and separation related to eternity. There is in fact no integration or separation, because everything is consciousness. All beings are held by consciousness, which is Atman, and which is perfect and single and knows no integration or separation. This Atman is eternally blissful. The terms integration and separation are used owing to ignorance at the level of mind. Even so, the integration (which is more of a refining process that reduces this ignorance) is possible only through good company. Unless one comes within the circle of good company, it is very difficult to escape from the flux of movement which runs through the creation. In common life, people get involved with the movement and thus can't see the substance of reality as it is. In good company one is sometimes blessed with moments of stillness and sees things as they are. If one increases these moments of stillness, one will see the unity which is always present. True Knowledge and disciplined work help one to be still. Regarding separation one can refer to what Arjuna asked Shri Krishna. "What is it that forcibly takes one away from Reality and compels one to do what one really doesn't want to do?" He was told that the ultimate reason is desire. Although there is nothing good or bad in desire itself, yet depending on what company one keeps one learns to desire good or bad.

Bad company is the real cause of separation. There is a very learned man in Benares Sanskrit University who knows all the six systems of philosophy. When he was asked to express his faith, he honestly told (H.H.) that although he is noted as a great scholar and can speak on all the systems of philosophy with great ease and command, he himself is in great confusion and is neither satisfied nor sure of himself. This simply shows that one can store all this knowledge and yet be separated. The ultimate thing is to ask one's own Self. If you have money you are confident you can buy what you need, and if you don't have money you can't be confident and can't buy what you need. This confidence is one's own, for no one can substitute confidence. If one has cultivated good company and enough Divine wealth one can do whatever one thinks needful, and if not one has nothing and feels separated. Perhaps you may, if you are a successful imposter, present a good face, but within yourself you are never sure.

To sum up, if one finds the idea of rebirth is a reality then integration or separation are no more than a thin or thick cloud of ignorance. Knowledge and discipline are both needed for so-called integration, and denial of these is separation. Good company is the only way to escape.

\* \* \*