

OUR WORLD**Part 7. Foods**

“Tell me what you do with the food you eat, and I’ll tell you what you are. Some turn their food into fat and manure, some into work and good humour, and others, I’m told, into God.” [Zorba the Greek, Nikos Kazantzakis]

Our excursion into the Ray of Creation has emphasized our unity with the universe. The universe is regarded as a living organism and we are built on the same pattern. We have within us the stuff and the being of the universe and our inner structure is aligned with the structure of the universe. In the universe there are both descending and ascending flows of energy, and the same two flows are found in us.

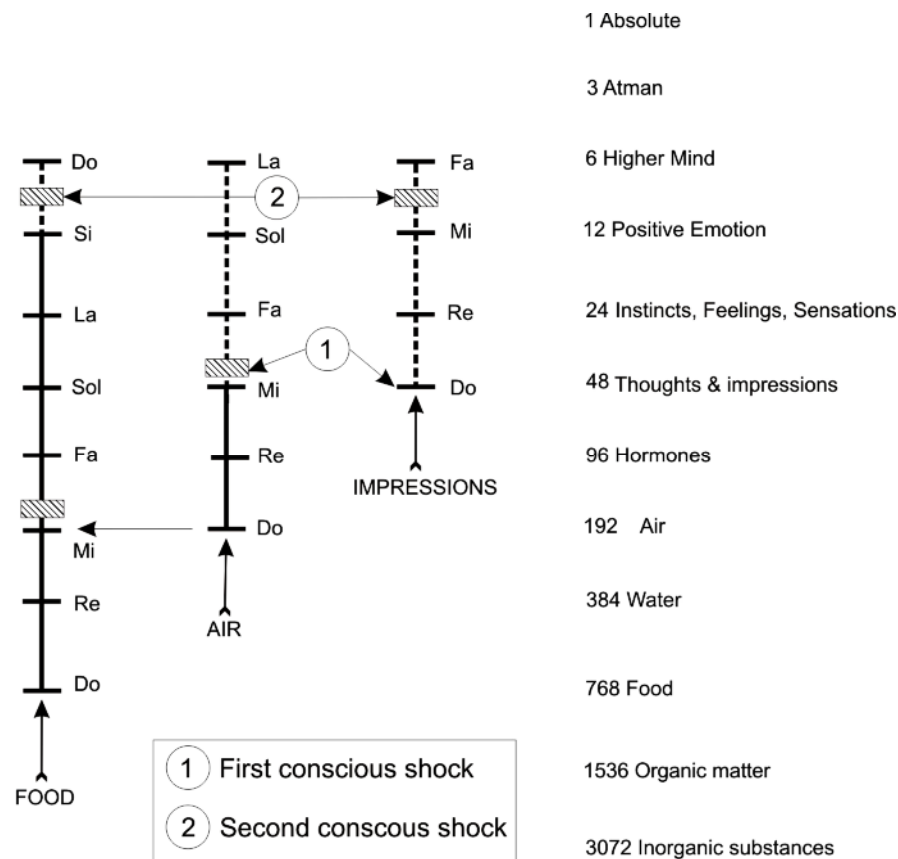
We do not generally have to make an effort to want to eat; we have sensors in our nervous system that make us feel hunger; after even a little starvation we are ravenous. Nor do we need to make an effort to breathe; not only is the rhythm of breathing automatic, but there are sensors in the brainstem that measure the level of carbon dioxide (a waste product of metabolism) in the blood and when this gets too high we breathe faster. Normally we take an active interest in the environment, the incoming impressions, and if we are starved of our usual intellectual or emotional diet the appetite can become voracious. Most things as regards energy are done for us, so why do we feel limited?

The figure shows an expanded view of the Food Diagram we used last week, showing the three separate octaves of the ‘foods’: solid food, air and impressions. The continuous lines show what happens automatically, with not much effort on our part. The dotted lines are the pathways that have to be made to work to achieve full consciousness, with all three octaves proceeding to the level of H6.

In the food octave the chemicals we require for physical energy are made in our tissues: practically every cell in the body has its own power supply. Foods such as carbohydrates are digested in the intestinal tract and delivered to our cells through the bloodstream and then turned by a chain of chemical reactions into the chemicals that underlie physical energy. But there comes an interval in the chain of reactions and this is filled by the oxygen we breathe in our air intake, maybe through the oxygenation of venous blood in the lungs.

In the case of the air octave the first interval can only be filled by energy from the ‘first conscious shock’, for example from self-remembering. It then proceeds to the second interval, almost to completion.

In the case of the impressions octave, there is nearly always a block at the outset, and again this is overcome by energy from the first conscious shock. Then at the first interval the second conscious shock is needed, and the same shock completes the air octave. (We will discuss the two conscious shocks further next week).



Many questions arise from this. For example:

Do we agree that all incoming impressions are the same as regards their energy level? Is it what we make of them that gives them such different qualities? Or is the 'impression content' of a traffic accident the same as a Mozart piano concerto?

In Advaita the accent is on energy coming from 'above', whereas except for 'grace' the diagram shows preponderantly a movement from below. Is there something missing from the diagram?

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The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer, as described in the Summer Programme 1963, contains numerous references to foods at different levels. Theologians will tell you that the Lord's Prayer is a compilation of contemporaneous Jewish prayers, and that it started as a simple petition to be used by mendicant disciples, literally "give us today our daily bread." However there is a lot more to it than that, as we can see by applying Ouspensky's classification of levels of thought (in the preface to the second edition of *A New Model of the Universe*).

Let us try to imagine the four methods of observation and reasoning in relation to the room in which I am writing this. The defective method is based upon a glance at the room through the keyhole or through a narrow slit and its characteristic feature is the certainty that what is seen through the keyhole or the slit represents all there is and that there is and can be nothing else in it except what is visible in this way. Given a certain imagination and a tendency towards superstition the defective method can make something very strange or monstrous out of an ordinary room.

The logical method is based upon a glance at the room from one definite spot, at one definite angle, and usually without enough light. Too big a confidence in it and the defence of this angle of vision makes the logical method defective.

The psychological method compared with the two first would be like a view of the room in daylight, moving about in it in various directions, knowing the objects in it and so on. It is quite clear that it is possible to learn more about the room in this way than by the logical method, and that it is possible to find many mistakes and wrong conclusions of the defective method.

The esoteric method of approach to the study of the room would include not only the whole room with everything it contains but the whole house, all the people in it with all their relationships and their occupations; and further, the position of the house in the street, of the street in the town, of the town in the country, of the country on the earth, of the earth in the solar system and so on. The esoteric method is limited by nothing and always connects every given thing, however small it may be, with the whole.

The defective method applied to the Lord's Prayer yields an extreme over-literal interpretation, for example 'Our Father who art in the heavens' results in the image of a bearded figure lurking in the clouds, which even a logical approach would exclude. The logical method yields the usual literal interpretation. Both the defective and logical methods fall short on "Lead us not into temptation" compounded by the translation (the literal translation is "save us from the time of trial").

Practical work. As an exercise, go through the prayer line by line and ask yourself what would be the interpretation according to the four methods, and check with the Summer Programme 1963.

It is tempting to connect the logical, psychological and esoteric methods with the different worlds: physical, subtle and causal. Correct?

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