

5 November 1962

**INTRODUCTION**

In one of their first conversations G. said to Mr. Ouspensky:

‘You do not clearly understand what I mean by ‘philosophy’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice,’ and he later added:

‘You know, when you went to India they wrote about your journey and your aims in the papers. I gave my pupils the task of reading your books, of determining by them *what you were*, and of establishing on this basis what you would be able to find. So we knew what you would find while you were still on your way there.’

(*In Search of the Miraculous*, p.16).

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When R. went to India last year he came under the discipline of a man who had clearly reached the highest stage, namely the *practical*. He could ‘do’ and he obviously knew exactly what he was doing and what would come out of it. So this last visit was just a continuation of the discipline; because our work in London has now to enter on a new phase. For many years we were just a School of *Philosophy* – but our Philosophy has been proved to be absolutely sound. Later we were able to develop the *theoretical* side of our System in the light of modern knowledge, and again our theories prove to be, in the main, correct. But now, having learnt the bookwork, the *practice* of our System can go ahead, with the ever-present help of an Expert in the making of Souls. For this man, having fully Realized himself, continuously Remembers himSelf and can make other people Remember if they want to enough.

(Pause for Discussion)

**PART 1. COSMIC LAWS**

We have talked for years about the two Cosmic Laws, the Law of Three and the Law of Seven, but till now we never experienced the power to *Be* and to *Do everything* on the basis of the interaction of the two laws.

It seems appropriate to make a start by quoting to you the beginning of one of the talks on this subject out there:

(R. outlines as follows the teaching of the System about the two Cosmic Laws, which is accepted as correct):

Our System says that all the laws governing phenomena in this universe can be reduced to two fundamental cosmic laws, Law of Three and Law of Seven.

Law of Three governs the birth of each single event, one example being the three Gunas which govern physical and spiritual birth of man.

Law of Seven governs successions or cycles of events, as for instance steps by which an Essence ascends or descends through successive lives. One example of Law of Seven would be the Seven Principles of the Sankhya System, with the Seventh Principle (Atman) including all.

Understanding of the interaction of the two laws, is the understanding of the man who has achieved everything possible for man, in a state of Cosmic Consciousness. We have a Universal Symbol based on a circle of nine points which can explain this interaction, and therefore all Knowledge can be found in it. And we have a proverb: ‘To

know all, it is only necessary to know very little, but to know that little one needs to know pretty much.' (His Holiness immediately recognised this proverb and smiled with pleasure!)

Would he tell us whether this outline is correct and whether, in his opinion, our System could at one time have branched off from the Holy Tradition itself?

### SYNOPSIS OF THE REPLY

His Holiness says that the two sets of laws – the Laws of Three and the Laws of Seven – are exactly as our System says. There is no difference at all in this broad outline between his System and ours. The two must have had an identical origin.

He has already spoken fully about the Law of Three and described with examples the interaction of the Three Gunas (separate recordings).

The Law of Seven is a repetitive motion unless there is escape from the Circle by full Realization. Otherwise the movement goes on mechanically again and again. Now he wants to say how the Law of Seven is described in his System as being easier to understand and very practical. (verbatim record made)

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### PART 2

In order to prepare your minds to receive the new material which is now being put together, it is proposed that you hear again the famous description of the Three Gunas as given in the Fourteenth Chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita newly translated by a friend of ours. For this is in tune with what you will be hearing:

### THE THREE GUNAS

#### **Krishna:**

1. I will reveal again a supreme wisdom, of all wisdom the highest: sages who have known it have gone hence to supreme perfection.
2. Taking refuge in this wisdom they have become part of Me: They are not reborn at the time of creation, and they are not destroyed at the time of dissolution.
3. In the vastness of my Nature I place the seed of things to come; and from this union comes the birth of all beings.
4. Wherever a being may be born, Arjuna, know that my Nature is his mother and that I am the Father who gave him life.
5. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas – light, fire and darkness – are the three constituents of nature. They appear to limit in finite bodies the liberty of their infinite Spirit.<sup>†</sup>
6. Of these Sattva because it is pure, and it gives light and is the health of life, binds to earthly happiness and to lower knowledge.

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<sup>†</sup>Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are the three 'Gunas', or the three 'strands' which, intertwined, are both the constituents and the changing conditions of nature. They are the light and harmony of pure intelligence and goodness; the fire and desire of impure mental energy and restless passion; and the darkness of dullness and inertia. Until final freedom is attained, they are clouds of matter darkening the Sun of the Spirit.

7. Rajas is of the nature of passion, the source of thirst and attachment. It binds the soul of man to action.
8. Tamas, which is born of ignorance, darkens the soul of all men. It binds them to sleepy dullness, and then they do not watch and then they do not work.
9. Sattva binds to happiness; Rajas to action; Tamas, over-clouding wisdom, binds to lack of vigilance.
10. Sometimes Sattva may prevail over Rajas and Tamas, at others Rajas over Tamas and Sattva, and at others Tamas over Sattva and Rajas.
11. When the light of wisdom shines from the portals of the body's dwelling, then we know that Sattva is in power.
12. Greed, busy activity, many undertakings, unrest, the lust of desire – these arise when Rajas increases.
13. Darkness, inertia, negligence, delusion – these appear when Tamas prevails.
14. If the soul meets death when Sattva prevails, then it goes to the pure regions of those who are seeking Truth.
15. If a man meets death in a state of Rajas, he is reborn amongst those who are bound by their restless activity; and if he dies in Tamas he is reborn in the wombs of the irrational.
16. Any work when it is well done bears the pure harmony of Sattva; but when done in Rajas it brings pain, and when done in Tamas it brings ignorance.
17. From Sattva arises wisdom, from Rajas greed, from Tamas negligence, delusion and ignorance.
18. Those who are in Sattva climb the path that leads on high, those who are in Rajas follow the level path, those who are in Tamas sink downwards on the lower path.
19. When the man of vision sees that the powers of nature are the only actors of this vast drama, and he beholds THAT which is beyond the powers of nature then he comes into my Being.
20. And when he goes beyond the three conditions of nature which constitute his mortal body then, free from birth, old age, and death, and sorrow, he enters into Immortality.

(Trans. Juan Mascaro, Penguin Classics)

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### PART 3. PRACTICAL

Now in the Outer Circle, this account of the Three Gunas has remained merely philosophy – the basis of many books full of conflicting theories. Only in the Inner Circle has it been maintained as the practical basis of Self-realization and the power to Do. Moreover, whatever the special branch of Knowledge adopted by the head of a given School of the Inner Circle, the Three Gunas form the basis of that Knowledge. There have, for instance, in India and Ceylon, been very practical Schools of Medicine in which the three humours of the organism in health and the three altered humours in disease derive from these Three Gunas. In the School R. has just visited, it is applied to the meditation and to a particular kind of music called Keertan ('Song in praise of...'), which is described as the external counterpart of the meditation.

For us, it must first become the basis of Self-observation – but only from the level of the Fourth Room, the seat of such consciousness as we have.

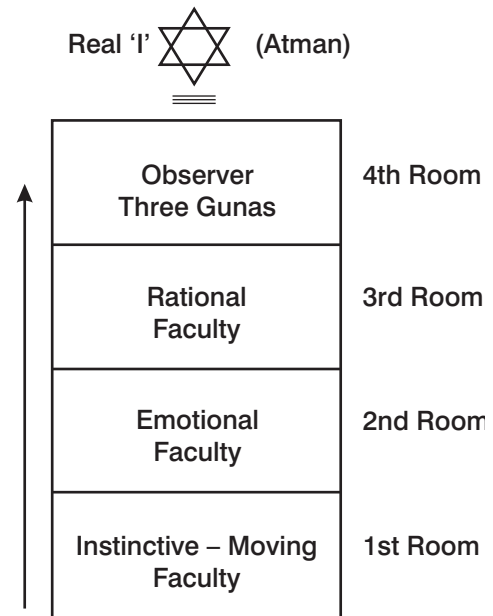
The Three Gunas are present in varying proportions in each of the other three rooms. One's head can be hot and overactive, it can be cool and clear, or it can be dull and sleepy; one's heart warm or cold; one's body too active and tense, or normal and well-balanced, or heavy and ill.

All this is determined by the machine. It is much too complicated and rapid to observe. Just as a cook prepares a special dish according to the recipe or her past experience, measuring and assembling the various ingredients, cooking for so long at such and such temperature, so the machine brings the organism to a given state at a given moment. But before the dish is served, the cook takes a final taste – a little more sugar, a little more sherry – now it's just right. This final taste is

the taste of the Observer in the Fourth Room who, at any moment, takes a quick taste of the sum total of the proportion of the Three Gunas in the whole organism and does what is necessary to balance the whole.

With the help of the School the cook is educated gradually to prepare and to serve this special dish for an honoured guest, whose special tastes she must remember throughout. In the same way the Observer is setting his house in order for the honoured guest – the Atman, Real 'I' – to come and live in it. *If* he could remember, that would be 'Self-remembering' – but he must first experience, that is, actually Realize himSelf, the Atman, or be guided by one who has Realized.

As we are now, the arrow on the left of the figure is directed upwards signifying that everything is governed by the machine, and there is no attention. Gradually we acquire the *practice of attention* until the arrow is permanently reversed, and everything in the organism becomes governed *from above* instead of from below.



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