

The Six Activities of Man: Part 2

Mr Ouspensky realised that understanding and recognition of the six triads takes time and practice.

Law of Three is difficult until one can realize difference in people's activities. This may be difficult for some time. Before we go further we must learn to distinguish difference in things which ordinarily we don't see. ... First we must learn with our mind—and then little by little we begin to see. ...

Q. Do you mean to see the forces?

MR. O. To see different activities. Before that, we can *learn* about it. But to see is difficult word — for if we become a little conscious we see many things we cannot see now. If we realize how many things we cannot see, we can learn much. We understand difference of matter — paper and wood, for example. But we cannot understand difference of action.

[PD Ouspensky, *A Further Record*, March 21st 1945]

Note that he is suggesting seeing the activity as a whole – not trying to see or distinguish the three forces within it. Eventually we need to learn to recognise the taste of each activity, and this comes from Higher Emotional Centre, not from Intellectual Centre, although we start by gaining an intellectual understanding.

Each triad represents a broad range of actions, so he advised studying simple examples to start with. Before we go on to look in detail at the three remaining activities, here is Mr Ouspensky's simple review of all of them:

Well, first category (Creation: *Sattva-Tamas-Rajas*) — trying to remember yourself [Self-remembering], esoteric work, also best forms of art, poetry, perhaps music. Second (Healing or Invention: *Tamas-Sattva-Rajas*) refers to highest intellectual, inventions, discoveries. Third (Refinement: *Tamas-Rajas-Sattva*) refers to professional work — tailor, doctor, yes; fourth (Growth: *Rajas-Tamas-Sattva*), simply physical work, sawing wood. Five, destruction. Six, crime.

Only you don't know which triad is which, and you won't know for a long time. Only try to understand difference between building house — much effort, planning materials; and burning house — just one match. One needs effort; the other works by itself, no question of motive.

[PD Ouspensky, *A Further Record*, March 21st 1945]

Mr Ouspensky did not have a simple and reliable method of Self-remembering. He says 'trying to remember yourself' but as we know from the Shankaracharya's teaching and from the Direct Path, it is 'trying' that prevents real Self-remembering. All that is needed is to allow attention to relax back into its source of pure Knowing.

Invention or Healing

The triad of invention or healing, *Tamas-Sattva-Rajas*, is the intellectual counterpart of the triad of creation, *Sattva-Tamas-Rajas*. Both triads result in a flow of energy from the active force, *rajas*. Whereas the triad of creation comes from emotional centre or higher emotional centre, the triad of invention or healing comes from intellectual or higher intellectual centre. The starting point is quiet contemplation. At the back of the mind there will be a problem that needs to be solved. But instead of focusing on the problem, attention rests in its source of objectless awareness. Accompanied by a surge of energy, the solution to the problem enters the mind, seemingly from outside.

At the highest level, this triad is responsible for scientific breakthroughs. August Kekulé was the principal founder of the theory of chemical structure and best known for his discovery of the structure of benzene. This is his description of how the answer came to him after working on the problem for many years:

I was sitting writing at my textbook but the work did not progress; my thoughts were elsewhere. I turned my chair to the fire and dozed. Again the atoms were gambolling before my eyes. This time the smaller groups kept modestly in the background. My mental eye, rendered more acute by the repeated visions of the kind, could now distinguish larger structures of manifold confirmation: long rows, sometimes more closely fitted together all twining and twisting in snake like motion. But look! What was that? One of the snakes had seized hold of its own tail, and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes. As if by a flash of lightning I awoke; and this time also I spent the rest of the night in working out the rest of the hypothesis. Let us learn to dream, gentlemen, then perhaps we shall find the truth... But let us beware of publishing our dreams till they have been tested by waking understanding.

[Benzolfest in *Berichte* (1890), 23, 1302]

Note that he wisely recommends use of the triad of growth (*rajas-tamas-sattva*) to test the solutions that arise in this way.

Creative ideas that come from this triad have no personal element. They don't arise through effort – they seem more like an unexpected gift from the universe. Often the same idea will arise in two different minds quite independently at roughly the same time. One of the best-known examples of this is the theory of natural selection. Charles Darwin was writing up his theory of natural selection when he received a paper from Alfred Russel Wallace, a biologist working in Borneo, describing exactly the same theory. (In gentlemanly fashion, they agreed to publish jointly.) This simultaneity is not surprising when seen from the point of view of the one universal consciousness that we are. One consciousness gives birth to one universal mind, and each of the many individual minds is a narrow window onto the one mind. We might think of the 'one universal mind' as something like Carl Jung's 'collective unconscious' from within which ideas arise in response to the needs of the moment.

Of course, not all the ideas that arise from this triad are aimed at what would be generally regarded as a worthwhile cause. In the recent Hatton Garden raid on an underground safe deposit vault, the idea of entering via the lift shaft and then using a heavy-duty industrial drill to make large holes through the thick concrete walls would have come from the triad of invention.

Destruction

This triad, *rajas-sattva-tamas*, starts from some kind of disturbance or agitation and it results in the object of the action being destroyed, rendered passive or reduced to a less organised state. This is the triad that we use most of the time – turning thoughts, unnecessary activities, angry responses are common examples. If we respond angrily from a sense of separation when someone opposes our ideas or our plans, the chances are that we will drive them into an even more extreme position leading to the destruction of any chance of finding common ground and the loss of friendship. So-called 'righteous anger' is neither righteous nor justified if it comes from a feeling of being a separate self.

However, sometimes this triad is needed to prevent a disaster or restore a natural balance. For example, shouting at a child who is running towards the road to cause the child to stop, blowing up a bridge to prevent an enemy invasion, pulling up weeds in the garden to encourage vegetables to grow unhindered. In these examples, there's no ego involved.

Crime

The triad of crime, *sattva-rajās-tamas*, emerges from *sattva* which becomes limited and turns negative resulting in *tamas*. What was good becomes corrupted and falls apart. Dr Roles described the triad of crime as 'Anti-school'; it 'starts in the heart but, through distortion and viciousness, it leads to destruction of your own and other people's possibilities of waking up'. Mr Ouspensky said that it is the only triad we never need to use.

The action starts from a feeling of calmness, but it has a twisted or distorted feel and an unpleasant taste. Common forms of this triad are manipulateness, damning with faint praise, a cold-blooded hate campaign. It is well-known in politics as the 'dirty tricks' campaigning used to neutralise a rival. A similar form of the triad of crime can arise in a Fourth Way school when identification turns the teaching into a religion and rival belief-systems emerge.

Belief in being a separate self lies behind all forms of this triad when it is operating at the level of our psychology. Rupert Spira explains that this belief is like a coloured filter that modifies the pure white light of awareness which is the origin and substance of love – 'the thicker the filter, the further from its origin the result will appear to be':

[If] love is filtered through a deep, profound sense of being a separate self, layer upon layer upon layer of feelings, of resistance, [then] this love comes out the other end as hostility or unkindness or hatred. But the stuff that the hatred is made out of is still just this substance of love. [<http://non-duality.rupertspira.com/watch/hate-is-an-expression-of-love> – transcript]

The triads of destruction and crime often work together reinforcing each other in a continuous circulation. Once established, this circulation can be hard to stop.

Choosing the right triad

According to Mr Ouspensky's system, the ability to see which triad is operating or to 'choose' the right triad requires the arising of Conscience which resides in Higher Emotional Centre. Conscience comes from Self-remembering. Dr Roles tells this story of the wrong triad being chosen by one of Mr Ouspensky's students:

To be able to pick the right action for a given situation, one must just see it without any preconceived notions or theories. There was a saintly but rather foolish man whom we knew as Ivanov. In his younger days he was put in charge of the kitchen garden. Once he came into the room where a discussion was going on, determined to remember himself, not to thrust himself forward, etc. Waiting patiently for a pause in the conversation, he said gently: 'God's pigs are in the kitchen garden'. With a wild whoop the leader and those around him rushed out to save what was left. Ivanov got a change of job! [FCR Record, 1968/9]

Most of the time, the triads we use happen automatically as a result of our established habits and conditioning. Even after Conscience is awakened, old habits have a tendency to reappear. Rupert Spira explains that these habits are the result of 'knots' that have been stored in the body over many decades. His yoga of sensation and perception (described in the Annex to this paper), is a way of helping these knots to dissolve so that all our actions come from love and intelligence.

Contemplation

Every time we find ourselves reacting to anyone or anything, ask on whose behalf we are reacting. We will nearly always find that it is on behalf of a non-existent self.

[Rupert Spira]

Annex: An Introduction to the Yoga of Sensation and Perception

The imaginary separate self is made of the belief that our essential nature of pure Awareness shares the destiny and the limits of the mind and body, and this belief has its counterpart in the body, where it is substantiated as 'me' feelings.

In fact, the feeling of being a separate self is by far the larger part of the sense of separation. Many of us may have a clear intellectual understanding of the non-dual perspective: that is, we may know from genuine experience that what we are essentially is the open, empty, unlimited space of Awareness, and yet still feel that we walked into a room and are sitting on a chair.

While it is perfectly obvious to us that Awareness didn't walk into a room and is not sitting on a chair, nevertheless, we still feel that we are located in and as a temporary, limited body. In other words, there is a discrepancy between what we understand and what we feel.

These feelings of separation are deeper and last much longer than our beliefs. For instance, a conflict may arise in a relationship, which, although subsequently resolved, may leave a residue of tensions in the body, which take some time to dissipate.

During our lives a network of tensions and contractions have been laid down in the body in this way, arising from our interactions with people, situations and circumstances. Long after their apparent cause has been resolved and forgotten, this network remains alive as a sort of memory or echo in the body, laid down, layer upon layer, mimicking the presence of a separate self that supposedly lives there.

In this approach to the true nature of experience, we make a deep exploration of the body, during which these residues of separation are explored and exposed. In time and as a natural and inevitable consequence of this exploration, these residues of separation in the body gradually and effortlessly dissolve. In other words, we learn to feel the body in a way that is consistent with our understanding.

The understanding that our essential nature of pure Awareness is ever-present and unlimited is just the first stage. If this understanding is not taken into the way we feel, act, perceive and relate, it cannot really be called true understanding.

One of the most common complaints on the spiritual path is that in spite of our clear understanding, we continue to feel, act and relate in ways that betray the presence of a separate self. The reason for this, in most cases, is that our understanding has not been taken deeply into the body, and remains only at the level of thought.

So, in this approach we do not just explore the way we think, but the way we feel; and indeed not just the way we feel, but the way we perceive, act and relate. In other words, the body and the world – not just the mind – are gradually colonized by our understanding.

This last phase of the spiritual path is an endless process that is described variously in the spiritual traditions as the establishment process, the Great Rebirth, the transfiguration, transformation etc. It is a process in which the body and the world are progressively permeated by and saturated with the open, empty transparency of our true nature. It is the 'outshining' of the mind, body and world by the light of pure Knowing.

From the conventional point of view, we believe that our essential nature of pure Awareness is made out of the body, and the apparently separate self is created with that belief. In understanding we realize that the body is made out of the open, empty, luminous presence of Awareness.

This is not an extraordinary new experience that happens to a few people; it is actually what we are experiencing all the time. However, the intimacy of our experience has been so distorted by thought that we have come to believe and, more importantly, feel that what we are essentially is made out of something solid, dense and located. In fact, the body is made out of a substance that is transparent, weightless, empty and knowing or aware.

This feeling of density, solidity and locality substantiates and validates the belief in being a separate self. Thus, this belief and feeling mutually support one another and, in doing so, are responsible for the complexity and tenacity of the apparently temporary, limited self around whom most of our lives revolve.

In these yoga meditations, we explore the body as it is really experienced, and in doing so, liberate it from the tyranny of a non-existent, separate self. We allow the body to gradually return to its natural, organic state of openness, transparency and sensitivity. We learn to feel and move the body in a way that is consistent with our understanding.

The well-defined borders or contours that seem to separate the body from others and the environment are seen and experienced to be non-existent. To begin with, we feel that the body is made of permeable space, in direct contact with everyone and everything, no longer sealed up in a clearly defined, impervious container. The borders between our self and the object, other or world dissolve, until we can no longer locate ourselves as someone, somewhere.

In time, we drop the space-like aspect as our Self: we are no longer the open, empty space of Awareness, but rather the dimensionless presence of pure Knowing. We know and feel our Self as the light of pure, dimensionless Knowing, which not only intimately pervades the entirety of our experience, but is its only substance and reality.

Whatever appears in the field of experience appears in our Self; we are that dimensionless, knowing field. We know our Self as the dimensionless field of pure sensitivity and receptivity – it knows itself as such – tasting intimately every appearance as a modulation of our own aware Being.

[<http://non-duality.rupertspira.com/yoga>]