

Energy—1

Attempts to observe ourselves and simply be present have been producing valuable and interesting results. As well as the constantly changing array of different 'I's presenting themselves there have been reports of better states, intimations of a Grace that lies waiting in the stillness and apparently unconnected experiences of peace and happiness. We may also notice how the sense of 'I' changes as the stillness deepens. At first, in the background, there remains a strong sense that this is 'my' stillness, and if this persists nothing much further happens. Yet sometimes an emotional element comes in and the feeling of 'I' seems to expand, becoming less personal and possessive as the field of attention widens to reveal the beginnings of a new state of consciousness where 'I' assumes a quite different quality. Being silent in a group—which we call 'good company'—can often be helpful in this respect.

What is going on here? It remains a fact that all this just seems to happen; the ebb and flow of different energies within us just comes and goes as it pleases. To allow things to progress further we need to have a clearer idea of how energy works in a human being.

We may think initially that all energy is active. Something that gets things done. But the System says that all energy is threefold, that it requires three quite different kinds of energy to produce not only the variety of our experience but the whole of the universe as well. The System says that all energy can be active, or passive, or neutralizing. The first two are quite easy to see but the third is more subtle. The Indian system has a similar understanding of these three fundamental energies which it calls Gunas.

Active energy we know all about, whether it is physical, mental or emotional and it is the energy we can most easily access on purpose. We usually seem to be able to galvanize ourselves into action if we need to. This energy is called Rajas guna in the Indian system.

Passive energy is less obvious. Yet what about resistance, inertia? We need a particular energy to go to sleep at night for instance, a particular energy is required to render our minds and bodies passive, so that a different state can manifest. In a less positive fashion our minds quite often take on a state of inertia where nothing seems to be possible; one becomes narrow-minded, negative, even cruel, or despondent and lacking in confidence and others can find us unreceptive to any ideas and mentally torpid. This state of inertia or resistance is not just an absence of active energy, it is something in its own right. It is called Tamas guna in the Indian system.

The third form of energy is what we particularly lack in our mechanical state. It is difficult to define but it has the quality of awakening, of something new and sweet and momentous, an unexpected moment where happiness becomes sublime. We know its flavour very well, in fact we often long for it, but we know very little about how to create, or allow it to enter. This energy is called Sattva guna in the Indian system.

None of these three energies is ever single and alone. All three are always present in a combination of infinitely varying proportions. Whichever one is predominant rules the nature of any situation or event.

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This teaching is called the Law of Three, one of the two fundamental laws of the universe. It is said that the Absolute, from being One, creates the universe by first dividing into three—a Holy Trinity—and this threefold manifestation, the Divine nature, is reflected by

everything in the creation. As above, so below. We have three bodies, physical, mental and emotional. We live in three worlds, body, soul and spirit.

The universe unfolds as these three different forces combine in six possible ways, and these six, together with the original One, create seven possibilities which form another law, the Law of Seven or Law of Octaves.

The Law of Three determines the intrinsic nature of every thing and event. The Law of Seven determines how events unfold and succeed each other.

One example of this same process is the creation of music. Three different notes, vibrations, come together in a particular relationship to create a triad, a chord that expresses a particular quality or harmony and which defines a scale. A succession of notes and chords create melody and rhythm, and the whole construction is what we call music. Three different kinds of note, and the scale of seven combinations arising from this create the whole infinite variety of music.

The psychology of human experience can be understood in this way. Our waking experience is created by a vast pantheon of different energies: hormones, neuro-transmitters, the digestion of food and the circulation of blood and lymph etc., memories and fears, desires and aversions, all our previous conditioning and future aspirations, all these are ceaselessly coalescing into the sense of 'I' in any moment.

The System can help us make sense of this. It provides the knowledge to support the conviction that it is enough to know and remember what we need only in this moment. By simply remembering the nature and the feeling of the energy we require in this moment, we are opening the way for it to enter. Knowledge is not the problem; convincing ourselves of the value of being just a little more aware, to the point where it actually becomes a regular, everyday habit, constitutes the work that allows knowledge to become practice.

If we wish to be less trapped in our time-bound state and enter more deeply into the still moment it is helpful to understand the order, the sequences in which these energies seem to pass through us. By remembering to be still and present from time to time we are bringing a particular passive force to the mind. This is the first force or energy required to sound a new chord in our being, and, if we persist, it begins to attract the emotional element referred to earlier, the active force, which is the next energy required for this new triad. Once these two join together, a new kind of 'neutralizing' energy, or Sattva, quite naturally appears.

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PRACTICAL

Try to observe these three fundamental energies as expressed by the feeling of 'I' in any moment. As in a car's engine; is the mixture too rich, we are roaring along uncontrollably; or too thin, creeping along painfully with little enthusiasm; or just right, smooth, quiet, and equal to anything that may be presented.