

### **How things happen: the law of three and the law of seven.**

Modern science and the System agree that the universe started as a unity which in the course of creation gave rise to successively more complex worlds – galaxies, suns, planets, life. Science attempts to find the exact physical laws that operate in each world; the System states that there are general laws which are the same in each world, and equally apply to psychology.

In the System, the Absolute unfolds the creation, universal and individual, by the complex interaction of two fundamental laws, the law of three forces and the law of seven or the law of octaves. Forces may be actual forces acting on something: pushing a pram for example. But they can also be other physical agents such as a chemical potential or a voltage, or psychological “forces” such as a desire.

The character of events is ruled by the law of three forces – the way the forces combine determines whether an event is constructive or destructive, for example. A succession of events is ruled by the law of seven or the law of octaves.

To take an example, in painting a picture there is a basic event or activity of a brush stroke - applying some paint to the canvas with a brush: this is a particular combination of three forces. But the whole process of painting the picture involves a number of steps: planning, preparation, and the painting process itself (which may involve a number of stages). This process is described by the law of octaves.

These two laws are often illustrated by the laws of music, or vibration, but without a fairly advanced musical education it is not easy to follow. Nevertheless the law of seven has always been described in terms of musical notation and uses the tonic sol-fa nomenclature: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do, for a scale rising in pitch.

The three forces appear as acting on or through matter. By the law of seven matter is transformed along a scale of increasing (or in some cases decreasing) levels of density or complexity. The System uses the term “materiality” to describe the level of something: everything is regarded as material — from the finest most intangible perception to the densest matter known to science — everything is unified and related in this one scale. Thus every phenomenon can be classified according to the force it conveys and the place it occupies in the scale of materiality.

#### ***Law of Three***

As we learnt last term, three forces can give rise to only six combinations (and one more, ‘incomprehensible to the human mind’) and it may at first be surprising that all possible phenomena can be classified as belonging to one of these six combinations.

Originally the three forces were described in terms of 19<sup>th</sup> cent. chemistry as Carbon, Oxygen and Nitrogen, and sometimes they were given the numbers 1, 2, 3, or described as Active, Passive and Neutralizing (or Integrating). The chemical description does not make sense on terms of modern science; the number description is confusing; so we will use Active, Passive and Neutralising (these names are close to the ones used in the Sankhya system of the three Gunas, which we will come to later).

It is the order in which these three forces act upon each other which determines the nature of the phenomena they create:

- |    |                             |                               |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Growth or development.      | Active — Passive—Neutralizing |
| 2. | Destruction or elimination. | Active—Neutralizing—Passive   |
| 3. | Refinement.                 | Passive—Active—Neutralizing   |
| 4. | Healing, invention.         | Passive—Neutralizing—Active   |
| 5. | Creation.                   | Neutralizing—Passive—Active   |
| 6. | Crime.                      | Neutralizing—Active—Passive   |

### ***Law of Seven***

Everything that is changing, matter or events, develops along a scale of increasing or decreasing energy or complexity. This scale is created by the law of seven or law of octaves which regulates the beginning, growth, development and end of any process. An octave is the process of doubling or halving of frequency, and as in a musical scale the process follows a distinct series of steps and ends at a point analogous but not identical to its beginning — just as this Monday is similar, but different, to last Monday.

The seven stages or notes of the octave are not a regular progression of equal steps. The rate of increase (or decrease) of frequency slows at some points and accelerates at others creating an uneven progress. This results in particular places in the octave where extra energy is required to maintain the original impetus. These places are referred to as intervals.

These intervals are responsible for the frequent unpredictability of our endeavours. Different processes, according to the law of three, determine which intervals will be filled naturally — so that the process goes naturally by itself to completion — and those that require an extra force to be given, without which the process will halt or change direction.

We are most conscious of our failures when dealing with new situations, where often “things don’t work out”. But lots of things in human society *do* work out, at least usually. Houses, ships, cars get built; food gets produced and marketed; money gets earned and spent; laws get passed; babies get born.

Why is it, in terms of forces and octaves, that some processes work out and others are so chancy?

### ***The Enneagram***

We can show a process as an octave, and if it is successful we might draw it as straight line: it starts at Do and ends at the next Do, just like the notes on a piano. But if we want to know more about the inner workings of a process it is more useful to use the enneagram:

