

Chapter VI. The Internal and External Senses

Devotee: Greetings, Swami.

Swami: Be well.

Devotee: With Your grace, everything is auspicious (*subha*). Without it, everything is inauspicious.

Swami: Good, but have you realised how both of these are based on grace? In one, both subsist; both are conferred by the self-same grace. Well, let that topic stand by. Last time you had a folk poem to digest, and it must have affected your thoughts deeply. In what stage of equanimity is your brain now?

Devotee: Ah. Everything appears as a puppet show now, Swami. But only on and off. The mind forgets and gets caught by the fascination of objects. What mystery is this, Swami?

Swami: Well, the mind is associated with all kinds of activities. It always follows the trail of the impulses and instincts (*vasanas*). This is its very nature.

Devotee: That is as much as to say that we cannot set it right. Then what is the hope? Ultimately, Swami, do we have to get immersed in impulses and become degraded?

Swami: There is hope, my boy! No need to get immersed and lost. Though it is its nature, it can be changed. Charcoal has as its nature blackening all that it gets mixed with. But you should not take that as final. When fire enters it, the charcoal becomes red. So too, though the mind is always wandering in the illusion of darkness, when through the Lord's grace the fire of spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) enters it, its nature changes and the pure (*sathwic*) nature pertaining to the Divine comes into it.

Devotee: Swami, they speak of something called *anthah-karana*; what is it?

Swami: The mind is referred to like that. *Karana* means sense (*indriya*). *Anthah-karana* means internal sense.

Devotee: So are there two types, internal senses and external senses?

Swami: Yes, of course. The external senses are called organs of action (*karmen-driyas*); the internal senses are called organs of perception (*jnanen-driyas*).

Devotee: Swami, please tell me which are the organs of action and which the organs of perception.

Swami: Well, all acts done bodily are done by the organs of action. There are five of them. Those that impart wisdom (*jnana*) from inside are the organs of perception. They are: hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. Both kinds together are called the ten organs.

Devotee: What work do they do together? What's the connection between their function and the mind (*manas*)?

Swami: Well, really, whatever work they do, they can't achieve anything without the meditation of mind. The organs of action perform acts in the world and receive knowledge, and the organs of perception discriminate between the good and the bad and offer them to the *Atma*, through the mind (*manas*). If there is no mind at all, how can these transmit? When we have to reach the other shore of a flooded river, we rely on the medium of a boat or raft. When the organs of action and the organs of perception, which are connected with nature (*prakriti*), desire to attain the *Atma*, they have to accept the help of the boat, the mind. Otherwise, they cannot attain.

Devotee: If so, where do these other things you spoke about —intellect (*buddhi*), memory (*chittha*), and ego (*ahamkara*)— reside?

Swami: They too are in this only. Together, the organs of action and perception are called the ten organs. Of these, four are distinguished and referred to as the four internal senses. Those four are mind (*manas*), intellect, memory, and ego.

Devotee: Very nice. That is to say, all are in the same thing. Life is indeed funny. But Swami, what is the function of these four?

Swami: The mind (*manas*) grasps the object; the intellect (*buddhi*) examines arguments for and against; the memory or subconscious mind (*chittha*) understands the object by means of these; the ego (*ahamkara*) changes the decision for or against and, by attachment, slackens the hold of wisdom (*jnana*). This is what they do.

Devotee: Excuse me, Swami, I am asking only to know; where do they exist in the body?

Swami: I am glad; don't worry. The mind is in the cupola, the intellect in the tongue, the subconscious mind in the navel, and the ego in the heart.

Devotee: Excellent. So, the intellect and the ego are in the most important places! These are the chief causes of all the world's miseries. Then, if we examine with reference to Your words, it looks as if there will be no misery when these two places are made pure!

Swami: You have indeed listened to me attentively. Yes, that is right. First, the use of words in a clean and pure manner is proof of the intellect treading the right path. Second, suppression and conquering of the ego is proof of the heart being pure. Therefore, be very careful regarding these two. Then, even your mind and subconscious mind will come to have good activities. Only then will you be free from pain and misery. Pain and misery can never happen to you then.

Devotee: So among all these, who is the "I"? Who is the experiencer of all this?

Swami: We have arrived at the right point. "You" are none among all these! All these exist only as long as the feeling "This body is mine" exists. They are all associated with some activities. The *Atma*, which observes all these activities, that is "You". The joy and sorrow, the loss and misery, the good and bad of these activities are all related only to the body, so they are not yours; they will not be yours. You are the *Atma*. Until this truth is realised, you sleep the sleep of "I" and "Mine". In that sleep, dreams appear of loss, misery, sorrow, and joy. The dreams persist only until you awake, and after you wake up, the fear you had while dreaming and the sorrow you experienced all disappear and are no longer true. Similarly, when delusion is thrown off and you "awaken" in spiritual wisdom (*jnana*), you will understand that all this is not "you", that you are the *Atma*.

Devotee: Then, Swami, for whose sake do mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), subconscious mind (*chittha*), and ego (*ahamkara*) do all this work?

Swami: For no one's sake! They are engaged in their own work! The *Atma* observes everything, and its shadow, the individual soul (*jiva*), which is deluded by the association of the body-consciousness, plays this drama, through all these acts.