

DEVELOPING OF FINER PERCEPTION

The existence of human beings on the planet is regulated by many different natural forces. Through the mediation of these forces people discover not only the bare necessities of life but also its different aspects and qualities. They discover love and other emotions, the ability of abstract thinking, the ability to care for others and for the collective, hope, spiritual understanding, the continuing development of perceptions, and the ability to become unified with the Creator.

The strongest and most dominating force felt by people is the instinct to live. This force takes precedence over everything else. The hierarchies of human priorities developed in the past by psychologists and other authors also reflect this fact. The basic necessities of life have to be attained before a person is able to concentrate on anything else. And it is easy to identify with such a notion. If we are deprived of sleep, we really cannot do much work or work to any degree of accuracy—we have to sleep. If we are hungry, there is nothing else more important on our mind. These are the basic necessities.

Similarly to the instinctual life force, the sexual force exists independently of the human will, and it will manifest in human beings in various situations through physical attraction, emotional attachments, etc. In cases of degeneration, not intended in the original design, people express their anger, violence and aggression in a sexual act. But this is a human transgression of the Cosmic laws—a transgression not known, for example, in the animal kingdom. Emotions are also very strong forces, which dominate human lives. They are the drivers of many activities: of peaceful living and of wars; they pepper life and add colour to it. Emotions can be moderated by the ability of rational thinking, which is a distinctly human ability. Today we take this ability to think for granted, but the work of many anthropologists shows that the process of developing this ability in human beings has been very long.

Mind, emotions, instinctual and sexual forces are the drivers of human beings. People live under the impression that they themselves are in charge of what is happening in their lives. But upon a deeper reflection one has to concede that this is not the case. And this is the point in a life analysis where usually most important existential questions may appear. But, generally speaking, people do not have much interest in psychology and the workings of their mind. For them things are as they are, and there is no need to philosophise; people are born, grow up in a particular cultural setting, have children, grow old and die. That is all. Consequently, many people in this civilisation, including those who are highly educated or skilled in a trade or profession, are not aware that there may be something urgently important hiding in their own psyche.

There is a part in our being, which has the ability to disassociate itself from the forces driving the human person. It has a function akin to an observer; it is our

personal reference centre. Unless a person realises the existence of this internal observer, he or she is driven unconsciously by the natural forces. The first moment of realising the existence of the internal centre is an epochal breakthrough in the consciousness of a person. This person can start a new kind of life—living life and at the same time observing oneself. If we are no longer identified completely with our own emotions and mind, it becomes apparent pretty quickly that previously we were only under the impression that we were in charge of our lives. Now we discover that in the ordinary life we are being driven by our habits, beliefs, social and cultural conditioning, peer pressure, demands of our family and the close ones. Rarely, if at any time, the decisions we made were dissociated from those pressures we had accepted consciously or unconsciously.

In a state of close or complete identification with the driving forces of life we make a lot of decisions we regret later. At the time of making those decisions we usually have a poor understanding of the situation. This process of making poor decisions in specific situations is usually repeated again and again in the lives of most people, because it is not the individual experiences that should teach them lessons but an understanding of the underlying drivers, unconscious motives that needs to become conscious if people are to change and learn anything about their own behaviour. Blaming others for their personal misfortunes will not change the fate of falling again and again into the same traps, every time with different people.

If we want to change our life we should endeavour to change ourselves—not other people. This is the only way to change our life. We need to understand our own faults, before we rush to point weaknesses in others. And that is the most important reason for knowing one's own psychology. There is a deep wisdom in the ancient admonition: 'Know Thyself', because, whether we realise this or not, there is a significant difference in the functioning of people who know themselves, and of those who are largely unconscious of their motives and drivers.

There is much, much more to life than what people ordinarily think. Because life is very rich in potentialities, it can be found more creative than what the conventional wisdom tells us. The fact that people do not notice these potentialities is caused first of all by the ignorance of the fact that such possibilities exist, and secondly, by a lack of access to those levels of existence, which can open these richer dimensions of life. Rarely can we meet individuals who were born with much finer perceptions than the average. We need to know, however, that there are processes and methods available to people, which can lead them to the refining of their perceptions. In fact the task of developing these finer perceptions is really **the** challenge in this life. Some people ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life. At the instinctual and hedonistic level of life no deep answers can be really comprehensible to an individual. These answers of course exist, but people need to lift themselves to a higher level of perception to be able to access a state of being and knowing, where such matters can be fruitfully investigated and comprehended.

Life and Consciousness exist in the Universe objectively; we do not have any say in this particular matter. Life and Consciousness clothe themselves in different forms, and a human being is just only one such form. Through our physiological, emotional, mental and intuitive tools of perception we can construe a picture of reality and have some understanding of it. But we must know that the picture we construe depends very much on those tools of perception we possess.

The range of perception capabilities in human beings is not constant. In fact it is changing throughout the life of an individual. From early childhood to adulthood and later, older age, the perceptions capabilities, personal awareness and interpretative abilities fluctuate. However, there exists another opportunity; apart from the natural life span fluctuations of perception capabilities, which are part of ordinary life of all individuals, it is possible to undergo a process of conscious expansion of awareness—a process which is different from the normal childhood / adulthood variations. The difference between the two processes is that in the case of natural fluctuations of perception, apart from undergoing formal education and having normal life experiences, we have no influence on the resulting levels of perception. In the second process, about which most people probably have never heard, we identify the stumbling blocks, which keep us bound to the same level of awareness all the time, and then, having identified these stumbling blocks, we can remove them, and consciously cause our awareness to expand.

Life and Consciousness exist below and above the human level of existence. However, at our level we have been offered a potential to expand our perception tools, so that, we, the human beings, can achieve increasing levels of awareness and wisdom. This is an extremely positive and optimistic outlook on our future as spiritual beings. We can develop within ourselves higher levels of awareness. We can have access to the infinite fountain of wisdom. We can become more effective, more affectionate, more loving people than we are at present.

This is not just a vision of humanity in the future. The process of conscious development and the expansion of personal awareness is available to us today. However, in order to access this knowledge we need to use our free will and make a decision to participate in such a profound life change. In practical terms, one could say that such an opportunity exists, but it requires a conscious effort on the part of the individual. It will not happen automatically, by itself; it actually requires a hard work on one's own psychology.

Refining of perception tools is a process available to everyone. It can occur when people realise and accept that there are a lot of 'weeds' in their psychological make up and, consequently, when they decide to make a conscious effort to remove these unwanted elements. The unwanted elements in fact constitute the main barrier; they keep people at a grosser level of perception. The Tibetan Buddhists call these unwanted elements ***psychic aggregates***.