

The lecture below is part of a series of lectures delivered by Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami (recorded verbatim by the late Gertrud Lundén). It is dedicated to the riddle of life and consciousness, with particular focus on the theme of *Different Levels of Creation*. Through the usage of geometric illustrations*, the author delivers a candid version of the origins of the cosmos and mind, as revealed to the rishis of ancient India.

For a better understanding of the abstract concepts, the reader is invited to first read Lecture I.16. See also Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami's book, *Layayoga* (Inner Traditions), which is an advanced exposition of the immaterial centers of creation in humans (the *chakras*) and their origin.

Note by Basile Catoméris

*copied directly from the original texts

Lecture by
Shyam Sundar Goswami
(I.25)

Mechanisms Involved in Acquiring Sensory Knowledge

Aindriyaka jñāna means sensory knowledge, and this is at the lowest level of the whole cognitive scale. As the adjective of *indriya*, which stems from *indra*, *aindriyaka* refers then to *indriya** as the instrument for humans to acquire sensory knowledge.

The inner means of acquiring knowledge is called *antahkarana* - the inner instrument or mind, regarded as a whole. Thus *indriyas*, which are the means to acquire sensory knowledge, serve as specific cognitive instruments. The internal principle for acquiring knowledge is called *antahkarana-indriya*. It is in the nature of *sthula*, a gross material form. *Antahkarana* itself fails to get any picture of *sthula*, which is a material form of *bija*. Because there is so much inertial power (*tamas*), *sthula*-shaped objects are unable to enter into *antahkarana*, whose nature is predominantly sattvic. Therefore, *antahkarana* has to project itself outward, thus forming an autonomous, objective aspect of consciousness. Projecting itself outside its own boundaries, it may then acquire the *sthula* forms. As such, it is called *vahih-* (or outer *indriya*), since here the projection, which is otherwise limited to *antahkarana*, goes outside. This is usually just called *indriya*, but it is rightly called *vahih-indriya*, the work of which is possible only when the outgoing power (when in contact with gross physical objects) becomes restricted so as to partially retrieve the

sensory knowledge. Indeed, the real picture of the material world is still unknown at this point. What is known is a world offered to us via the senses, or *indriyas*. However, it is not quite correct to say that the *indriyas* equate to the "senses."

The *vahih-indriyas* consist of 5 forms in the external projection of *antahkarana*. From the most gross to the most subtle, they are:

5) *Grahana*, the most external aspect of the *indriya* forms, means the faculty of "receiving." It is the direct contact with gross material forms, objects, or whatever remains outside the *antahkarana*. For instance, to "see" means that the material form (along with light) is reflected on the eye, the outer organ that enters into contact with the physical form of an object. The receiving part, this outermost organ that is in contact with a gross form, is *grahana*.

Further up comes:

4) *Svarupa*, or the "conducting part," is that through which a perceived sensory picture is carried up to a special brain area. Up to this point of become pure perception, the process is essentially sensory.

It is generally said that apprehension occurs in the brain. However, the physical aspect of that apprehension is not all. Once it has reached the appropriate brain area, it becomes dematerialized (in a process which already started at *grahana*), granted that the physical impression passes through the nerves. Nerve impulses are known as being electrical in nature, however, available detecting instruments cannot differentiate between different nerve-currents (e.g. sight or hearing). A nerve impulse has to first reach the brain before its specificity can be determined.

Thereafter the *indriyas* become subtle and are properly termed as *svarupa*. Gross forms consists of 5 main patterns, received by 5 equivalent forms of projection, which are called *jñanendriyas*, or instruments of acquiring sensory knowledge from outside. *Antahkarana* itself projects in these 5 forms of *jñanindriyas*, each featuring a characteristic manner when

receiving and conducting the gross (or *sthula*) pattern. The aspects of gross form are known to us as the senses of perception of:

- a) sound (*shabda*);
- b) touch (*sparsha*) (including heat and cold, pain etc.);
- c) sight (*darshana*);
- d) taste (*râsa*); and
- e) smell (*ghanda*)

These are the recipients for the 5 aspects of the compound-form, which is *sthula*, or gross. In the compound-form, there are 5 *mahabhutas* which generate 5 characteristic sensory features (of sound, touch, etc.) that are picked-up by the *indriyas* from the gross and passed on. However, only certain parts are taken that way, while the rest escapes from the *indriyas* (as the extra-physical part lies within *antahkarana*). The form of *svarupa* is characteristic of the gross form. It is received by the senses or *indriyas*, in the aspect of sound, touch, etc., according to their capacity to take these 5 forms or aspects of the gross surrounding cosmos.

Still further up is:

3) *Asmita*, or the "I-as-the-knower," which stands beyond as a non-physical entity and does not proceed from any process in the brain. After *svarupa*, there is a gap, but gradually the part that lies in *antahkarana* is known. How? At first the *indriyas* predominate, but in the projections of *antahkarana* there is also a non-physical part in parallel to the physical. This starts from the brain-centers toward the organs which are in direct contact with the physical.

In *asmita*, the I knows all from beyond.

2) *Anvaya*. Still further up, there is the cosmic *bija*-form of *anvaya*, which directs to the 3 fundamental attributes of creation (called *gunas*). The *indriyas*, like everything else, are composed of the 3 *gunas*, which operate (with characteristic features) in evolution or dissolution. The pattern of

receiving things known to the I is not neutral. The I always "feels" when it becomes aware of something. It does not compare to a mirror that reflects objects quite objectively. There, things are reflected in the objective aspect of the consciousness, for the I to elicit its awareness and create a personal relationship. According to the prevailing pattern of the object that is received by the *indriyas*, whether it is sattvic, rajasic or tamasic in nature, a specific behavior and reaction will take place with different objects.

With the 3 *gunas* in the background, the reason for being (*arthavattva*) has the faculty of empowering the I (mainly) with two different behavioral modes: *râga* (interest, liking, attraction) or *dvesha* (non-interest, disliking, repulsion). The comportment of the I in relation to a specific object, received or rejected at the time it is reflected in the objective consciousness, elicits:

1) *Arthavattva*.

Through the faculty of reception, or *grahana*, something enters into the field of *antahkarana* as an object and/or the reaction of the I. This reaction corresponds to the stage *arthavattva*, a pure "raison d'être". At a certain point, in order to enter into the field of consciousness, the gross material object must be made subtler and dematerialized so as to be received. Mind is subtle in nature, indeed. It can only receive pictures that have first been dematerialized by the *indriyas*, whose task it is to receive objectified images and forward them – dematerialized - to the objective field in *antahkarana*, where the I becomes aware of them. Physical organs are in constant contact with the 5 gross patterns of objects, albeit only one single type of impression at a time is received, of which the I becomes aware. Things have thus to be made subtle by the *indriyas* before they are brought up to mind. Somehow, though, the input flow must be checked.

Selective Mind

With the sensory organs being in constant contact with the physical world, there is much information, which is constantly brought to the mind's attention. A selection is made at the moment that these impressions first predominate, from the great amount of dematerialized sensory data received. The selection and synthesis of all input is made by an internal entity called *manas*** . As such, *manas* plays an important part in the vast *antahkarana*, with the pivotal role of selecting and synthesizing input data. Once the selective process is completed, it projects the picture for the I to know it. That which starts with *grahana*, ends in the brain-center. To sum-up, dematerialization takes place for the conveyance of sensory impressions to *antahkarana*, where they are selected and synthesized by *manas* for the I to know. Particularized forms, selected by *manas*, are projected on the objective aspect of consciousness, of which for the I to become aware. Because of *arthavattva*'s decisive influence, an intimate relation to the objective aspect is established, insofar as the image, which is brought about by the *indriyas* and selected by *manas*, has an impact on the I, which thus both knows and reacts in some way.

This is the principle for acquiring sensory knowledge. (Sensory impulse is the term used when something from outside passes through the physical channels.) This one way of receiving the external is usually regarded as the only method. However, it is not without certain limitations. In the sensory field, senses are restricted by certain factors. Take for instance, sight—one can only see an object up to a certain size, at a certain distance, or when it is not concealed. These 3 limits are always operating within the physical realm of perception. The *indriyas* suffer, therefore, of 3 main limitations:

- 1) *Sukshma*, which relates to size;
- 2) *Vuavahita*, which relates to obstruction (either by time- and/or space-factors); and
- 3) *Viprakrista*, which relates to distance.

In all the above cases, the senses are unable to receive sensory images. Sensory knowledge which is acquired upon reception of all gross objects, is modified by these 3 limiting factors, thus diminishing it to a rather narrow picture. The next stage beyond this scenario is extra-sensory perception, which holds the possibility to obviate the limitations herein described.

*Reviewed by B.C., spiritual disciple of Sri S.S.Goswami,
and edited by Jim Earles*

* Yoga literature acknowledges five senses of perception or cognitive faculties (*jñanindriyas*): smell, taste, colors and forms, touch, sound; and five conative senses of action (*karmendriyas*): speech, prehension, locomotion, organic activities and reproduction. *Note BC.*

** Cf. Probably linked to the Greek *μυαλό; νοῦς*; Latin *mens*; English *mind* and French *mental*. *Note BC.*