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Consciousness

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ABSTRACT

Consciousness is a fundamental reality in existence. It becomes that with which it identifies. Identification with Love for the Cosmic Consciousness, the Divine with all His comrades of Light, Knowledge, Power, Ananda (Ecstasy) is the way to freedom and mastery over our mind and body.

Keywords: Consciousness, Awareness, Reality, Spirit, Divine

In day to day language, Consciousness implies awareness. When I say I am conscious of this, it means, I am aware of this. But in Spirituality, Consciousness is not only awareness but something more. In words of Sri Aurobindo, 'Consciousness is a fundamental thing in existence, it is the energy, the motion, the movement of Consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it, not only the macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but the Consciousness arranging itself. It is there even when it is not active on the surface. It can determine its own reactions or abstain from reactions' [1]. It is eternal. It never dies with the death of the physical body. It has the joy of its own existence. It becomes that upon which it lays its importance or in other words, it becomes that with which it identifies. If it identifies with anger, it becomes angry. If it identifies with love, it becomes lovable. Matter is the Consciousness organizing itself in its densest form and adopts the behavior of the Matter. Spirit is the Consciousness organizing itself in its subtlest form and adopts the qualities of the Spirit. Mind is the surface Consciousness and the Spirit is the inmost Consciousness within or the Highest Consciousness above, but still it is the Consciousness. When the Consciousness identifies with the Divine, it becomes the Divine Consciousness and it organizes to be possessed by all the qualities of the Divine, i.e. Divine Light, Divine Power, Divine Knowledge, Divine Ananda (Ecstasy). As

an analogy, water is called ice when it freezes and is called vapor when it evaporates. But still, it is water. The whole Universe is the result of Identification of the Consciousness with a specific thought. As Sri Aurobindo says:

'Afflicted by the little self, Thy Consciousness forgets to be the Divine' [2]. It is the thought of your limitations of your mind that makes you think as little.

In Medical Science, the definition of mind is the brain. "From the brain comes all thoughts, beliefs, behaviors and moods. It is the control center for the rest of the body" [3]. But brain is only the receiving and transmitting center of the Consciousness. It is not the originator of thoughts, feelings, behavior, moods, etc. The originator and controller is the Consciousness. The concept of mind in the brain makes us believe that brain or for that purpose all the physical organs are the source of pleasure and pain. Thus we are making ourselves more and more dependent upon them and our original Consciousness is forgot and we never feel free. There is no denying the fact that Medical Science has given us a lot of information to treat our diseases, but one of the factors to treat the disease is the belief in Medical treatment from the very birth that it is effective. If the child is taught in the very beginning that he/she is the Spirit, which is the controller of our life, then there is every likelihood that the man may become immune to diseases. In any case, both the Spirit and the Science must be accepted to guide us. Since the Spirit is so mingled with the physical body that we cannot separate the Spirit from the physical body ordinarily, and therefore we assume that the Spirit is subject to

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Physical Laws. Actually it is the Consciousness in the matter that is obeying the Material laws. In fact, the basic truth is that the Spirit entered the Matter in a process known as 'Involution'. It is now manifesting itself in the process called 'Evolution'. In this concept, Aurobindo, beautifully explains the three aspects of the Divine (The Spirit) [4]:

1. It is the Cosmic Self and the Spirit that is in and behind all things and beings, from which and in which all is manifested in the universe ~ although it is now a manifestation in the ignorance. (Involution of the Spirit).
2. It is the Spirit and Master of our own being within us whom we have to serve and learn to express His will in all our movements so that we may grow out of the ignorance into the Light. (Evolution of the Spirit).
3. The Divine is transcendent Being and Spirit, all bliss and light and divine knowledge and power, and towards that highest divine existence and its Light we have to rise and bring down the reality of it more and more into our consciousness and life. (Transformation of Consciousness)

Since Consciousness in the form of Spirit resides in the matter, it has to obey the material or physical laws which is the realm of Physical Sciences. When the Spirit manifests itself completely, it transcends the physical laws. Physical Scientists do not believe in the Spirit, but the Spiritualists believe the Physical Sciences. In this context, it will not be out of place to quote the writings of Ananda Mohan Lahiri [5] with regard to Science and the Higher Power inherent in our Consciousness.

"Our eagerness for worldly activities kills in us the sense of spiritual awe. Because modern Science tells us how to utilize the powers of Nature, we fail to comprehend the Great Life in the back of Nature. Our relations with her is one of practical business. In Science, our relation with Nature is that between an arrogant man and his servant. We cross examine her, challenge her and minutely weigh her evidence in human scales that cannot measure her hidden values. On the other hand when the self is in communion with higher power, Nature automatically obeys, without stress or strain, the will of Man".

How to awaken the Spirit or Divine Consciousness within us

First of all we have to have Faith that the Divine exists and is within and around us. Then there are various methods to awaken the Divine in us. These are Prayer, Surrender to the Divine in all what we do and in all what happens to us if we cannot change it. Intense aspiration to be possessed by the Divine, Purification of mind by inviting the positive thoughts and rejecting the negative thoughts. It is well established that positive thoughts produce positive energy and negative thoughts, the negative energy, which is the source of all the troubles in life. Other methods are Practice of Patience, Shanti (Peace), unconditional pure Love in our mind with no excessive

attachment, and meditation. Lahiri Mahasaya [5] lays stress on meditation as he says:

"Through delusion, you are perceiving yourself as the bundle of flesh and bones, which at best is a nest of troubles. Meditate unceasingly that you quickly behold yourself as the Infinite Essence, free from every form of misery. Cease being the prisoner of the body, using the secret key of Kriya, learn to escape into the Spirit" (Identification with the Spirit).

Scientifically speaking, the **Identification** with all the qualities of the Divine as mentioned before is the surest method of union with the Divine.

Again, some time we feel restless when we have nothing to do and seek some work to do and when that is done, another restlessness sets in. The reason for this is that we make our Consciousness take interest in activities only. When the activity is not there, we feel restless. At that time we must go into Real Emptiness or Meditation and feel free and quite in our mind with no thought, anxiety or any kind of passion. Then we can feel the Divine in us. When that happens, i.e. when we are in union with the Divine Consciousness, we may be doing something or doing nothing, we are then not bound or compelled by Nature to do something.

The other method to be in union with the Divine is to practice the gist of the following mantra:

"I am Peaceful Solid Rock, un- moved and unperturbed in situations all.

As vast as Space I am, pervading every object that I am.

I am the creator of My Nature Sublime, set forth by Me in My Play Divine".

"I inhale the Divine, day and night and try to behave like Him in my daily life. Then a Divine current rises along my Spine, and makes me feel myself Divine".

As a result of such practices, you can be in unity not only with the Divine but with mankind also and work through their minds as you work with your own mind.

In Baba Ji's own words [5].

" If one feels his unity with mankind, all minds become transmitting stations, through which one can work at will".

Let us know what Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi and Buddha say about Consciousness.

Ramana on Consciousness:

Consciousness: "Existence or Consciousness is the only reality. Consciousness plus waking, we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream, we call dream. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it" [6].

Buddha on calm Consciousness:

“Whether he walks or stands, sits or lies down, talks or remains silent, his concentration does not leave him. He is not elated or uplifted, fickle or idle, agitated in mind or body. Calm is his mind, Calm is his voice. Though in a crowd, he dwells apart, even, and unchanged in gain and loss. Thus in happiness and sufferings, in praise and blame, in fame and disrepute, in life and death, with pleasant and unpleasant, with holy or unholy men, with noises or music, with form that are dear or un-dear, he remains the same” (7).

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Authors Column



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