

Lecture One

The Subtle Body of Man

From achievements of modern medical science we know that activities of all organs are run by the nervous system. Hormonal functions of the organism also take part in the regulation of the organ's activity. However, modern physicians and researchers would hardly reply to the question, "What causes the nervous impulse itself to act and what makes it move"? The answer to this, as well as to many other questions, is there in the Vedas.

The Vedas are the most ancient scriptures, consisting of many treatises recorded not less than five thousand years ago. In this ancient source of scientific knowledge, there is information about all phenomena and aspects that are accessible to scientific research. There is also information which is only being conjectured about in scientific circles. The Vedas explain the principles and laws of existence of this world. They contain information both about the structure of the atom and solar system, as well as about all creation as a whole. There, it is narrated about the origin and development of the universe. At the same time, they give a detailed description of the child's development in the mother's womb and the structure of the human organism.

According to the Vedas, in addition to the usual anatomical structure of the organism, there is another, more subtle one, which we cannot see. We don't acknowledge it, because we are not taught this nor do we have the corresponding qualification. However, its subtle structure as described in the Vedas in detail, can be seen by anyone and the qualification necessary for this can be acquired. In order to learn how to see the subtle nature (character, diseases) of any person, it is necessary to first of all understand that the subtle body is also a body and it is also material. Our subtle body has many layers. Its layers exist in strict reciprocity with each other.

The Prana

Tissues of our gross body are subordinate to the work of the nervous system. The nervous system itself, however, is constantly influenced by the subtle energy, which in the Vedas is called prana. The interaction of our consciousness with prana is called prana-maya.

Let us have a look at a simple example. If, as a result of some interest to do anything, a strong desire for action appears, then a special energy meant for that will automatically go into the organism. In this way, our consciousness with the help of the desire to act is naturally interacting with prana.

It means that if a person really wants to do anything, he is getting the energy necessary for accomplishing it in the form of interest to this or that activity, as enthusiasm to act and to be determined. We often think that strength appears by itself. However, in reality, life forces appear in the organism as well as in the mind, due to a strong desire to do something. In the same way, because everyone of us has a strong desire to live, then as a result, invisible energy supporting the organism's life functions is constantly drawn to the organism.

Thus, desire always attracts powers for its fulfillment. If you feel that for converting your desires into a fact, you lack strength, it only means that your desires are not strong enough. Therefore, for your desires to attract enough energy for their fulfillment, you should associate with people whose similar desires have already acquired great strength.

Prana, by filling up our organism with life force, gives us the opportunity to act. Without it, we cannot even lift a finger. Prana is oftentimes misidentified with electric impulses. Thus, extra sensors invent all kinds of devices for accepting wave radiation, and state that they measure a person's biological field. But, we have to admit that the energy of prana is still more subtle than electromagnetic waves.

If it were not more energetically subtle than the electromagnetic field, we would have found ourselves under severe attack by all electromagnetic waves that surround us. They surely influence the person's body, but not to the extent of making the life itself impossible. If our prana were really so much dependent on electromagnetic waves, then there would have been no chance to live in the present day world saturated with electronics. Our nervous system would have been totally paralyzed by the uninterrupted influence of all these waves. But, it is exactly the subtle energy of prana that causes nervous tissues to move; that's why the energy of prana is much more subtle than the energy of electromagnetic waves.

The energy of prana is also called subtle air or life air. This is the force that we absorb while inhaling, following the desire to live. When under the desire to live a person takes a breath, then all the seven biological centers or chakras, i.e., top of the head, central part of forehead, throat, heart, solar plexus, groin and coccyx, are absorbing subtle energy from space as life air.

How can you practically understand, "What is prana"? It can be understood with the help of those sensations that arise when prana is contacted. For example, in the mountains there is much prana, therefore, people lacking it very often desire to go to the mountains. While inhaling mountain air you are feeling freshness in the forehead, lightness in the top of the head, coolness in the larynx, strength in the organism. Everybody likes this state. Also, when a healthy person takes a moderate amount of food, he can sense freshness in the region of solar plexus, groin and coccyx during inhaling.

Prana or life air is entering our organism along with inhalation. It enters active psychic centers, the chakras. Then by special channels of subtle energy, nadias, it spreads itself through the whole organism as life air. In some chakras this life air is functioning more actively and in the other ones it is weaker. Weak

functioning of prana, for example, in the chakra, situated in the region of solar plexus, points out diseases of digestive organs.

When we exhale, life air comes out from our organism. Inhaling and exhaling of prana can also be accomplished without physical breathing. In other words, inhaling of prana into the organism can be performed without the usual respiratory movements of the lungs. To learn how to do it, one should use special methods of training, for example, pranayama. Yama is translated as exercise, and prana is life air. This technique allows training in governing prana. A person practicing pranayama, can fill himself with prana thus nourishing his nervous system, even without breathing physically. One who has mastered the art of pranayama can live without breathing for a very long time, up to forty days.

Everybody knows about the experiments. When a yogi is hermetically sealed in a sack and sunk under water, in such a situation he can be there for up to forty days. Such phenomena corroborate the fact that a person can live without oxygen for a lengthy period. Thus, oxygen is not as vital as it has normally been considered.

The movement of prana is carried out in the organism under the influence of our consciousness. In other words, man's consciousness controls the movement of life air in the organism. If a person is sluggish and has no aim to do anything, his prana goes down, and he is overcome by sleepiness. After intaking food, prana is concentrated in the center of abdomen and the person feels warmth there. During mental activity prana goes upwards. When the person is doing physical exercises, prana is distributed throughout the organism.

The subtle body of man's prana cannot be registered by any existing instruments. But it can be sensed with the help of our own mind which has a more subtle nature than that of prana. Sometimes we feel creepy all over, sometimes the forehead grows cold or the body gets hot all over, or we feel like we are suffocating. All these are different manifestations of the subtle energy of prana. With the help of breathing techniques a person could make himself feel heat always and everywhere, even in very cold weather. For example, there are people who can walk around naked when it is freezing outside.

Prana is contained in everything where there is life. How can we understand, for example, that there is prana in an apple? If you take it and mash it, will its taste be fresh? In a few minutes, not a trace of its former freshness will remain. A whole resilient apple has a pleasant taste. But when we destroy the structure of its pulp, it loses freshness and taste, quickly. If you do the same with watermelon, what will happen then? Although in essence the watermelon remains the same, it will not have the same fresh taste anymore.

Why is it that if we change the natural form of a fruit do we deprive ourselves of using its full value? Why does the taste and nutritiousness of the organism change so much? The answer is that the product's taste and feeling of its freshness are formed not only by its chemical composition, but, first of all, by how filled with prana it is. Thus, a plucked plant, after staying for some time, is losing to some degree its original qualities. The plant, that has just now been plucked, always has a more pleasant taste. When biting a fresh juicy apple we are feeling its refreshing taste and thus getting a burst of cheerfulness. A freshly cut out

watermelon is pleasant in the same way. To drink watermelon juice is, however, quite a different thing.

The attraction of a fresh resilient apple or a freshly cut out watermelon is in prana, which is contained in them. The quantity of prana can be estimated, for example, by suffusion of watermelon cells with liquid. By destroying watermelon cells, we free prana from them. As a result, its health qualities reduce. That is why everybody likes to eat fresh fruits and vegetables.

To say how much prana is in a body and, to some extent, to evaluate health is possible by the condition of skin. True, somebody may have elastic, resilient, dense skin. Then it is compared to an apple. There is a category of people described as 'blooming with health'. Their skin is good, and they themselves are 'a picture of health.' Normally, these people have a lot of prana. Dryish people, as a rule, have less prana in their bodies. However, they can have more prana in their minds.

Nervous impulses in our body are transmitted due to the movement of the ions; K⁺, Na⁺, Cl⁻, in the liquid filling pipes of the nerve cells. It is clear that nervous conduct is not carried out with the help of metal wire in the body. There is a cavity filled with liquid in a nervous cell, so ions are moving in that liquid. It is due to this that nervous impulses are transmitted and it is the subtle body of prana that causes the liquid to move. If there is not enough liquid in the body, then at breath prana will not be able to penetrate nervous tissues of the organism completely as they are supposed to be watery when at norm. As a result, nervous tissues will not function normally and the dehydrated organism will feel weak.

An apple, while drying, starts going bad. Under certain conditions, however, it can stay good for a long time. Although it doesn't breathe with lungs like us, it has its own breathing, because prana enters an apple in the same way it enters man's organism. Again, it confirms the fact that one can learn to breathe without using lungs. It is agreed that a man is a more developed creature than an apple.

It is not always that when entering us that prana causes a positive effect. For example, prana of the product that is not compatible with our constitution, can do harm. As a result, a very juicy, fresh and quite edible fruit can cause indigestion. How can we understand which fruit to eat and which one to not eat?

It is very easy to understand by tasting the fruit. It is the taste that tells us how much prana of the product goes with us individually. The product taste characterizes quality of its prana. Besides, the feeling of taste is directly connected with presence of liquid in cells and tissues. It is not possible to feel the taste of a substance unless it is liquid. Without having chewed food and wetting it with saliva, it is not possible to feel its taste. An overly dry tongue does not perceive the taste of dry food. If one eats sappy food that is pleasant to his taste, then prana accumulates in his organism. It is represented as a feeling of cheerfulness and burst of energy.

Thus, if the food is fresh, and its taste is pleasant and joy-giving, then it gives the feeling of cheerfulness. At the same time prana of one product can go with us well, and that of the other one cannot. Therefore, one should very attentively choose what he would like to eat and what not while being guided by his inner

inducement. However, in the process of choosing food there is one more participant, the mind. The mind may have some bad habits, that's why not everything desired can be wholesome. It happens very often that the thing one wants to eat is exactly the thing that does harm to the organism.

Mind

Besides prana, the subtle body of the mind is another subtle structure of our body. Depending on its condition, somebody behaves as an intelligent person, and somebody else as a madman. In Sanskrit 'mind' is called 'manas', and the subtle body of the mind 'mano-maya-kosha'. 'Maya-kosha' means 'covering' of manas, that is of the mind. Thus, mano-maya-kosha can be literally translated as covering of the mind. By its nature, mind is even more subtle than prana. However, even more subtle than the mind is the subtle body of intelligence, and more subtle than intelligence is a spiritual covering of ananda, or happiness, which directly interacts with our spiritual essence, the soul. All this terminology and conceptions are taken from the Vedas.

Many people think that they are the body. But according to the Vedas, each of us is only in the machine-body. In reality, 'I' is the soul, not the body. The subtle body of the mind is material, and has its own, invisible to the eye, structure. This structure cannot be registered by any modern devices. According to the Vedas, the subtle body of the mind can travel throughout the universe, without stopping or encountering any hindrances. Moreover, if we can tune in properly, our subtle body of the mind can easily learn how to evaluate the condition of any planet or any spot in the universe.

The penetrating ability of the subtle body of prana is likened to the movement of atmospheric air, which fills up every nook and corner of the earth. Unlike prana, the subtle body of the mind has the nature that shows itself as fire, air, water, etc. In other words, mind can be likened to any element. If by some wonder you succeed in observing the subtle body of the mind of a very angry person, you will see a fiery clot. Its density will be increasing in the region of biological centers, the chakras. During active mental activity the subtle body of the mind is also being filled up with fiery force. In the same way the mind can be filled up with liquid force, solidity or the force of any other element. It depends on the person's lifestyle and his way of thought.

The contemplating mind enters into harmony with surrounding space and accepts the structure of that space. The active mind accepts fiery nature. The peaceful mind accepts the structure of the smooth surface of water. Stable, unswerving mind becomes as hard as earth.

How can we understand the connection of the active mind with the fiery force, and where can this fire of the mind can be sensed? The mind always accepts the form of the body. That's why, depending on the person's lifestyle and his views on life, the part of the body on which his mind is concentrated will fill up with heat. As a result, metabolism is naturally increasing either in the upper, middle, or lower part of the body.

What makes the mind concentrate its power in this or that part of the body? Our aspirations. If aspirations are elevated, then the fire of the mind is mostly concentrated in the head and the region of the heart. Such a person shows inclinations of goodness. If a person is inclined to over infatuation with acquisitions, fame, prestige and money, that is, has a passionate nature, then, as a rule, the fire of his mind is concentrated in the region of the stomach. But if a person is inclined to bad, mean actions and has vile motives, the fire of his mind is mostly concentrated below, impelling the sex organs to act.

We live in the mind, because we perceive the whole world through the contact of the subtle body of the mind with the objects of the surrounding world. The nervous system and sense organs participate in this process of connecting the mind with the surrounding world. Indeed, in order to be connected with the surrounding world we need the organs of the senses: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin receptors. Our ability to perceive the surrounding world is directly dependent upon how sensitive our sense organs are. Thus, if our mind cannot be set with the help of its sense organs for an object, then perception of this object will never take place.

We have to set our sense organs for perception. However, our sense organs are not perfect. For example, we don't see infra-red and ultra-violet rays, although they do exist. We can observe only a small spectrum of the life in which we live and cannot perceive anything of which we are not aware. At the same time when the mind learns about anything new, it expands the spectrum of its perception. For a person who has realized this, there is nothing unattainable in this world. How then can one expand one's understanding of the world?

With the help of our eyesight we easily understand how this world looks. What information does tactile sensibility give to us? By experiencing heat on the surface of his skin, a person, even if he is blind, can understand that the sun is shining on him. Then, having tuned up with the sun, a blind person can contact the sun with the help of his mind and understand what its form is. In the same way, we, as if blind, don't see the subtle body of the mind of another person; meanwhile that other person is influencing us by his glance or word.

To understand how the subtle body of the mind acts is possible only by associating with someone who himself has already realized this knowledge. Knowledge changes the spectrum of world perception, expanding and deepening it in this way. The detailed knowledge describing the ways the mind acts is contained in the Vedas.

What way of perceiving the world is the most informative? The Vedas state that the most effective method of perceiving the essence of things, however strange it may seem, is not by eyesight, but by speech. In reality, it is only by enriching his knowledge from the inspired speech of another person, that the mind of the listener can actually change, and the person can easily change his character.

Talking in general about the possibilities of the mind to contact the surrounding world, one has to admit that they are truly phenomenal. For example, the mind has the following wonderful quality; if one starts thinking about

anybody, immediately mental contact with that person is taking place. Notice that this contact is quite real. It can be strong, weak, steady or interrupted, depending on concrete relationships. It is agreed that most people have no idea about it, nevertheless, it doesn't stop our interrelation with each other in the mind. For example, lovers, when in separation, live with each other by mental contact. The mind of one relative is constantly connected with the mind of the other relative. If a relative dies, the contact with him gradually becomes dim, and his face is forgotten in time.

Even the picture of the dead differs from that of the living. By looking at the picture of a live person, we are contacting with him on the level of the mind without understanding that. After some training this capability can be developed by anyone. By practicing medical treatment through the Internet for many years, I have developed the ability (just like many other physicians practicing it) to determine not only the character of a disease, but also proper herbs and gems for its healing. In the same way, by talking with a person on the phone it is possible to diagnose the state of his health and give him proper advice.

The subtle body of the mind in each person has its own distinctive peculiarities. Our organism consists of organs and systems. The subtle body of the mind gives each organ its unique character. The characteristic of the subtle body of the mind is not just wandering in the air, but is concentrated in certain organs. It is because of this fact that each organ has its own character. The totality of all these characters form the aggregate character of a person. The main power of the subtle body of the mind is concentrated in the region of the heart. Therefore, to understand a person's character, one should concentrate on the region of the heart, because the center of mental activity is there.

The subtle body of the mind is situated in the region of the heart, not in the head. The region of the heart is meant here and not the heart itself. If the heart is ablated, the subtle body of the mind will remain in the same place. From this region, the subtle body of the mind is distributing its power throughout the whole organism. It fills up all our organs with character, and in addition to that, it distributes its character around us.

By just exchanging glances, people are evaluating the subtle body of the mind of each other without even knowing that. After only one glance we already come to a conclusion on whether a person is pleasant or not. "I don't like him for some reason," "Perhaps, there's something bad in him." That's how we think sometimes, without even having talked to him.

Sometimes the feeling of enmity toward a person can be false. For example, a sick person becomes unpleasant not because his character has become spoiled due to his disease, but because the character of one of his organs has become spoiled due to the disease. Disease of any organ of physical organism always affects the person's mood.

But the root of the evil is not our organism, but our world outlook. This is exactly what forms our character. Right, good character keeps the health of the organism in good shape. Each feature of the character is connected with some organ. Therefore, if a person is always positive and behaves properly, he will

stay healthy. However, when a person thinks ill or is ill-behaved, it affects not only people surrounding him but his own health as well.

The conclusion is the following: the most effective treatment is the treatment with the help of changing one's character. If a person is well-disposed and wishes happiness to all, or at least is trying to do that, he destroys all his diseases. Nowadays this good habit is rarely found. It is not easy to cultivate. Try, for example, to wish happiness in your mind to everybody all day long. It is very difficult.

While communicating with people we always feel this or that emotional state, which somehow or other influences our organs. Knowledge about inner structure of the mind also helps to understand external aspects. External activity of the mind is fully dependent on senses. Just like the mind, the senses have subtle nature. Their activity shows through the nervous system and organs of the senses. That's why damage of the sense organs or nervous system does not provide senses that are subtle by their nature with adequate reflection.

Senses

There are five kinds of senses connecting us to the surrounding world: hearing, sight, smell, touch and taste. According to the Vedas, to feel means to really interact with the object of our perception with the help of the sense organs. For example, we are listening to some good music and feeling pleasure for that. Everybody understands that by listening to music we are interacting with it. However, not everybody understands what it means to feel somebody else's glance on one's own self. Can anyone touch with a glance? It appears that yes, it is possible. The sense of hearing can also work not only for receiving, but for the directed contact with the sound as well. Thus, for example, a conductor purposefully catches the sound of one of numerous violins in the orchestra and estimates whether it is correct or not.

Thinking is the internal activity of the mind, and perception of the world, with the help of senses, is the external activity of the mind. Some people, mostly women, are inclined to heightened sensibility. In such a state, the mind is subject to severe influence of the senses. Others, mostly men, have less sensibility, and are more inclined to thinking. Sometimes it leads to callousness, coldness. There are also people who have both these processes, perception and analysis, in harmony.

It is necessary to learn how to control both the process of perception and the process of thinking, otherwise one can suffer a lot. Sometimes it is the senses that are controlling a person, and not the mind. As a result, we are wasting irrevocable time on trifles. Negatively disposed senses disturb, annoy, and bother the mind. Why isn't there the desire to talk about anything bad when we are in a good mood, but when the mood is bad, so much negative information springs up in the memory?

For example, if they don't give us our salary, we can go on discussing it all day, as if from that it would be given sooner. As a rule, such things are explained by the fact that we attach ourselves to some attractive object, even when it is not accessible to our perception. The mind, being subtle by nature, attaches itself to any idea that attracts it. It can attach itself to a salary, even if it hasn't been paid yet.

Thus, the subtle body of the mind connects with the object of its perception with the help of senses. The senses are the tentacles of the mind, with whose help it perceives the world. The process of perception of the reality surrounding us essentially depends on the mind's disposition. The disposition can be either positive or negative.

Of no small importance in world perception is the degree of our selfishness. If a person is selfishly disposed, his senses want at any cost to get the desired object. This brings only troubles to him, because it is very difficult to overcome suddenly sprung up desires. Thus, the senses become stronger than the will, and we become led by them. A paradox occurs. The senses control the mind, not vice versa as it should be, but when the senses and the mind are controlled, or, at least, there is some endeavor to do it, then life becomes much happier.

It is better to learn to control one's mind with the help of knowledge, rather than by one's negative experience. The difference between the intelligent person and the foolish one is that the first one comprehends everything through studying, and the second one through 'doom', reaping the bitter fruits of his experience. The intelligent people learn from the wise to direct their mind towards positive perception of the world. The unintelligent are inclined to always search for problems in everything. A slight touch of some unintelligent, unbalanced person is enough to make his mind sway towards negative perception. Then come arguments, swearing and seeking out relationships. All this leads only to suffering.

Such is the negative, unhealthy disposition. It is the very reason of development of many diseases. The mind governs the work of all the organs, but when the negative information governs the mind, the corresponding negative influence spreads throughout the whole organism. The intelligent person does not lament or becomes angry at trifles, because he can control his senses and doesn't allow them to get attached to undesirable objects.

Hearing

One who understands that hearing is connected with the deepest spheres of our consciousness is very fortunate. Attaching paramount importance to positive hearing, such a person will without doubt increase the power of his intelligence. According to the Vedas the sound represents a great power. In ancient times there were sages who had Vedic knowledge about the power of sound. With the help of some sound vibrations he could rule different processes in nature. For example, they could cause rain or stop rain.

Mantra is a combination of sounds recommended by the Vedas for influencing this or that object. The knowledge of how to use mantras could be applied only by Brahmans (saints) and kshatriyas (righteous kings). Those were people with highly developed consciousness, possessing high morals and spiritual power, because by mastering mantras a high degree of purity of the mind is required. If the mind is pure, it accepts mantra vibration easily and properly, memorizes it and then reproduces it without mistakes. Only in this case, the mantra genuinely starts working wonders.

What could the priests do with the help of the sound, using different mantras? They could set weather that was needed (to cause rain or stop it, to cause wind and direct it in a certain way, to ignite fire, etc); resuscitate the newly dead; operate aircrafts; cure any diseases; acquire an object that was at a distance of hundreds of kilometers; become invisible for people, and influence the consciousness of animals, birds, insects and many other things. Since descriptions of this kind are not directly connected to the subject considered here, I recommend, to whoever becomes interested in them, to directly address the Vedic scriptures.

Nowadays, when pollution of the subtle body of the earth is so evident as a result of our sinful activity, it is impossible to, practically, take advantage of these mantras. Five thousand years ago, the general picture of the world, including energetic of the mind of its inhabitants, was still comparatively pure. It is not the case now. That's why, on this planet, the ecology of the mind should be given as much care as the preservation of nature. The pollution of the mental energy of the earth is seen in the extremely negative disposition of the majority of people. The difficulties in mantra pronunciation are due to the following reasons:

- People don't have enough purity of the subtle body of their minds to correctly perceive, memorize and reproduce proper sound vibrations.
- Nowadays there is practically nobody left who could teach these mantras.
- Most of the textbooks for such practices are lost.

However something remains. It is still possible to learn how to acquire objects from great distance, ignite fire, and cause or stop rain. To learn all these things, a qualified teacher is needed. Such a teacher would pass to the disciple, who displays the right attitude, the ability to pronounce the mantras properly. The process of teaching, however, would be very lengthy and there is not today a dire need for the above-mentioned arts.

It is remarkable, that, nevertheless, there are mantras, which are comparatively easy to master. These mantras are specifically recommended for our day and age. They purify the consciousness and burn up one's negative karma. These mantras have the Holy Names of God within them. You can find them in Vedic literatures. One such mantra, consisting of the Holy Names of God, is especially recommended for the present time. It is called the maha-mantra (great mantra):

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare

All of us can easily take advantage of this mantra, because there are no strict rules for its pronunciation. It is acting not on the subtle material level, but on the spiritual level, therefore, the main thing is to express your love of God in it.

The contaminations of the subtle body of the mind do not influence the soul. Upon having touched the material world, we start looking at it through the contaminated mind. For this reason, hardly any sounds reach the depth of the soul. In the Vedanta Sutra, there is a description of that special kind of sound, which can directly reach our soul. It is of spiritual nature, and therefore is not dependent on the subtle body of the mind. It penetrates without difficulty. The Vedas state that this spiritual sound, having nothing in common with the material world, is reproduced by recitation of the Holy Names of God.

It is remarkable that this spiritual sound can be pronounced by any person, although with different degree of purity, depending on the degree of faith in God and purity of consciousness. Each of the Holy Names of God brings indescribable good. But there are some especially powerful mantras, which in ancient times were used by great sages for the purification of consciousness. Such is the maha-mantra, leading one to spiritual perfection.

It is astonishing that, unlike the very difficult to master mantras, affecting the subtle body to get the effect from chanting a spiritual mantra is possible by anyone, even without spiritual initiation. Although, of course, spiritual initiation, as well as association with a saintly person, gives unquestionable advantage, leading to quick progress in pronouncing mantras.

Let us continue talking about the senses. As we mentioned before, all the senses belong to the subtle body of the mind, which has five tentacles with which it contacts the outer world: hearing, eyesight, smell, touch and taste. Besides, each of the senses, including hearing, is working not only inwards, but outwards toward the object as well. For example, the ears of a hare are turning and picking up the sound like locators. At first glance it may seem that such tuning is taking place due to the incoming sound. But actually, upon seeing an object, a hare is tuning in the sound with its ears and listening. Even if nearby, a stronger sound is heard, a hare will still be able to ignore it, and with its ears will find the sound from the object of its interest.

We are capable of more, because our mind is developed more than that of animals. For example, there are people who can, upon tuning in, hear somebody else's conversation at a distance of a few kilometers. To develop such mystical

ability, years of special training in the eight step yoga system is required. The Vedas don't recommend developing such abilities in our age. True, such engagements will not leave either power, time or enthusiasm for spiritual practice, which is, unlike any other practice, a special primary need for each person.

Touch

Touch acts deeply enough upon our subtle body. It reaches intelligence. Anything that touches our body, contains certain psychic information. The Vedas state that when the body is touched by dirty items, the consciousness becomes impure. In this case, the consciousness, which pervades everything, including the subtle body, means the subtle body of intelligence. The intelligence has a more subtle nature than the mind. Dirt means the items containing negative connection with subtle body of the mind or intelligence of a person. For example, excrements or dead tissues (nails cuttings or hair) have this kind of influence on the mind and intelligence. If while eating one touches a nail cutting or hair, then some portion of negative energy of the subtle body of their possessor will be passed to us. To avoid this, the Vedas recommend women to cover their heads while cooking.

To purify the mind from contaminating touch can be done through the contact of skin with clean water. For this, one can simply wash one's hands or take a pleasant cool shower. The Vedas state that running water can purify, not only the gross body of a person, but the subtle one (mind and intelligence) as well. It is for this reason, that upon taking a shower, one's mood becomes better and he gets a healthier perception of the world. Thus, when the body touches a pure item, purification of the mind, and even of intelligence, takes place. It is known that Jesus Christ would cure people by touching their foreheads with his fingers.

For purification of intelligence the Vedas recommend to walk barefoot on the earth that was inhabited by saintly persons. Afterwards, for hundreds and even thousands of years ahead, the earth of such a locality will be able to purify the consciousness of the pilgrims. Such holy places are referred to, in the Vedas, by the Sanskrit word, 'tirtha'. Their circumambulation, during pilgrimage is called 'parikrama'.

Why do people come to a tomb of a saint and put some dust or earth from it on their heads?

The power of a saint through his skin (sense of touch) is interacting with that earth. What happens next? The senses, mind and intelligence of the person who put the earth on his head, become purified. When somebody is pouring water taken from the holy place on himself, again, his subtle body is getting purified. Why does a person go to the holy places and walk barefoot? Touching his feet to the holy land brings purification of the intelligence. What is the holy land? Say,

a saintly person lived in some place. Then, the power that he left in that place, turns it into a holy land. It will be purifying our existence for many years.

However, not everybody derives benefit from visiting the holy land. It is necessary to have the proper attitude to, first of all, the saint himself and second, to the place in which he lived. If we are humble and respectful, then the process of purification of consciousness in the holy place is guaranteed for us. Humbly means without egoism, desiring nothing for our self. As far as respect to a saint, it comes from realizing the importance of what that saint has done. Spiritual power and egoism are incompatible, like fire and water. If you have come to a sacred place, it is necessary to throw away egoism and unnecessary pride, and humbly bow down to that sacred place. Bowing down is the action surcharged with spiritual power. Then it is recommended to touch the sacred place with the right hand, and then touch the same hand to the top of one's head or forehead.

Have you ever heard about the treatment of such consciousness? Having experienced unusual happiness, many people who know these methods of purification, tune in every day, exclusively, for the contact with spiritual energy. They regard this as their utmost duty. The spiritual energy, which brings only happiness, is present where souls are: in people, plants, animals, and even in precious gems. Far from trying to be unhappy, the saintly persons know how to become happy. Therefore, from the very morning they tune themselves to accepting only the positive from people. In this way they are cultivating the power of happiness in themselves. For the protection from the bad influence, the saintly persons put the signs of purification of consciousness (tilak) on their bodies, using clay from the sacred places. During this process, special mantras, consisting of the Holy Names of God, are being chanted.

Everything that touches the skin automatically influences the intelligence. For example, clean clothes purify the intelligence and dirty clothes contaminate it. Due to the work of sweat glands a lot of dirt accumulates on the body throughout the day. Therefore, it is recommended to take one full bath, at least, once a day, preferably upon awakening. One cannot get rid of physical or psychic dirt just by sprinkling the skin with some eau-de-Cologne. It is not possible to be healthy either physically, or psychically without performing purifying procedures which, acting through the sense of touch, purify our consciousness (prana, senses, mind and intelligence).

Eyesight

Eyesight influences mainly the subtle body of the mind. The intelligence is influenced less by it. It is grosser than touch, and is connected with the element of fire, or fiery nature. It is evident for everybody. No wonder, there are so many popular expressions, confirming the comparisons given in the Vedas:

eyes filled up with blood;

eyes burning with fire;
hot, burning look;
cold look;
rage, storm, thunder, fulminate;
burn through with eyes;
incinerate with glance, etc.

Sometimes the following happens: you are walking and feeling that somebody behind you is looking at you. You turn around and so it is. Familiar situation? Some feel heat from a glance or feel the glance itself. Having understood this, you can conclude that there is some power coming from the eyes. According to traditional understanding of modern science, light moves only inward toward the eye, and not vice versa. But the Vedas state that with the help of our subtle energy of fire, our organs of eyesight can actively influence the outside.

For example, you are walking down the street and, suddenly, you get the desire to turn around. Upon turning your head you meet with the glance of a person, looking at you attentively from the bus. It is a familiar situation. By analyzing it, one can come to the conclusion that it is no mere chance that we turn around. The cause of this is the power coming out from the gaze.

There are people who can set fire visually to an item. It is unusual, but this kind of experiment was carried out by both Vedic and modern scientists. The Vedic scriptures describe a lot of similar cases. Today such people are rare. The reason for this is that the subtle atmosphere of the earth is very polluted now. Therefore, the possibility of obvious demonstrations of mind's nature are very limited. If such people do exist, they must be living in a sufficiently pure environment (mountains, forests), or actively engaged in spiritual practice, like chanting the Holy Names of God.

Taste

The sense of taste manifests through the element of water. It is not possible to have the sense of taste in a waterless environment. The sense of taste indicates the compatibility of prana in our organism with that of the product we eat. If the taste is pleasant, then the prana of the product harmonizes with the prana of the organism. If the taste is unpleasant, it doesn't. The antagonistic element of prana is not always that bad. For example, very bitter taste, although may seemingly unpleasant, stimulates protective powers and activates movement of prana in the organism. Ayurvedic doctors often take advantage of this peculiarity for medical treatment.

Still, in most cases, food should have a pleasant taste, otherwise, there is a greater chance of getting sick after taking it. Besides these qualities of products,

there are other factors to consider for eating: in what mood the food was prepared, how organized the process of eating is and at what time it is taken. If the food is prepared with love, it acquires positive charge and can exhibit a strong healing effect. It is noteworthy that if the cook prepares the food with love of God, chanting the Holy Names of God while cooking, then such food can gradually purify a person from all sins. Such an approach for cooking food naturally makes for a happy life.

It is very difficult to become happy in this life. Many people are ready to give up everything to become happy. But it appears that by just cooking in accordance with Vedic principles, a person quickly approaches happiness, and then finally reaches it. The Vedas say that if the food is sanctified after preparation, it influences a person's consciousness very effectively.

Smell

This sense acts through the energy of dry substance, or, as it is said in the Vedas, through the energy of the first element of earth. The Vedas say that the first element of earth contains all other elements within itself. It is possible to get in touch with this wonderful first element only through the sense of smell. With the help of the sense of smell one can understand the compatibility of food products with all of the functions of the organism. By controlling the smell of different products, it is possible to define their fitness for individual food consumption and their compatibility with the organism. Thus, one can create one's own diet. Below is the classification of fragrances that has been compiled by experimental method. The Vedic statement, that it is the smell of the substance that contains all of the information about its qualities, is vividly reflected here. Further on we give the method with which you can test food products and more easily select your individual diet.

Individual selection of products and medicine

You can test any medicine or food product to find out if it suits you or not, with the help of smell. Let us examine how we can classify herbal, product and medicinal effects according to smell.

The first test requirement is to test what is to be smelled, in a dry state. The second condition it to smell quickly, and then, by keeping your face away from the test product, try to understand what kind of smell it was. To conduct your diagnosis properly, take advantage of the following description. To more effectively carry out of this test, you need 10-15 minutes of training. Before

testing, food products and herbs should be dried out and ground. Below is the following classification:

The tested food product suits you, if:

- the smell is pleasant, light, fresh, cool;
- it doesn't have any smell, neutral (when shaken up and closely brought up to nose,) the feeling of freshness appears;
- it has a strong smell, but is still light, fresh and pleasant.

The tested food product suits you somewhat, if:

- the smell is pleasant, cool (fresh), but has light tinges of pungency, warmth, astringency, sourness, dustiness, sweetness, bitterness, earthliness.

The tested food product does not suit you, if:

- the smell is pleasant and warm (any freshness or coolness are absent), besides, it can be sweet, sour, bitter, salty, heady(spicy), astringent, dusty, earthy;
- the smell is unpleasant, you don't like it;
- the smell is neutral (when shaken up, dustiness is felt).

The same classification according to qualities can be used for testing chemical preparations as well. However, you should consider that any medicine made by chemical method does not have a subtle body. So, for them testing by smell can be used only with the purpose of verification of their authenticity. The medicine will have either a light or heavy smell. There won't be any other tinges of smell. Pills may have a sour, salty, pungent or sweet smell, but they won't have the smell caused by the presence of prana (fresh or cool, for example).

The smells related to mental energy have different characteristics. How are they different? How a herb is different from a pill is not, perhaps, difficult to understand. Herbs have vivid, very noteworthy smells. Pills have dull smells; they can be strong or sharp, but they won't have tinges of freshness, coolness or brightness.

Thoughts

Let us go back to studying the subtle body of the mind. The mind interacts with the outer world through all five kinds of senses. The Vedas call them knowledge acquiring senses. With the help of these five senses we perceive the outer world. Diseases and health also come to us through these senses, and directly, through

the mind, which the Vedas call the sixth sense. By uttering or having listened to rude speech, we get a great amount of problems. If we see anything which is not auspicious to look at, again, we get problems. For example, somebody is watching a TV thriller and thinking that it won't affect him. However, the subtle body of the mind is accepting everything, and some changes are already taking place in the organism. As a result, on the next day, this person finds himself in some incomprehensible negative mood he didn't have before.

The subtle body of the mind plays an important role in vital functions of the human organism. It rules the nervous system and movement of prana. The moment you see or hear something, the negative information enters the subtle body of the mind, and your breathing stops. If anybody tells a mother 'your son has been taken to a hospital', she can faint from these words. Why can a word so easily knock a person down? When some information about anything which is dear to us enters the mind, it reacts immediately, and makes the nervous system work in a certain way, sometimes even for self-destruction.

So, besides conscious thinking, the mind performs subconscious functions as well. Agreed, we are not conscious of the character of our internal organs. We don't know the emotional state of the liver or the character of the heart. All these are subconscious functions of the mind. The mind is not just a vortex of thoughts in the head. The mind has a certain structure. Don't confuse the structure of the mind with that of the brain. The structure of the mind is invisible to the eyes. However, the invisible mind activates the activity of the nervous system. That is why the convolutions 'stir'. Thus we get the opportunity to develop memory and other intellectual abilities. If everything depended only on these convolutions, then how could they activate themselves? Only in a fairy tale can one pull out himself from the bog by his hair.

The subconscious functions of the mind become apparent in the interaction with the objects surrounding us. Mood is the aggregate of all functions of the mind. If, for example, a person is ill disposed to us, it will be constantly spoiling our mood. Our psychic state is formed by our past deeds. They are coming from the past into our mind by way of the universe and its planets, especially such planets as the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. If we have enmity toward a person, then, no matter whether we know it or not, the negative disposition will in a certain way influence our mood. A simple way to be happy is to wish happiness to all. When wishing happiness in the mind, you have to make an endeavor to recall the person you don't like, and try to really change your disposition towards him.

Man is a master of his destiny, and can by his desire become happy. He just has to desire it. You have only to start wishing happiness to all, and then life itself will gradually start changing. With the help of this simple method, relationships with close people become normal. As a result, there will be the chance to bring up children without conflicts, or to get a job easier. You have only to start wishing

happiness to all, even to the boss who spoils your mood by his association. Suddenly he, by his own initiative, will take up a conciliatory position towards you, and will even give you a voucher to a sanatorium.

If a person is well disposed, everything good comes to him by itself. According to the Vedas, a man becomes happy only with the help of the knowledge of how to become happy. With the help of realized knowledge about what the highest happiness is, we cannot only change our own life, but also help others to change. Without the desire for self-perfection, we will not advance and without the desire to help others become perfect, we won't be able to hold onto for long to the way of advancement.

It is necessary to understand, all of us are closely connected in this world. We live in the subtle body of the mind. Through it our interaction with outer world is carried out. Therefore, we have to learn proper association with each other. In the mind, both good qualities of character bringing happiness and bad qualities causing suffering are shown.

Resentment is a state when we are negatively disposed toward some bad quality in someone else's subtle body of the mind. When we are disposed to a bad quality of somebody's character, negative emotions towards that person form, such as resentment, malice, hatred, despair, greed, and/or lust. All these are activated as a result of mental contact with that person.

For example, you resent somebody. Try to stop feeling hurt. To discard resentment for a moment is easy, but in time it will remind you of itself again. Bad thoughts will come back again, because the real connection with the offender is preserved. This connection is not just an imagination. When I don't have a connection with other people, I am neutrally disposed towards them, but as soon as subtle connection with them appears, the mood changes. Who wants to be in a bad mood? Nobody. Where does it come from then? It comes from the negative contact of the mind with other people.

Sometimes we forget about the person, but the memory is persistently retaining the negative emotions connected with him. As soon as they reveal themselves in memory, we recall that person. Why do these emotions arise? It is because the negative contact is retained. How can we break it? It is very important to know. You have to 'tune in' towards the person you don't like, and start regularly, daily wishing him happiness. You will be thinking about him anyway, whether you want it or not. Why is it not possible to stop thinking about him? It is because there remains a subtle, invisible contact between you and the offender. Therefore, the answer to the question lies not in whether to think or not to think about him, but in how to think about him.

Wishing happiness is an ancient ayurvedic method of treatment. In the beginning, when you start using it, obtrusive negative thoughts will be coming to

you:’ I wish happiness to Vasily Petrovich... with whom I am bored to death. I wish happiness to Vasily Petrovich, I wish happiness to Vasily Petrovich, who certainly is not worthy of being wished happiness.’ The negative contact is still retained in the sub consciousness, and you, somehow or other, by the strain of will, have to overcome it, because it is this negative connection that makes negative thoughts always come into your head.

The thought is able to influence the outer world, and simultaneously to accept information from it. Therefore, the mind is considered to be the sixth sense. All other senses depend on the mind for their activity. Besides, they themselves prompt mental activity. Therefore, when you are trying to wish happiness to the person you don’t like, the mind is intensively evoking something bad about him from the memory.

The real knowledge leading to success is the practical knowledge that allows life to change for the better. If a person has achieved success in understanding the laws of physics and, for example, has created the atomic bomb capable of destroying millions of people, then what is the practical value of such knowledge for himself? In his future destiny he will get nothing, except for sufferings, from this knowledge. The Vedas give knowledge about how to become happy. If you scrutinize them, you can get the understanding of the real essence of life.

So, let us sum up the conversation about the nature of the mind. The thought, being a function of the mind, has a subtle material nature, and the speed of its spreading is thousand of times faster than the speed of light. With the help of it and after special training, a person can travel across the whole universe. On the level of the mind we immediately connect to each other. Therefore, it is necessary to learn to accept only the positive aspects, and not to get stuck on the negative ones. But the main thing is to learn to direct the mind and thoughts into a spiritual channel. This is the only way to possibly get a strong taste for the positive perception of the world and completely get rid of the desire to think badly about somebody.

The Subtle Body of the Intelligence.

Now, let us talk about the intelligence, which has a more subtle nature than the mind. The mission of the intelligence is to govern the subtle body of the mind. The intelligence is the force, containing within itself, the conception of our existence and our understanding of the essence of life and happiness. Since everybody has his own understanding of what happiness is, the qualitative characteristics of the intelligence are different in different people. Depending on disposition, the intelligence can be pure or impure. These two types of intelligence act in completely different ways. Thus, the impure intelligence contains in itself the egoistic conception of understanding happiness. The

intelligence is the force that motivates a person's activity in accordance with his view of life. You've got the desire to learn something, to understand something, and the intelligence is leading you in this direction. The intelligence is the greatest power, available to our consciousness.

According to the Vedas, one has to pay special attention to the development of intelligence. Some people are more inclined to pump the muscles of their body than to develop the intelligence. But the body gets old quickly, and the muscles grow decrepit. The intelligence, however, does not get old. Therefore, the old people are oftentimes much wiser than the young. This is what they are respected for. The power of the mind is apparent in the power of the senses and analytical abilities. If anybody has very developed senses, he is called emotional. If anybody's analytical abilities are developed, he is called clever, and if the intelligence is developed, then he is wise. Sometimes it happens that you are explaining something to a person several times, and he replies: 'I got it'. It looks as if the 'analysis' has worked. But then he does everything completely the wrong way round. This is the symptom of foolishness. If a person can analyze everything, it doesn't mean yet that he has understood everything. For example, a lecturer with a cigarette in his mouth can very be substantially explaining that smoking is harmful. But has he actually realized this, if he himself keeps smoking?

An intelligent person upon having gotten the explanation, turns it into a guiding principle for his life. It is only possible when the intelligence is able to control the mind. If a person, upon receiving the explanation immediately gets rid of bad habit, then the intelligence of such a resolute person is called strong. And, if he on his own understood that, for example, smoking is harmful, it means that due to some work on himself he has somehow cleansed his intelligence. It should be considered, however, that to purify the intelligence is possible only through humble association with the person who already possesses pure intelligence. But when a person's intelligence is dirty, contaminated by egoism, then he accepts only what he likes or what is congenial to him. To get the chance to purify oneself, one has to learn how to be self-critical. By developing self-criticism, one becomes humble and wise. Such a person with strong and pure intelligence can accept the authority of scriptures (for example, the Vedas) and saintly people, so that he would be guided by their instructions for the rest of his life.

How can we learn to distinguish people with pure intelligence from the people with dirty or contaminated intelligence? A certain degree of contamination of the intelligence is inherent in each person. Upon hearing the phrase that the Moslems are better than the Christians, the followers of Jesus will at once prick up their ears and reject this opinion, because their false ego will be touched. The person extolling Christianity over Islam will be rejected by the Moslems. If somebody tells me that I have an unpleasant voice, my false ego will also be affected. Everybody has a false ego, independent of birth or faith. Somebody may have a more developed ego, others a less developed ego. That's why there

is no sense in condemning one's religious feelings or profession. Any criticism, be it even sober, is useless and even harmful, if a person is not ready to hear it. To learn how to patiently accept people with different constitutions of character and different inclinations, one has to cultivate the power of intelligence in oneself.

By developing the purity and power of intelligence in himself, a person learns how to accept things that are necessary to accept. Such is the principle of a successful life. The necessity to be happy compels a person to develop the intelligence. The essence of happiness relies on the ability to be intelligent. Some look for happiness in money or something like this. However, having had his share of trouble, one starts searching for more pure and elevated happiness, by gradually getting rid of such delusions. So, according to the Vedas, happiness is in the ability to be intelligent.

What then is the ability to be intelligent? When the intelligence governs the mind and senses, and not vice versa, then one is situated in the state of happiness. It is only possible when the intelligence is strong. An intelligent person understands how to act properly, relate to people, eat, live, act in life, and understand; what the female body is meant for (what are woman's duties), what the male body is meant for (what are man's duties), how to raise children, how to treat old people, what the difference is between one country and another, why he took birth in this very place and not in Africa, and so on. Thus, a strong intelligence gives the understanding in which direction one should advance in life to become genuinely happy. All questions of development and influence of the senses, mind and intelligence are very nicely revealed in the Vedas. By studying them, we can change our life.

It appears that the intelligence can be trained in the same way as the muscles are pumped. The intelligence gets strength with the help of the practical use of the laws of life. If a person, by overcoming his desires, is trying to act properly (and not as he wants), he is training his intelligence. Some people think such directive seems to be artificial and useless. They like to obey their insatiable senses in everything. In the Vedas such life is compared with that of animals.

Someone may like to read a lot of books. But by theoretical, dry learning, the intelligence is not being developed. Only the knowledge of how to properly behave determines the ability to be intelligent. To develop the intelligence, it is not very essential to read a lot; but one should scrutinize scriptures and apply them in one's life. The power of intelligence is determined by behavior, and the main index of the intelligence is its intent. An intelligent person can be understood by his speech, it is the main criterion in evaluation of the intelligence. Therefore, the Vedic wisdom declares that one can judge a person only after he has opened his mouth and said something.

The intelligence directs our life in a certain way. The highest possible intent is seen in two kinds of people: in the extremely intelligent and absolutely

unintelligent. The unintelligent are being drawn by some force, and they are unaware of why they are drawn into this or that activity. Thus, the unintelligent people are ready to spend all their time and efforts for additional comfort in their apartment and foolish amusements. But the intelligent choose the main goal of their life, set their intent on it, and then reach it. Thus, they become happy in every respect. The contaminated intelligence can be directed only at the goal on a lower level. Depending on how the intelligence is directed, life will be formed. Without changing one's world outlook (the intent of the intelligence, understanding of happiness, life views) it is simply impossible to change life.

Happiness Is Within Us

The true happiness is within us, and its effulgence is called by the Vedas, anada-maya-kosha (spiritual covering of happiness). If one can concentrate on the power of happiness contained within himself, he will be cured from all ailments, obtain happiness, inexpressible by words, and complete tranquility. Moreover, he will always be dwelling in a state of absolute knowledge. The most wonderful thing is that such a person will be completely free from the feeling of thirst and hunger and different sufferings caused by this body. This state in Sanskrit is called samadhi. The person in the state of samadhi doesn't feel the need for anything. He experiences absolute bliss. His pure mind is filled up with happiness, all his organs and systems are filled up with happiness, and everything in his organism is functioning due to the power of happiness. This power, dwelling within each person, as well as he, himself and any other living being, has divine spiritual nature.

The intelligence of the majority of people, as a rule, is aimed at the opposite, not spiritual, but material happiness. The Vedas says that with such a priority to reach the realization of happiness within oneself is very difficult. The power of spiritual happiness is higher than our utilitarian search for material happiness. Living by material aspirations, we cannot realize all the depth and power of spiritual happiness. A person can perceive the highest happiness, living within himself, only by changing material interests for spiritual ones. This is only possible with proper behavior.

So, the power for happiness dwells within every living being. It brings happiness to pure people and sufferings to the sinful. It is called the Supersoul. The Supersoul is the Supreme Soul, God Himself. As for us, we are the souls subordinate to Him and His powerful Soul. The presence of God within us doesn't mean that we ourselves are Him. We are the spirit souls subordinate to Him. We live by being attracted by false material enjoyment, in a material body. Our goal is to reestablish our relationship with God who as the Supersoul (spiritual happiness) is eternally abiding with us.

It is easier to understand God as the voice of conscience. The easiest way to open this voice of conscience within yourself is to choose an elevated saint as your spiritual master. Then the voice of conscience will start talking with us, through that saint. How can you situate yourself properly, so that all this would become a reality? It will be possible only when all the instructions of that saint are humbly followed by us. Such is the simple and effective method of perception of the highest happiness, suggested by the Vedas. Unfortunately, it is hardly accessible for an unintelligent person. Humility is the first symptom of the purity of intelligence. Therefore, the main condition necessary for starting the path to happiness is the development of humility.

The soul, unlike the body in which it is situated, never dies. The soul, beyond the material body, is filled with unselfishness and the desire to serve the highest truth, that is, spiritual happiness, coming from the Supersoul. Sometimes, however, the spiritual soul is trying to search for happiness without resorting to the help of God. Thus self-interest arises. When the desire of selfish happiness prevails over unselfishness, the soul gets the material body and egoism at the same time.

Because we are all souls, nothing is closer to us than spiritual knowledge and spiritual happiness, and egoism is our worst enemy. The soul uncontaminated with egoism is in the state of:

1. eternity
2. knowledge
3. happiness

These are the qualities that attract everybody, because we are all souls. Everyone is attracted by eternity; he doesn't want to die. And actually, the soul doesn't die. Even the subtle body of the mind doesn't die, it is transferred from one gross body to another. Having stopped functioning, the gross body decomposes, and the subtle bodies of the mind and intelligence pass from the old body to the new one.

The soul is eternal and indestructible. One cannot burn or destroy it even with a nuclear explosion. He (the soul) never dies, cannot be destroyed by anyone, and he himself cannot kill anyone. It happens that the embodied soul is forcefully deprived of the body in accordance to his karma, accumulated as a result of bad actions in previous lives. But such actions themselves never go unpunished. By the law of karma, the soul of a murderer will have to suffer for the committed murder in the future, but the karma of the victim of this evil deed will be considered as already worked out.

Activity is characteristic of the soul, he is never passive. When the soul is in pure state of consciousness, his main aspiration is to live for the sake of others. To develop this kind of understanding, one should seriously work on oneself.

True And False Egoism

As a result of the influence of the contaminated intelligence acting upon us, we are inclined toward self-interest. We are always considering what benefit we shall derive for ourselves from this or that. Such is the manifestation of false egoism. By subduing our intelligence with its power, it plunges all our existence into ignorance. Egoism is a great power influencing all of our material existence. It saturates all bodily structures. Egoism can be true and false. True egoism is exhibited when a person's intelligence is free from self-interest. By acting selflessly, one remains a worthy person and rejects selfishness of motives. To make true egoism dominate over the false one, one must with all one's might try to purify the intelligence with good actions, studying of scriptures, and chanting the Holy Names of God. Otherwise, one will have to willy-nilly be led by one's own false egoism, which is constantly showing itself in our life from the very birth.

Indeed, upon having just taken birth, a child starts making prehensile movements with his little hands: 'To me!' Thus the prehensile reflex is there in a child from the very birth. If a child grabs anything, you can only try taking it back from him. Even when seizing a knife, a child is not aware of the danger. This need to catch is coming from egoism. If we try to take back this item, dangerous for his life, immediately a loud crying will burst out. So, it is not difficult to notice how the false ego manifests in a person already, from the cradle. Each of us under the influence of own egoistic desires can get into any most dangerous situation. This prehensile reflex of egoistic desires stays with us for the rest of our life. However, by being engaged in spiritual practice, one can overcome egoistic desires and inclinations in oneself, and thus obtain full happiness.

If anything is taken away from a person, and even though he himself is ready to give it away, his mood can nevertheless be spoiled. It happens even with respectable people, because it is very difficult to control egoism. It is present, and you can't do anything about it. It is simply existing within us. Only a saintly person is free from egoism. He doesn't think he has any possessions. Therefore, it is impossible to make him unhappy, by taking anything away from him.

The false ego says: 'I don't want to give away happiness, I want to take everything for myself. Everything meant for others is bad; everything that is for myself is good.' In the state of mind contaminated by egoism, everybody thinks in this way. It hurts a person when he is told that he is bad. This negative information contacts the mind contaminated by false ego, and pain appears in the mind. It turns out that the false ego has a special function, to evoke pain. All kinds of pain existing in the world appear as a result of the fact that the false ego

is responding to an action it doesn't like. Thus, if anybody carelessly touches us, we can get pain. This pain appears, because the false ego stimulates in the body the reaction to alien interference. Everything that prevents the body from enjoyment causes pain. Depending on what kind of consciousness the false ego is touched with, that is the kind of pain we get. Therefore, pain can be classified in accordance with the structure of our organism:

1. Bodily pain.
2. Pain on the level of prana.
3. Sensual pain.
4. Mental pain.
5. Pain in intelligence.

Bodily pain appears each time the body stops enjoying. Lets say, a microbe has intruded upon our body and starts using it as an object for its enjoyment. As a result, our knowledge acquiring senses (in this case, tactile sensibility) will inform the mind about what happened, and the mechanism activating consciousness for protecting the body from the microbe will be turned on. All this is accompanied by unpleasant sensations connected with bodily activity of the false ego. Upon arising, painful sensations will be immediately extended to prana, senses, mind and sometimes intelligence. Therefore, an insignificant bite of an insect can cause hysterics in an egoistically disposed person.

The following helps to reduce bodily egoism: hatha yoga, cold shower baths, 1 day fasts, and also such treatment as vibro massage. In this way you can help yourself to cure the diseases caused by excessive bodily egoism. Here is a short list of these diseases:

- excessive reaction to irritants (microbes, chemicals) resulting in inflammatory process;
- allergic reactions of all kinds;
- autoimmune processes in organism (when the changed immunity destroys own tissues and organs);
- heightened excitability of skin, intestine, stomach, liver and other organs.

Pain in prana arises when the false ego contacts the life energy of a person. When they force us to do anything without good will, we often experience such psychic feelings as weakness, fatigue, and sickliness. This is what is called prana pain, that is, egoistic reaction of a person to the use of his prana. Excessive egoism on the level of prana (see: activity of prana in ignorance) leads to the following diseases:

- reduction of capacity for work;
- giddiness, weakness, nausea;
- headaches;
- overfills of pressure;

-faint.

To reduce pranic egoism it is good to practice hatha-yoga, pranayama, cold shower baths, cultivation of tolerance within oneself; it is healthy to go group hiking, participate in socially useful, selfless work.

Sensual pain arises when the false ego is contacting the senses. There is no need to comment this kind of pain, it is clear. If they take away our favorite, resentment, despair, anger, irritation, and anxiety appear. It is especially dangerous when egoistic feelings, stirred by the success of others, give rise to envy. The main reason of excessive pain in the senses is greediness which make sensual pain practically intolerable. Egoism overfilling the senses can activate them to such a degree that it will cause hysterics and conditions of stress. Sometimes sensual pain can be so strong that a person dies from heartbreak. Uncontrolled senses can easily bring a person to a disease and even to jail. Sensual pain causes a lot of different diseases:

- neuroses
- hysterics
- neurasthenia
- hormone disorders

To treat the diseases related to heightened sensual egoism one should perform charity, give gifts, ask for forgiveness from everybody he disturbed and forgive all those who disturbed him.

Mental pain arises when the false ego is in contact with the mind. With excessive mental egoism a person experiences a constant desire to talk about the faults of other people. Pain in the mind also represented by in despair, negativity towards other people. As a result, there come isolation, suspiciousness, embitterment. Pain in the mind makes us form different hypotheses that the people surrounding us are so bad. Regular gossiping is the activity directed for the satisfaction of mental egoism. As a result of strong influence of egoism on the mind there appear stagnation of thinking (big difficulties in understanding other person), deterioration of memory of the good and intensification of memory of the bad. Such conditions cause deterioration of mental activity, which in its turn leads to different chronic diseases, and also causes:

- imbecility;
- deterioration of memory;
- obsessions;
- schizophrenia;
- psychopathy.

To reduce mental egoism and rid oneself from the diseases it causes, it is recommended to cultivate conversations on spiritual topics, to try to find good

qualities in others and be lenient to their faults. To work on the egoistically set mind, it is good to practice saying 'I wish happiness to all!' or 'I wish happiness to you!' (if it refers to a certain person). It would be good if a person becomes interested in how the laws of karma work, and the best is if he starts spiritual practice.

Pain in the intelligence appears when the false ego is contacting with one's intelligence. The intelligence filled with egoism cannot tolerate a single word contradicting the views of egoistically disposed person. A wise person also has his adamant view, however, he is not suffering at the time of hearing out anybody else's opinion. His main desire is to understand the conception of the opponent deeper, and having sized it up, to try to explain his point of view.

Therefore, humble sages don't ever have arguments. They converse with deep respect to each other. But when a person is not ready to change his conception of life, a wise man will not disturb him. People whose intelligence is saturated with egoism behave in a quite different manner. They listen to the opinion of others with great hostility and try to prove their own things with irritation in voice. Therefore, the discussions of sages in the Vedas are called the gatherings of swans, and the arguments of fools are called the mob of crows. When crows get together and there is something that doesn't suit them, they make big noise. Thus, by the ability to listen to somebody else's opinion without irritation it is possible to define the degree of humility and selflessness of one's intelligence. The excessively egoistic intelligence is a very great danger. As a result of such inclinations of the intelligence the following diseases can appear:

- alcoholism;
- drug addiction;
- sexual perversions;
- senility.

Worst of all is when under the influence of an extremely egoistic intelligence a person at some point of time starts considering himself God or Messiah.

The false ego is pulling us to degradation, although it is considered that all of us are progressing in our evolution. Look around: many people are hardly ever aspiring for spiritual progress. The false ego is changing our perception of world. It forces us to act not in the way we are supposed to, sometimes even against our will. As a result, we act as if against our own selves. Egoism forces us to grab, appropriate, be greedy, irritated, resentful, to swear, steal, deceive, hate, envy. By activating itself, it evokes the desire to grab. A greedy man does never have anything to give, but he will never refuse to take.

The false ego always calls forth the feeling of rivalry, therefore, if we act with selfishness, the egoism of the surrounding us people will be increasing. On all sides there will be resistance, and life will become impossible. An egoistic person, even without realizing it, starts pulling everything to himself. However,

such behavior inevitably brings one to sufferings. All living beings have false ego, that is why an egoist will meet with conscious or unconscious resistance everywhere. The life of an egoistically disposed person is intolerable. And who is to blame? 'Of course, everybody else, but me', the false ego dictates. Thus appears a mass of dissatisfaction, grudges against everybody, and, of course, then gossips, grumbling, swearing, etc. It awaits everybody who does not purposefully struggle against his egoism.

Therefore we should learn how to behave selflessly, and try not to touch egoism of another person. If we behave tactfully, deliberately aiming at selfless service for the sake of people and are trying to live according to the laws of God, there will be no manifestations of egoism. This is the way to establish contact with pure nature of the intelligence of surrounding people. At our proper disposition even people without elevated qualities of character can help rather than hurt. Every person has something good. To try to see the good in other person is one of the main methods of struggle with one's own egoism. However, if one doesn't keep watch on oneself in association, there will inevitably appear tendency to criticize, negative perception, and this will lead to contamination of the mind. The contaminated mind says: 'I start acting from the position of egoism.' Thus, as soon as you barely touch egoism, your mood spoils right away. Therefore, at any moment you can become immediately contaminated from undesired association.

Many Vedic works explain what the false ego is. Bhagavad Gita (3.38-41) describes the nature of the false ego in this way:

'As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the womb, the living entity is similarly covered by different degrees of this lust.'

'Thus the wise living entity's pure consciousness becomes covered by his eternal enemy in the form of lust, which is never satisfied and which burns like fire.'

'The senses, the mind and the intelligence are the sitting places of this lust. Through them lust covers the real knowledge of the living entity and bewilders him.'

'Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas, in the very beginning curb this great symbol of sin [lust] by regulating the senses, and slay this destroyer of knowledge and self-realization.' It is not always very easy to understand your own egoistic disposition. However, if in our opinion we take the position of duality, of drawing a boundary path according to some indication, for example, a political indication, then by this we show vivid signs of egoism. Covered manifestations of egoism show at every step. For example, one can declare 'I am Russian and therefore I am best of all', or 'I am American and therefore I am even better.' Such mentality is a covered manifestation of egoism which gives birth to all kinds of nationalistic ideas. For some reason, everybody always thinks

that his nation, people or faith are special. Or we say 'Our people are the best,' or, vice versa, in despair 'Our people are the worst.' When duality of such kind manifests, it means there is egoism in it.

We can retrace two main forms of egoistic consciousness:

-I;
-My.

Egoism can saturate with its power not only our gross and subtle bodies (conception of egoism 'I'), but everything which is somehow or other connected with us (conception of egoism 'My'). For example, the strongest egoistic feeling arises within us in relation to the members of our family. We often say about our people 'You are the best', or, vice versa, in despair 'You are the most awful.' In other words, there is no middle, because mine is always special. The Vedas teach us not to consider close people our own property, and recommend not to use them for our enjoyment, but, on the contrary, try to serve them.

The person who considers himself the body (conception of egoism 'I'), and the objects of the outer world his property (conception of egoism 'My'), cannot purify his consciousness from delusions. Moreover, it will be very difficult for him to form up his relationship with close people. Perceiving everything surrounding him as his property, he is gradually losing good sense under the influence of the false ego. It is confirmed in Shrimad Bhagavatam (3.31.30):

'By such ignorance the living entity accepts the material body, which is made of five elements, as himself (conception of egoism 'I'). With this misunderstanding, he accepts nonpermanent things as his own (conception of egoism 'My') and increases his ignorance in the darkest region.'

The true knowledge about how to live properly purifies the intelligence. When under the influence of pure knowledge the false ego is leaving the intelligence, and only the true ego remains there, such intelligence is considered pure. A sage is a person who has pure intelligence and acting not from the position of the false ego, but from the position of his true spiritual nature. Acting in this way, he undoubtedly obtains the highest happiness. Shrimad Bhagavatam confirms this (3.32.6):

'By executing one's occupational duties, acting with detachment and without a sense of proprietorship (conception of egoism 'My') or false egoism (conception of egoism 'I'), one is posted in one's constitutional position by dint of complete purification of consciousness, and by thus executing so-called material duties he can easily enter into the kingdom of God (spiritual world).'

As a matter of fact, there is no so much need in the material. Why? Because happiness has influence on us not from outside (the amount of money, fame, facilities), but from within, from inner disposition of a person. One can have a lot

of money and be unhappy, and, vice versa, one can be a pauper and be happy at the same time. The quantity of happiness always depends on whether we know how to treat it (happiness) or not. If we direct our power to another person and want to give happiness to him, then happiness itself is coming out from us. If one starts living for God, then happiness will be coming to such person from the source of all existing happiness. All who serve God and His servants, are filled up with the power of happiness, coming from the supreme source of happiness.

How To Learn To Wish Happiness To All

When one's mind is in a good state, one sees in others more positive things, rather than the negative ones. A pious person can wish happiness to all, because he himself experiences happiness, coming from other people. However, the majority of people cannot steadily retain this healthy disposition. The same person can be in high spirits today and consider all people to be good, but tomorrow he can be in a bad mood and think quite differently. Change of mood often depends on the influence of our past karma on us, which overtakes us through the movements of planets. When bad influence manifests, immediately lamentations start: 'What rascals are all around!' or, 'I am not lucky, only awful people come across.' The mind of a person is contacting with qualities of the mind of other people, both good and bad. Nevertheless, with the help of volitional endeavor one can wish happiness to all, even while in bad mood, and thus to set one's mind properly, that is, to the good qualities of others. Regular practice of wishing happiness to all gives the opportunity to raise purity of one's mind.

Somebody may think that all this is very simple, and he simply wishes happiness to all, but if in a bus somebody steps on his foot, his wish acquires the opposite character. It is difficult to really, sincerely wish happiness to all. One can, of course, move one's lips, but real happiness will not increase because of this in anybody. One has to be strong inside to be able to wish happiness to all from the bottom of one's heart. When we start practicing this disposition seriously, then on the subtle level a constant positive contact is being established.

In fact, to wish happiness to somebody means to overpower negative influence of other person on oneself. For example, somebody is thinking bad about you, but you are trying to wish happiness to him. But as soon as your minds start interacting, under the influence of his false ego resentment, hatred or envy to this person comes to you. However, with the help of your intelligence you have to overcome this negative force.

It is very difficult. First, try to wish happiness to the people, whose relationships with you are not that bad. Then, upon being inspired, start wishing happiness to all people. There are certain rules on how to do it better. If you have decided to

start wishing happiness, then in the beginning it is better to practice it at home, while staying alone. Do not declare to all your relatives about it, because some of them may think about your idea in the wrong way, and their opinion will influence your determination. As a result, determination will disappear, and you will 'have no time' to wish happiness.

Therefore, until you are not fixed in your aspiration, do not tell everybody about it, to speak nothing about trying to convince somebody else in doing it. For example, if a wife decides at once to take the bull by the horns and do something to make her husband treat her nicely, she can even unconsciously start wishing him happiness. But one day the husband may come back from work angry, so, she will tell him through clenched teeth: 'I've been wishing you happiness for the whole month already, twenty minutes every day, but you, such and such, how are you talking to me!' The secret of this is that one should not expect a quick result, to try at one stroke to set afoot a big layer of destiny.

To make sure this method works, experiment on small problems. The solution of serious problems needs time to accumulate inner strength from long trainings. Besides, you should be very humble inside. When you are trying to be humble, you are visualizing the feet of others. Normally we look over other people or, at the best, into their eyes. Try making yourself feel more humble, unworthy of your loved one's (friend's, husband's, wife's) association. This is, of course, not easy, but having made yourself feel this way, you will soon see positive changes in your relationship. Humility is the power enabling us to have positive way of thinking. If you are humble, nobody will harm you. Humility means you think of yourself lower than another.

Imagine a scene: two kids are arguing. One of them realizes that he is older, another one that he is younger. It happens that when the elder offends the younger, the younger accepting seniority of the other thinks, 'Yes, he is older and more clever, I am really more foolish'. Problems don't occur to such kid. When he is called bad names, he is not resentful. But when the younger says anything to the elder, the elder becomes very angry. Actually there is no arguing between them, because the younger always wins. Within himself he always agrees with rightness of the elder.

When a person made himself feel humbled, nobody can hurt his feelings, as he sees a lot of faults within himself. Besides, such people normally notice a lot of good things in others. To see faults within yourself doesn't mean to loose self-respect. Where there is self pride, resentment is justified. Humility suggests reappraisal of values.

A humble person is more intelligent and pious, than the one who is not. A humble person is more happy, because nobody can upset his balance. It does not necessarily mean he looks worn out and is dressed haphazardly. Humility means

a person respects other people, respects their opinion. Humility shows in the ability to see the good qualities in other person.

According to Vedic knowledge, if we start giving excessive importance to anything good in ourselves, we are developing pride, the opposite of humility. Therefore, only he who doesn't stress his own merits, but highly appreciates the good in others, can be happy. When he is humiliated, he is not resentful, because he knows he does have faults.

So, there is no need to declare to the whole lot that you wish happiness to all of them. Don't do it for show, defiantly or as a deliberate gesture. It will not lead to humility. While wishing happiness, it is very important to be very sincere, to really desire that a person be better. While doing this, do not expect the results for yourself: 'Now I am going to wish happiness to that person, and my relationship with him will improve.' If you make up your mind in this way, nothing will come out. To help a person with your wishing of happiness without thinking about yourself or your gain, that's what is needed. It is very difficult.

When we don't expect advantages, the result comes. This is the secret. When we anticipate advantages, there will be no result. We do have to desire the result while wishing happiness, but not for ourselves. Or else, you will find yourself saying: 'I wish happiness to you. It's already half hour that I've been wishing happiness to you. When at last will you start treating me nicely?' With such attitude, never.

When we wish happiness to another person with some self-interest, our thought by contacting with the subtle plane of that person excites in him the same self-motivated force. As a result, two people start opposing each other. Egoistic thought is set to opposition. An egoistically set person cannot be happy in his life, because everybody around resists it. He says 'I wish happiness to you!' and at the same time he has hidden egoistic motivation. As a result, people around consciously or unconsciously prick out their ears and start opposing him. If a person wishes happiness selflessly, then other people will be undoubtedly imbued with reciprocal feeling to him. In some time selflessness will start showing in them, to a greater or smaller degree.

To choose the right position of body while practicing this technique is of no less importance. One should straighten one's back and stretch out. When one is bent all his energy automatically goes down. In this way he won't be able to wish happiness to all in an effective way, with great selflessness.

Questions And Answers

Question: If somebody wishes happiness to the person who doesn't know about it, will his condition still improve?

Answer: Yes, it will. In the book 'The Life of Saints' there is a description of one incident. A traveler was passing by not far from the place where Sergey of Radonezh lived at that time. On recalling him, the man decided to offer his respects to the saint by bowing down. At this moment Sergey of Radonezh was taking his lunch. When the man was bowing down, Sergey rose up from the table, turned towards the direction the man was located and also bowed down. Then he returned to the table and continued his meal. Nobody understood what happened, because the man was at a distance of many kilometers away from the monastery, so, nobody could see him. Nor did anybody knew that he was passing through that place. In some time everything became clear. This is another proof of the fact that a person with pure mind perceives the actions and thoughts of another person at great distance without difficulty.

The same can be said about interacting of our thoughts with other people. Since our mind is not pure enough, thinking about each other simply changes our mood, and we normally cannot understand why. Thus, subconscious contact does exist, but due to the lack of purity of our consciousness it is very difficult to consciously associate with another person with the help of thought. Nevertheless, by wishing happiness to another person, we still influence him while thinking about him. Certainly, by thinking good about a person we also make him feel better.

Question: Is it necessary to form a mental image of the person to whom you wish happiness?

Answer: Yes, you can try imagine the object of concentration of your attention. However, not everybody will always succeed in it. When we try to imagine another person, it often happens that due to the lack of power to concentrate on this very person we 'catch' with the subtle body of our mind some other things or other people, and the image becomes vague. In most cases we see a combination of some images. Such is a deep nature of the mind: it has the tendency to be wandering, lacking in self-discipline.

Still, if we come to love another person or develop a strong desire to help him out of sense of duty, then the deep nature of the mind will be contacting with him, irrespective of whether we can remember his image at the present moment or not. Thus, love subdues even the mind. No doubt, when we are thinking about a person, we create the contact that causes psychic changes in both of us.

Such influences appear mostly among loving people, so it is no mere chance that in popular songs they sing something like: 'My words are your words' or 'I've got mad, I need her', etc. There is no doubt, the contact on the mental level along with the changes in consciousness do take place. The only question is whether we are able to understand their origin. As for the ability to change the life of another person with the help of your mind, it is not that easy. For this purpose

one should learn how to wish happiness to all. According to the Vedas, the most effective way to change your life and the life of your close people is to chant the Holy Names of God with love and faith.

Question: How to purify the mind?

Answer: There are two ways of purification: through sufferings and spiritual knowledge. Both ways are real, both bear result, but the purification through spiritual knowledge is much deeper and faster. The essential difference between these two methods is the depth of purification of consciousness. The spiritual knowledge gives a person the unique opportunity not to repeat the mistake he made before, for in the process of purification this knowledge is taking away even the propensity for sin. The purification through sufferings gives a person the opportunity to avoid problems only until he starts doing the same, as the propensity to repeat mistakes is still there within him. Therefore, purification through spiritual knowledge is superior. It changes one's world outlook (understanding of happiness, thinking, goal of life). The best way to get the highest spiritual knowledge is to get on the path of that kind of love that is most pleasant to the mind: love of God.

Lecture Two

Law of Karma

All our life and activity is connected with outer world. Still, it does not depend only on environment and the people surrounding us, but also on the actions performed in previous lives. What we perform can be compared to a snowball that we are pushing along the snowy path. We hope to have it rolled to a certain place. The longer we are rolling it, the heavier it is becoming. We are rolling the ball of our sins further and further, its weight is growing. After all it is no more liftable. Since we cannot roll it to the marked place, our plans ruin.

This is the way of the law of karma: sooner or later one has to suffer for what he has done. One has to understand that he should never act thoughtlessly, whatever circumstances might be, because any activity somehow or other leads to certain results, sometimes the unexpected ones. Any action influences the environment and people. This influence is fixed in the subtle body of the mind of the one who performs it.

How does it happen? By performing some activity we are creating a certain field around ourselves, either subtle or gross. This field is influencing the environment. For example, to saw down a tree is a gross influence. To say something to somebody is a subtle influence.

By influencing the environment we agitate it. This agitation comes back to us like a boomerang. These processes are invisible to our eyes, they are happening on the subtle plane.

The subtle influence is also an influence. The subtle body of the mind is also material. We just cannot see it. Just like when they saw down a tree, in the same way on the subtle plane they can 'saw down' a person with words, and the person can get sick or even die. The victim is feeling that on the subtle level he is being cut with the knife of abusive words. Sometimes it can be even more painful than if he were cut with a real knife. At this time the mind of the violator is resounding with the thoughts of the victim: 'For what? You won't get away with that!' The feeling of forthcoming atonement arouses within the violator. Although it may not arouse right away, in time this feeling is becoming very distinct. Thus, the offender will first be suffering in the expectation of the atonement, and then, when the right time comes, in full measure. Nothing goes unpunished: this is how the law of karma acts.

Sometimes in the hour of atonement sinful people start repenting and cry to God for forgiveness. It happens due to the fact that at the time of difficulty one's perception of the laws of this world becomes sharper.

In the fuss of workaday routine these laws become forgotten. Normally people stagnate in the prejudice that this life is unjust. Nevertheless, everybody tries to arrange things in such a way that the situation be favorable. If this world is unjust,

what's the use of aspiring for the better? Isn't it unreasonable? So, all hope for the better, nobody wants anything bad, and at least in childhood we don't wish evil to others. In other words, subconsciously everybody understands that the law of justice does exist. Why then the life of one person is heavy, and that of another one is happy? Why is it that one person wallows in sins, while the other one does good without difficulty? It turns out that everything depends on our past actions.

Classification of Karma

Karma (the law of cause and result) can influence on us in three different ways:

1. Pious karma is acting on those who performed pious deeds and lived selflessly in the past.
2. Impious karma (vikarma) is acting on those who performed impious deeds and lived selfishly in the past.
3. Absence of material karma (akarma), that is, the activity on the spiritual platform, applies to those who served God with love and devotion.

In the same way, by our desire we can act in either of these directions and create karma of three kinds for ourselves.

The essence of pious activity, or pious karma, is in the fact that a person works not for himself, but for the real welfare of other people.

If, however, a person acts for his own satisfaction, wants anything for himself and ignores the interests of others, such activity is considered impious. It contradicts the laws of life and is called vikarma. The laws of the universe require that one lives and acts not for himself. If a person ignores the laws of the universe, he is accumulating sinful power in himself.

There is also akarma, the absence of material activity, that is, the activity on the spiritual platform. Somebody may think that akarma is inaction. Actually, material inaction does not exist in this world. For example, a person has decided not to take part in the events, and thinks he is inactive. However, such inaction can create the situation in which his wife and children will be hungry. Another example. A person does not interfere when somebody is being assaulted. As a result of such inactions people suffer. Therefore, one who causes sufferings by his inaction will have to answer for this. In this world even inaction can be a sinful action (vikarma) for which one should suffer sooner or later.

Akarma is more often understood as the spiritual activity which in no way comes into contact with material energy. Therefore, it is not subordinate to its laws. The person on the platform of akarma directs all his activity towards the

association with God. Such activity is taking place on the spiritual platform, and is not understood by materialistic people. One who practices it ranks higher than a pious person, what to speak of an impious one.

One who lives for the sake of material welfare has hard time in understanding what the activity on the spiritual platform is. However, the Vedas state that such activity does exist. Externally people following the spiritual path perform their usual duties just like all others, but internally, in their mind and intelligence, they are immersed in the service of God. As a result, all their external activity also turns to be on the spiritual level. From this we can conclude that the activity in the mind is a very important aspect in our life.

According to the Vedas, the word is also an action. Therefore, we should know how to form our association with people around, depending on different circumstances. With proper disposition our actions, thoughts and words can help us come to a happy life. On the other hand, with improper disposition sufferings are unavoidable. To see that the activity performed in the mind, or by the speech and body does not bring sufferings, one should learn how to think and act properly. So, in detail and by numerous examples the Vedas describe how by acting in this world one can avoid sufferings and attain happiness.

The main condition for obtaining such knowledge is studying the Vedas in a humble mood under the direction of a saintly person. The Vedas give the foremost significance to the process of humble hearing from the one who has perceived the wisdom of spiritual knowledge. It appears that hearing from a saintly person itself burns down the sins we accumulated in our previous lives. It evokes the enthusiasm to act properly.

By simply hearing from a saintly instructor one destroys all his bad karma. It is very difficult to believe in this, isn't it? It seems by hearing we are not performing any activity. To realize that hearing is the most important aspect of our activity is the main secret of spiritual practice. Actually, to be able to listen to the instructor in a humble state of mind, accepting all his remarks and discarding one's own opinion on the subject is extremely difficult. Only a very intelligent person can do it. Since humble hearing from a saint opens quick path of progress, all our other activities should be directed for the development of this humility. Only in this case we can be sure that our life will not be spent in vain.

What Disposition Will Bring Us To Happiness

Let us return to the activity in the mind. The center of the mind is situated in the region of the heart. It is for this reason that the words bearing happiness are like a balm for the heart, while the words bearing suffering cut the heart like a knife. However, on our own, without the help of the people with clear consciousness, it is difficult to understand which association will bring happiness to us, and which won't. For example, flattery is also like a balm for the heart. However, in reality it caresses person's egoism, not his intelligence. Therefore, in most cases praise turns to be a test, not a support.

A person's interaction with the outer world is taking place on the level of the subtle body of the mind. When a person reacts in his mind to the outer world by pondering over what is happening, he is getting from this either health or disease. Everything we write or speak somehow or other will have either positive or negative consequences. If, for example, here I expound any false knowledge leading to an inauspicious activity, the consequences of this will be first of all pernicious for myself. Nevertheless, a person cannot avoid mistakes in his opinions or actions. To avoid actions that would bring him to sufferings, he should collate his every step with scriptures. This is the way the intelligent people act. When a person is performing actions, he is sowing the seeds of their consequences in his heart. In the heart means in the depth of the subtle body of the mind.

The activity of a person is governed by the intelligence. The intelligence consists of the knowledge, showing its power. The intelligence directs and motivates us for the activity. The aim of life is the catalyst and force increasing the potency of the intelligence. If one's aim of life is good, one's intelligence is becoming more positive and pure in the process of activity. If one's aim is bad, his intelligence is becoming contaminated in the process of activity. It is then considered dirty.

The contamination of the intelligence shows in different ways, for example, through pride, self-love, boorishness, hypocrisy, ignorance, but the essence of all these cases is one. The person contaminated by the ignorant, egoistic understanding of happiness contaminates his intelligence by his own uncontrollable egoism. If a person is egoistic, he always acts for his own pleasure, thus creating around himself the corresponding psychic force in the psychic sphere of his life. When coming across this force, another person is entering the same state, or, at least, he has to fight for his right disposition. If a person doesn't know how to protect himself from dirty association, he inevitably becomes subject to the contamination of intelligence.

If, however, we are doing anything good, people around us dispose themselves to good. Thus, the people around get purified. When we are doing anything bad, we are spoiling the consciousness and mood of the person we are associating with. Thus, we contaminate him. Therefore, bad thoughts are also actions for which we will have to answer. By the law of karma, a person having bad thoughts, without desiring them, will find himself among the people who will always be spoiling his mood.

How does the contamination of consciousness take place? Let us analyze a simple, even a commonplace example. A drunkard is lying in a puddle. A sober, healthy and normal man is passing by and starts thinking about the drunkard with disgust. Thoughts with a tinge of contempt are a symptom of contaminated state. It seems that the sober man by thinking bad about the drunkard behaves properly. However, we should know that when a person thinks negatively about somebody else, he proceeds from egoistic positions, and that's why he is not right. So, what use will this seemingly sober person derive from such thoughts? No doubt, thinking bad about somebody, we act quite unsoberly, because we contaminate our consciousness and thus call down sufferings.

Another example. A usual story, a husband and wife have had a quarrel. One of them starts being angry and speak with spite, another one resents in reply and also starts speaking out 'impartially'. It seems that the one who has started the quarrel is not right, but, actually, both of them are not right. In this way one person involves another one in sinful activity and sufferings. One person is the impulse for the conflict, the other one under the influence of his/her bad destiny has got into the situation in which he has been forced to become wrong. What is his wrongness? That he/she is irritated, angry and abusing. He who acts with contaminated intelligence inevitably commits a sin, even if he is not the initiator of the conflict. Thus, being unable to properly relate to what is happening, we are unknowingly contaminating our consciousness. As a result, we have to wait for sufferings. Where does this bad destiny come from? From such behavior that took place in the past.

How does it happen that from the bad mood of one person other people suffer? It happens, because all these people that got under the fire of the scandalist themselves had bad disposition in the past. In the past they themselves behaved wrong, and now they have to suffer for that. One cannot avoid the law of karma. It turns out that one person is a puppet participating in the performance of somebody else's bad karma, and, of course, he himself is earning bad karma by that. There are so many such performers of our bad karma around us! However, despite the fact that there are so many people behaving in an unrestrained manner, we still have to with all our might tune in ourselves positively and wish happiness to these people.

Besides, there is inner force that involves us into vikarma, sinful activity. It is selfishness, self-interest. In other words, it is the state of consciousness when a person's intelligence is in ignorance. Sometimes selfishness acts in a very reserved way. It seems to us that we are doing something important and useful for all, but really we are working exclusively for our own sake. How to verify it? Very simply. If after having done anything we are waiting for a reward, then it means that the motive of our activity was egoism, not selflessness. Upon having done something and not received a reward, we start considering other people to be unworthy of our association. In this way we earn our sufferings.

An egoistically disposed person is inclined to use mistakes of others for his own satisfaction. Thus, if a person is instructing another person while on the position of the contaminated intelligence, his 'advice' will sound in approximately this way: How dare you to behave in this way? How dare you to live in this way at all? You are simply a fool! If while saying anything unpleasant a person is feeling hatred or malice in his heart, then he is performing a sinful activity. Even despite the fact that he is telling the truth. However, if a person is kind, then, while strictly accusing anybody, he is doing it without malice in his heart, with the desire to help. In this case, the person is not doing anything impious. On the contrary, he is of benefit to both, himself and others. His activity is pious, because it is not directed to his own satisfaction, and his instruction will bring benefit to another person. Every second of our life we have to be aware of what we are doing, for whom, with self-interest or without it. We should always be thinking about the consequences of our actions.

All our actions can be divided into two categories: selfish and selfless. The Vedas state that that self-interest ultimately brings to sufferings, and selflessness to happiness. Intelligent people know that selflessness increases when a person is aspiring for understanding his spiritual nature, for spiritual happiness coming out from the depth of his heart. Selfishness increases from the strife for bodily enjoyment (food, sleep, acquisitions, sex) which according to the law of karma bring one to animal existence. True, all their life long animals are satisfying their bodily necessities, and nothing more. They are not able to act selflessly. Haven't you ever met people with the same inclinations?

Everybody wants to be happy. However, people understand happiness in different ways. A man has the choice. Either he strives by all means to earn as much money as possible, to get as much sexual pleasures as possible, or he strives to perceive the mystery of divine structure of this world. If a person gives priority to money and material valuables he loses spiritual happiness. Money can, of course, be also used for spiritual progress. For example, they can be donated to a temple, or saved for visiting holy places. Agree, however, that mostly they are used for the satisfaction of bodily necessities. If a person dedicates all his activities to the happiness of his body, he is gradually losing the understanding of piety and pious activity. That's why each of us has to work out of the sense of duty, without thinking about reward and especially without aiming at increasing our comforts.

Only in this case we can expect to get a good karma. You cannot escape the truth – if you want real happiness, think about your spiritual progress.

Spiritual happiness means love, kindness, happiness in work. Not for one's own self, but for the sake of God and in accordance with His laws. When one acts in this direction, he undoubtedly gets benefit. If, however, one strives to get benefit by acquisition of any material things, comforts and fame, he only accumulates more problems in his life. One automatically objects: this is exactly what all are striving for. Yes, this is true, but, according to the Vedic knowledge, an excessive interest in one's own material welfare is the quickest way to sufferings. Even not only sufferings. Many people living by hopes for the future material happiness unknowingly for themselves start committing sins. How come that the person aspiring for selflessness all of a sudden acquires happiness, and the person striving for happiness in the form of material prosperity, gets sufferings? Let's analyze it.

The subtle body of the mind interacts with outer world through senses. This is sensual activity. The senses are the tentacles of the mind. The Vedas state that the senses also have material structure, and are meant for the perception of the object, to which the mind is directed. The senses can either give us happiness, or steal happiness from us. It depends on the disposition of our intelligence. The egoistically disposed intelligence searching for some acquisitions with the help of the senses always brings only troubles and sufferings. On the other hand, the intelligence aspiring for the happiness in selfless activity, always brings happiness.

How can the selfishly disposed intelligence bring us to suffering? Let us analyze this question on very simple examples from life. Let's say, there is a

need to go to a store and buy a loaf of bread. What will be the behavior of a selfishly disposed person and that of the person with a proper disposition?

A variety of different products appear before our eyes in the supermarket. A selfishly disposed person thinking about satisfaction of his desires can even at a quick glance at the products be drawn by something. There is nothing bad in this, of course. However, a strong desire to buy and possess that something is growing, and then the senses are getting attached to that object of desire. This is already real danger, because from that appeared attachment unexpected expenditures will arise.

It seems that our senses are meant for bringing happiness to us. In reality, however, egoistic senses are gradually pulling out all the money from our pocket. Who will suffer from that? Our relatives, friends and we ourselves. What should we do to stop the senses from disturbing us, and to make them help us? For this we have to try to do everything out of sense of duty, and not for the satisfaction of our own senses, or self-interest. By acting in this way we gradually are getting used to think about common welfare, not about our personal one. Gradually we will come to the understanding that the common welfare can be achieved only if we do everything for God and spiritual progress. Strange it may seem, but with such disposition, be you either in a shop or at home, the senses are not getting attached to unnecessary things, they don't take away our strength and money. This mechanism works not only in the case of shopping, but also in relationship with our relatives, friends and colleagues. We should always learn to control the egoistic activity of our senses, because it always inevitably brings sufferings to everybody.

Still, can a self-interested person reject the desired? No, he cannot. When the senses have got attached to the desired it becomes impossible to refuse buying it. Moreover, uncontrollable senses give birth to various harmful habits. As a result, money are becoming less, and there comes the necessity to work more or to deprive one of the relatives in means. In this way gradually the tension in relationship of the egoistic person with his relatives is appearing. As long as the person was not obsessed by the acquisition of unnecessary things everything seemed to be going on well. The fact remains, selfish disposition will sooner or later let know about itself. Self-interest always gives birth to financial problems and problems in relationships.

Should we give so much significance to undesirable purchases? Yes, we always have to be aware of what is happening. In the beginning, the negative disposition demands satisfaction of some small whims, but then it brings to big problems. Thus, buying a trifle will not cause problems, but if one gets into his head that one has to urgently construct a country house, buy a fancy car or new luxurious apartment, then it becomes serious. Small self-interest means small purchases, but big self-interest draws big purchases. It can happen that creating of material comfort is really necessary. One should remember, however, that even in this case the spiritual interests should be given the priority. It is due to occupation in spiritual practices that a person increases his good karma and gets, for example, the opportunity to improve his dwelling facilities.

So, a small self-interest is gradually turning into a big one. Big purchases made out of mercenary motives are always big problems. It is difficult to be satisfied with what has been achieved. An observant person understands, however, that the tendency to look for happiness in material things always brings to tension, fatigue and diseases. Look around, the majority of people are in pursuit of material boons. What do they come to? To the increasing lack of personal time, the increased fatigue, lack of time for upbringing children, family breakdown, and, as a result, to the unhappy destiny. Whoever lives for the sake of coming and inevitably going material boons, forgetting about spiritual progress, faces these problems.

That's why one should look for happiness in spiritual association, selfless work for the common welfare, love to the people in general, and the main thing, in love of God. One does not need anything for this, except for striving for happiness. Certainly, just aspiration is not sufficient. One also needs proper association, due to which one gets the inspiration to follow the rules of spiritual life. The greatest happiness, of course, one can achieve in the process of perceiving God. Unfortunately, these truths cannot be understood by the majority of people who have strong desire to first of all build their own material happiness. The Vedas state, however, that the material needs should be satisfied out of the sense of duty, while all one's strength should be directed for spiritual progress. When one is busy with a big thing, then a small thing is worked out by itself. The series of books *The Laws of Happy Life* describe the mechanism of it. Here we will not scrutinize how the person who has changed his understanding of happiness is gradually coming to real happy life. The aim of this lecture is to show how the law of karma influences our life.

So, practically all people think that happiness is when you have a lot of money, good status in the society, big opportunities to engage in sex and good rest. Such ideas are eradicated from the consciousness with great difficulty. On the face of it, material enthusiasm really excites the feeling of happiness. Why then the majority of people are deeply unhappy? It is because material happiness has the nature to be always destroying under the influence of time. Agree, we are all getting old, as well as everything surrounding us, e.g. apartments, possessions. Even business relationship are gradually fading and breaking.

To feel oneself happy, even materially, one should be always experiencing the increasing of happiness, because we can never rest on laurels. When anybody is striving for material pleasures, he comes to the realization that their increase inevitably brings to a more strained labor, tiresome endeavors to reach a higher status in society, etc. For the increasing of spiritual happiness, however, money or status in society are not required. It can be acquired by the performance of good deeds, and just they themselves can already make one happy.

Even a poor man can always wish happiness to all, and due to this good deed he will be more and more happy with each day. This action doesn't require any additional financial expenditures. When you start practicing it, you will very soon feel how the amount of happiness increasing. Nevertheless, to practice wishing

happiness to others is quite difficult, because it requires firm faith that it will really work.

Agree, all of us aspire for happiness, but each of us understands happiness in his own way. Surely, not any action leads to happiness. Some people go to it in a roundabout way, thinking that before becoming happy they should acquire wealth. Others simply wish happiness to all and become happy very quickly. They certainly also work. Their work is aimed at bringing welfare to others, not at becoming rich. No doubt, money also comes from selfless work, because work always bring means of livelihood. Besides, due to proper disposition (work for the common welfare, not for one's own pocket), this money will not excite in us a strong egoistic feeling. Thus, by the law of karma, striving for money bears suffering, and striving for selflessness brings happiness and prosperity. Why then still haven't all become selfless and happy? The reason is that to understand these truths is very difficult.

The majority of people sincerely think that in order to obtain happiness i.e. wealth, prestige, comfort, fame and power), one has to work hard and earn money. Others think that the best way of obtaining happiness is fraud and financial machinations. According to the Vedas, both are going along the path of bad karma. The statements that a man cannot live without food, work, family, etc, are fair. Surely, we cannot completely reject material needs. It is quite natural, to make efforts for maintenance of life. However, one should not search happiness in money. The only way of obtaining the true happiness is in spiritual perfection. Material activity should not be first and foremost, but secondary.

How People Normally Spoil Their Destiny

Let us continue the conversation about the search of real happiness. As it has been mentioned, one should aspire to get spiritual happiness, that is, the happiness that comes from selfless behavior by the mercy of saintly people and God. We have come to the conclusion that one should regard everything material with great caution. This doesn't mean one should reject everything material.

Both, possessions and business relationship can be also used for the common welfare in the service of the highest truth. One should see, however, that his feelings are not firmly attached to material pleasures, otherwise sufferings will be inevitable by the law of karma. Why? The senses after having attached themselves to the desired and failed to get it, immediately come to the state of anxiety. As it was mentioned before, the senses cannot be completely satisfied by material pleasures, because material pleasures cannot be constantly increasing. By the law of karma, the material happiness of even the richest people changes to sufferings.

All get sick, die, spoil their relationship with relatives and friends. Money will not help in this.