



INSIGHT INTO INTUITION

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Intuition is the mystic way to Liberation, and therefore, an aspirant must have a deep insight into what it means and how to develop it. Intuition is latent in every individual. The intellect is actually a conditioned aspect of intuition. If the intellect were to be liberated from the pressure of egoistic impressions, it would swim in the milky ocean of *sattwa* or purity emerging from profound *samadhi* (super-consciousness) and become intuitive. The purpose of human existence is to discover and realize the intuitional function of the mind. Until this happens, the mind is working in the realm of illusion.

In order to better understand the role of intuition, consider an

experience you might have in a dream. Suppose one night you dream that a snake is chasing you. Frightened by the snake, you say to yourself, "What should I do? Should I try to destroy this snake or should I run away?" You may think of the cleverest ways of escaping it, but the truth is that the most effective technique is simply to wake up. This waking up from dream is like developing intuition.

In your daily life you often are able to use your intellect to overcome the negative aspects of the situations you encounter. Unfortunately, as soon as you overcome one negative aspect, another one develops. Many times you thank yourself for your bright intellect. But

many times your intellect becomes so confounded that you can do nothing. You discover that you are always moving from one layer of illusion to another.

The moment you understand that what you actually need to do is to wake up—to have intuitional knowledge—you have placed your foot upon the first rung of the ladder of Yoga. But until you understand this, religion and mysticism remain at the primary school level.

Another illustration can help you gain a better understanding of intuition. Recall the parable about the blind men who tried to study an elephant. One of them put his hand over the elephant's big foot and said that the elephant was like a pillar. Another one touched its body and said that the elephant was more like a wall. The third one felt the elephant's ear and said that it seemed like a winnowing fan. They each had different views about what an elephant was like. And this is just how the intellect works—it studies the world in fragments.

You may become intellectually involved in studying biology, zoology, or astronomy, and you may learn a great deal about these subjects and become an authority on them. Yet in spite of all your accomplishments, your intellect will only be able to bring you a tiny fragment of the cosmic whole. If you were to compound the knowledge that all the scientists throughout history have amassed, it would not give you even an iota of what Reality is.

If those blind men had sat down and combined all of their knowledge about what they had observed, they would have come to the conclusion that an elephant must be a ridiculous sort of animal indeed. Their perception that an elephant must be made up of a wall, a pillar, and a winnowing fan would be totally inaccurate.

Similarly, if you were to take all the books that have ever been written and all the knowledge that has been gathered by the brightest intellects together, you still would not have an inkling of what the Universal Self is all about. The blind men needed to have eyes so that they could see the elephant. Much in the same way, the aspirant needs intuition in order to discover the Universal Self.

The intuition highlighted here is not the "intuition" of common parlance. For example, when you are thinking of something and suddenly someone tells you what you were thinking, you praise his intuition. Such intuition is ordinary. In Vedanta,



intuition is termed *Brahmakaravritti*. It means that the mind has developed a profound insight into the illusion of objects by understanding that God or *Brahman* is the Reality behind everything. The truly intuitive mind flows only towards *Brahman*. Its only ruling thought is *Brahman*.

When you possess such a mind you are not distracted by objects because you know that they are not real. Your experience of those objects is only indirect. For instance, when you are walking in the desert and think that you see water, you know that it is only a mirage; you are not deceived. The vast majority of people feel that what is experienced by their senses is very compelling proof that everything around them is real—but this is not actually so.

What you experience through your senses must travel through many layers. Viewed in one way, we can say that your mind becomes externalized and then influences the brain centers to prompt the senses to contact objects. Or interpreting your experience in the reverse manner, we can say that the objects bring certain impressions to the senses, which then present them to the brain centers, which then transmit them to the mind and intellect for evaluation.

At the outcome of this process you say, "Oh, now I know the object. I have experienced it. It is soft, it is colorful, it is tasty." You have to realize that this is not a direct experience. Rather, you are using instruments to

determine what you "know"—not mechanical instruments, but the subtlest instruments given by nature: the mind, intellect, unconscious, and senses.

Therefore, the experience of any object through this indirect process is not intuitional. The intuitional experience arises when you divest yourself of all instruments and develop the awareness of the Self. When you do this, the entire universe fades, and there is a oneness of experience. You realize; "I am all. All is one. I am *Brahman*." This is known as *Brahmakaravritti*. This is also termed *aparoksha-anubhuti* or direct intuitional experience.

When you understand the nature of intuition, you have solved a profound mystery, and all problems become insignificant. You will not have to worry any longer about what you are looking for in life or what your goal should be. If you have not understood intuition, your mind will be constantly attached to and pressured by the idea that today you have not resolved your problems, but tomorrow perhaps certain solutions will come.

For example, you might say, "I'm not feeling happy today, but surely something better will happen the day after tomorrow or by the end of the week. Life has become so boring. I hope that something exciting will happen. Oh God, send me some excitement." The mind is constantly looking forward to the future, and the present is never appreciated. Thus, people never live in the present.

If you want to develop intuition, do not let your mind shift either to the past or to the future. Do not let yourself be deluded by the idea that the future is going to bring you a better external situation in which you will be truly happy, and in which you might even find a spiritual path that will lead you to *samadhi*. Do not be deceived into thinking that things may someday be so wonderful externally that the moment you sit down you will just automatically enter into super-consciousness. If you think like that, you are moving from one illusion to another. Spiritual evolution depends upon how you transcend the world internally through understanding, not upon how things happen externally.

For example, if a person were to sit down on the sand by the ocean and decide to stay there without going into the water until all the waves died down, he might end up sitting there for a very long time. In the case of the ocean, it is true that the waves will subside at times, but in the case of the world process, the waves never calm down; they are always surging. As soon as one situation is resolved in life, another one arises. This goes on constantly and, as a result, your psycho-physical personality is ever in a state of agitation.

And so, in order to develop intuition, you must not succumb to the illusion that external developments are important and that you are dependent upon them. Instead, you must develop the art of transcending everything,

no matter what the situation may be. For example, if it is a cloudy day, consider that day glorious. If the sun is shining, feel that is wonderful. If it is raining, that too is wonderful. Every situation has its own beauty.

When in winter, a person thinks of spring; and when it is summer, he thinks of winter. You might be suffering because of a terrible heat wave and think how wonderful it would be to see snow. But then, when there is snow everywhere, you are chilled to the bone and dream of a beach somewhere in the tropics. This is called illusion. What you need to do is practice equanimity. This practice will bring you serenity and will relax your physical body as well. You must not let your mind enter into the illusion of expectations. Allow your mind to transcend the changing world of time and space for the intuitional realization of the Self.

The need for transcendence has been the message of all religious systems. Consider the symbol of the cross, for example, in which a horizontal line is pierced by a vertical line. Your intellect has a horizontal way of looking at things. It sees things in terms of time and space, recalling the past, expecting the future. From the intellectual point of view, perfection is somewhere in the future. From the intuitional point of view, it is here and now. The intuitional point of view is the vertical line that pierces the horizontal.

While looking at things in a horizontal way, an aspirant must

allow the development of vertical vision. With vertical vision, you do not care about the waves; you simply plunge into the waves and go deep, letting the waves pass over you. With vertical vision, you do not care about the clouds; you pierce the clouds and soar into the sky like a jet. Vertical vision does not depend on externalities. One must develop that ideal or else live a life of perpetual tension and turmoil.

No one is ever really happy or peaceful because of external situations. It is from intuitional Enlightenment alone that one can experience true peace and joy. That is the goal before an individual, and therefore, developing intuition is the sacred task of every aspirant and the essence of every religion and every mystic philosophy. Intuitional Enlightenment does not affect the practical realities of your life, rather, like a magic wand, it gives a new dimension to everything that you touch, everything that you do.

