

A Higher Consciousness

We are going to talk about higher consciousness today. When Perfect Living Masters mention higher consciousness, they do not refer to an altered state of consciousness. They do not refer to a new awareness, something that we are not experiencing every day. They really mean something higher, more desirable, more durable, more permanent, more akin to our real nature, more real, in fact. Therefore, it is best to understand how we use the word consciousness and awareness so that we can understand what is meant by higher consciousness.

When we talk of consciousness generally, it means we are conscious of something and that is why we call it consciousness. When we say we are conscious of something, it is generally understood in the sense of being aware; just knowing, through senses or otherwise. Even memory would be a sort of awareness, so when we are aware of something, we say we are conscious of something. In that sense, something that we have forgotten would not be called consciousness. Something that is not immediately available for awareness but can be recalled would not be called consciousness. This is not the term in which the great mystics and masters have used the word consciousness. They have not said consciousness means only what is available now.

Consciousness, for them, means all possible potential awareness. Therefore, they distinguish between what is consciousness and what is awareness. Awareness is what is immediately available and consciousness is what is potentially available in the past, present, or future or in any other dimension. Let us then consider what is meant by higher consciousness. Does it mean change of awareness? Does it mean recall of something that is not available now? Or does it only mean a strictly higher consciousness in a level of experience that is different from all levels of experience at one plane such as the physical plane in which we are normally experiencing consciousness through the physical body?

To make it more simple, I would put this question. When we talk of higher consciousness, are we including in higher consciousness dream-like states, trance-like states in which the awareness is altered but is no different than the awareness of other things that happen on the physical plane? That it is not much more real than the physical awareness in the wakeful state? What would we consider the recollection of a past life? Is it a higher consciousness or is it merely expanded awareness?

According to the Perfect Masters, all these experiences of bringing into awareness that which is not immediately available is only expansion of consciousness or expansion of awareness and does not mean any higher awareness of higher consciousness. People have experimented with consciousness and tried to find out if they can find ways by which they can reach levels unknown to us in the normal, physical wakeful state. All those experiments

do not yield any higher level of consciousness. Most of them merely yield information and experience of other altered levels of consciousness. Such as wonderful dreams, strange recollections, recollections of past lives, meeting people and having strange feelings, emotional feelings arising out of the energy centers in the body, doing yoga and kicking off new experiences which one hasn't had earlier but are relatable to the other wakeful experience. All these are expanded consciousness.

These are examples of expansion of awareness and not an example of higher consciousness. What then is meant by higher consciousness? Can we really pinpoint the distinction between an expansion of awareness or expansion of consciousness and the ascent of consciousness to a higher level. The Perfect Living Masters, who are themselves experiencing higher levels of consciousness and can share it with us, they explain that a higher level of consciousness is like a higher awakening. Like we have the dream state when we go to sleep and in the morning we wake up, it is a totally different kind of experience. The dream suddenly becomes unreal. The whole of the dream world also at the same time becomes unreal. The characters in the dream become unreal. We do not say we have come from a certain place into another place, we say a certain experience which was not real has ended.

This kind of transformation, this kind of change is called stepping into a higher consciousness. If the change is not so clear and so real we do not describe it as higher consciousness. There are many Yogis, eastern mystics, eastern Sadhus who have performed many kinds of sadhana or exercises in order to explore higher consciousness. When they try to explore higher consciousness, they are fascinated by the fact that the movement of human attention in the different parts of the human body can kick off different experiences and sometimes the tendency has been there to describe those experiences as higher consciousness.

Patanjali, the great author of the treaties on Raj Yoga and on the eight-fold path of yoga, he describes how we can ascend from the bottom of the torso to the six energy centers in the body and go right up to the highest level behind the eyes and through the head into the thousand petaled lotus. When he describes this ascent of consciousness, he is really referring to the ascent of attention at the existing physical level of consciousness through different energy centers in the body and although it looks like each energy center gives a different experience as we go from the two lower chakras to the third chakra to the fourth to the fifth to the sixth. Although it looks that the experiences are different, in fact we are merely having different facets of experience, of an emotional type, of the type of expansion of energy, expansion of energy awareness but all in the physical body in the physical level of consciousness and when we get out of that kind of a sadhana or transcendental state or meditation or yoga, we come back to the physical state and we say, "This is it. This is the real state which we can explore through all the centers and now we are back where we are and we can talk to other people in a real way in real terms of what we have experienced."

Those experiences are merely parts of our physical experience, because even after all those

experiences we still feel that the physical wakeful experience is a real one where we can relate to those experiences. We can almost describe those experiences as side flights, side trips into different areas of energy and emotions which we normally do not have unless we put our attention on those physical chakras in the body. The Perfect Living Masters do not regard any of those side trips or flights into energy centers as attainment of any higher consciousness; because none of those experiences in any of the lower chakras which people attain through the performance of this yoga, leads to an awakening of the same nature as awakening from a dream in the morning every day.

In fact, many of the experimenters have described those states to be states of very great realistic dreams as if they were very interesting dreams, not very interesting wakefulnesses. After one comes out of that state of dream and into the wakeful state from behind the eyes and feels that the consciousness has now come back from all those chakras, all those centers, back to the eye center, one feels one has really elevated oneself to the top. Many of the yogis used to describe the two petaled lotus, the eyes as the highest and they said we start from two petaled lotus and we return to the reality of the two petaled lotus, going in the middle to the four petal lotus at the rectum, then advancing to six, eight, twelve, sixteen petaled lotuses, all along the way, and returning back to the two petaled lotus from where they started. And they said what we have discovered by the entire circuit of this yoga, of this experience in different centers of energy or centers of emotions, what we have discovered is that the truth lies within us and although we start from here we end up here, and we are the reality.

Therefore the self is the reality and by this circuit of experience, we have found our own self. They have not found any new self, any new higher consciousness of the self. What they have found is that what they regarded as ordinary physical life is not ordinary physical life; that there are many other possibilities of experience and they had those experiences and they have come back to the physical life which indeed remains the top of those experiences and contains the methods and techniques by which those experiences can be attained. Therefore, although these are interesting, novel, new experiences, they do not represent higher level of consciousness or a higher consciousness. Therefore, they represent an experience of our existing consciousness in unknown areas of emotions and energy which we are not normally tapping in, when we tap into them, then they look very interesting and so we call them different experiences, but not higher experiences.

You might have noticed that I am frequently referring to the experiences of these chakras as energy and emotional experiences. Why am I using these words? Because if you distinguish between the adjectives we use for different experiences, you will find that these are the two adjectives which fit in with this experience. Emotional and energy experiences. People who have had experience of the yogic practice of the six chakras, they have never had experience of things like love, expanded thoughts, source of thoughts, universal mind, universal consciousness, origin of Akashic records, origin of the life and birth cycles. They do not find any of these things here, all they find is new levels of energy, unfoldment of energy,

expansion of energy, new emotions being raised, emotions coming up, solar plexus rising up to one's emotional height. Therefore, it is correctly described that these experiences in the six chakras below the eyes in the physical body are subordinate to the level of wakefulness which we have right now; and although they are new, they represent new energy, new emotions. They do not represent new awareness or new consciousness or higher consciousness. So we must then once again have a look at what would constitute truly higher consciousness.

The Perfect Living Masters, they come and tell us that real higher awareness starts from above the eyes, starts from above the local physical wakeful condition. Now we are in a physical wakeful condition and if we can have something that goes above this, then we can truly call it higher level of consciousness. It should be a higher wakeful state, not only a higher state of experience but a higher wakeful state in that we should feel more awake and this world should look more dreamlike than it does now. Just like when we wake up from a sleep in the morning, the dream state which occurred during sleep looks unreal in relation to the wakeful state in which we have come. Although while we are dreaming the dream state looks real, but when we wake up the dream state becomes unreal. This kind of change in consciousness or change in awareness is automatic. Nobody has to be told about it. Nobody does any research into it, there is no study required. When we wake up in the morning do we ever check are we awake or not? Do we pinch our bodies? Do we ask questions of people, we want to verify are we awake? No. We know we are awake. How do we know we are awake? Because we recall, we remember that we went to sleep in this very body and what happened in between, after we went to sleep and after we got up was unreal; that we just made it up and the dream looked so real but it looked real because we were unconscious of this state. So if we are unaware of, or unconscious of the physical state, the dream looks real. What would happen if we are also conscious of the physical state? Supposing during dream we remember that we are sleeping and there is our body lying, the dream would look dreamlike, would never look real.

Therefore, a certain amount of switch off of consciousness, a switch off of awareness is needed in order to make the lower level of consciousness into a reality. Same thing is happening now in this physical state, in our physical level of consciousness right now we are experiencing this reality around us because we have switched off the awareness of any higher level of consciousness. We have a higher reality, a higher consciousness but we have cut it off. Therefore, this level looks real. Why should that be? Why is it necessary for us to cut off something that is higher and stay in what is lower in order to enjoy it?

Let's put this question to ourselves in relation to the sleep and dream state. Why is it necessary for us to go to sleep at night? Why should we dream? What is the purpose of the dreams at night? Do they serve any purpose at all? Now when we look at our own wakeful and dream state, we come to know that the stress of the wakeful state itself compels us to go into a dream state to recover the balance of the wakeful state. Have you noticed that? If we did not sleep for several days the wakeful state would be too burdened with stress. The

stress of wakefulness itself will force us to go to sleep and then come back refreshed. Looks odd, but it is true that we need a lower state of consciousness where what we take as real can be shut off and something else made to look real in order that where we are real becomes refreshing; that we can recoup our state of awareness.

Therefore, in order to fully understand the nature of sleep and wakefulness, we have to understand the nature of the pressures of wakefulness. When we are awake, we are under a certain pressure that we are in a state of continuity of experience at a certain level. The pressure built up in the continuity of experience at a certain level has to be broken and a refreshing state of relaxation attained by cutting that off and substituting it with something which is in a lower level but gives a chance to the real pressure to be released and we get some rest. So we go to sleep at night really to get rest. We go to sleep at night to get refreshed so that when we are awake in the morning, in whatever form we are in the physical body, the mind, the senses, all our systems become refreshed. We have closed our consciousness at the wakeful state in order to get a refreshing sleep and we wake up refreshed. Then why should we have dreams? Why can't we just cut off consciousness for a while and get refreshed and wake up refreshed?

That's a very important question which only Perfect Living Masters, Who studied the real nature of consciousness were able to answer. They said, "Consciousness is a continuous reality. Consciousness cannot be cut off. It is not possible for a person to be totally unconscious. It is not possible for consciousness to commit suicide. It is not possible for consciousness to die. Consciousness, or soul, or spirit is immortal. It is permanent. It cannot change. It does not follow any laws of alteration."

Therefore, consciousness, or being aware of something, is continuous. Therefore, we cannot have a state where we can say consciousness is cut off. If it's cut off, it's finished. There's nothing left. When consciousness has to be cut off, it only means cut off from an existing experience and tuned into something else. Therefore, we must always be conscious of something or the other to eternity and this has been going on from an endless beginning, a beginningless beginning and goes on to an endless-end then therefore this is an eternal continuity of consciousness and therefore consciousness is the only reality because there is nothing else which has got this kind of infinite life, except consciousness. Therefore, consciousness cannot really be shut down.

When we say we want to have rest, give rest to a certain experience of consciousness, the way to do it is to cut that existing level of pressure of consciousness that existing state of consciousness, go into something that is more illusory, less real than that and thereby give rest to consciousness at the more real level and it's both relative. You can give rest to consciousness in a dream state by going into a further dream and waking up in that dream than you would have given rest to the consciousness in the dream state by a further devolution into the illusion of another dream. Therefore, it is necessary always to have some experience of consciousness at all times and if dream is essential does it mean that when

we go to sleep we are always dreaming?

The answer is yes. Even if we don't remember it. Even if we feel we never dreamt, we are still dreaming. People in the sleep clinics now they have been able to do lot of experimentation with the rapid eye movements and they have been able to find that we are having a dream almost all the time during our sleep and we have several series of dreams every night and we wake up in the morning without remembering them. Why do we forget our dreams? Because forgetting our dreams is the only way for us to feel that we shut off consciousness. Forgetfulness is another device, to say we really had no consciousness. Although we are conscious continuously, but by using this ploy of forgetfulness, we are able to attain a state where we feel we had no consciousness. Therefore, we feel more refreshed. We had a deep sleep, very refreshing sleep because we had no dreams. Actually, that is not a correct statement. The correct statement is: we had deep sleep because all the dreams we had we had forgotten when we wake up.

In order for this to work satisfactorily, the link between different levels of consciousness has been so designed that when we move from one consciousness to another, we get rid of the awareness of our vehicle of our body, of our form in that level of consciousness and this makes it easy for us to forget the other level of consciousness when we move from one to the other. For example, when we lie in bed at night going to sleep, what happens when we go into a dream state? Even if we induce a dream or we get a natural dream, the first thing that happens is forgetfulness of the fact we are lying in bed, forgetfulness of the fact there is a body lying in bed. That's the very first thing. Nothing can happen, no other dream sequence takes place. When that happens the dream becomes real and we go to sleep.

The first thing is to get rid of this feeling of identity with a particular form. Similarly, when we wake up in the morning the dream fades away so quickly. Have you noticed how quickly the dream fades when you wake up? Just seconds before you wake up you know you were dreaming, and then suddenly when you feel you are back in the body in which you slept, the dream is gone. You can't even remember it. Every day it happens. So this fade out process, taking place both downward and upward in levels of consciousness is natural if we have to have a refreshing sleep at a lower level of consciousness. Mystics have been able to discover that by ascending in processes of wakefulness to higher and higher wakefulness we can discover the reality of this level of consciousness and the reality of other levels of consciousness which are, in fact, states of wakefulness of greater reality, greater wakefulness and, therefore, a higher level of consciousness than even the physical state of wakefulness.

Does it not occur to us that when we can wake up from a dream which looks so real and make it look unreal we could also wake up from the present state, of physical consciousness and find that was also a dream? Is it not possible that we can keep on waking up again and again like that and we do not know how far the limit is? We do not know. But if somebody who is awake and can nudge us in our sleep and talk to us and wake us up at will, he can tell

us, "Look, my friend, I have come to wake you up." Because he's already awake.

When we talk of Perfect Living Masters, we do not see their form because we are sleeping and dreaming in the wakeful physical state. They speak from a higher consciousness. So when they speak to us we hear their voice either inside us or outside in a form which we create temporarily. Therefore, when these higher level consciousness people, from higher level of consciousness, these Masters of higher consciousness, when they come and wake us up then we know that this is a state of wakefulness which we think is awake but is actually a dreamlike state in relation to those higher levels of consciousness.

When these Masters awake us to a higher level of consciousness, we find it is not necessary for us always to stay in the same physical level of consciousness to explore other consciousness and come back, which is what the yogis found when they went into the lower chakras. These Perfect Living Masters, they tell us that we can rise to a higher level of consciousness without having to lose that higher sense and come back into the physical level to explain or explore or satisfy ourselves about those levels of consciousness. What are the levels of consciousness they describe?

Briefly, they say if you wake up, you can find that you are in a state where you are really waking up like you wake up from a dream and you can see things, do things differently than you did in a dream. The distinction is in certain principles of experience that we notice. For example, in this physical level of consciousness, we find a certain consistency in time, cause and effect of the different incidents that happen and they said that when you go into a higher level of consciousness the consistency becomes even greater. When you go into a lower level of consciousness, the consistency disappears. In the dream, different segments come one after the other and we don't know what is the beginning, what is the middle, what is the end.

But in the wakeful state above this state, we find even greater consistency, we can recall events and how they are connected with each other much more clearly than we can do even in this physical state. The description they give of the higher consciousness is where you can sustain your experiences without recourse to the physical systems; where you can have a sensory experience per se without having to depend upon a physical body or a dream body like in the lower states, that would be a higher state of consciousness. And you can have an experience of past, present, and future like you cannot have in any other state.

They say you can wake up again into a state of consciousness that is purely mental, where the senses don't play any part. Concepts, the origin of concepts, the origin of shapes, forms, colors can be traced back there. You can find the origin of thoughts. You can find the source of thoughts. You can find the packages of patterns of lives, which we cannot find here. That is a truly higher state of consciousness. And, finally, these Perfect Living Masters tell us that we can go to the highest levels of consciousness where we discover that our real nature, our real self never consisted of any of the forms that we adopted. It was neither the mental forms, nor the thoughts, nor the covering of the senses, nor the covering

of the physical body, nor the several forms that we create in our dreams; that all these forms were only covers upon our true nature of spirit or consciousness which can exist by itself.

So the highest level of wakefulness as described by these Perfect Living Masters is pure consciousness where we do not have to wake up any further and we can find that this is the starting point for all other sleeps to refresh us back to our own eternal state of consciousness. So that, indeed, is the highest level of consciousness.

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