

**THE INNER
CONSCIOUSNESS:
HOW TO AWAKEN
AND DIRECT IT**

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The Inner Consciousness: How to Awaken and Direct it by Swami Prakashananda

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SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

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CALIFORNIA

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By

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THE INNER CONSCIOUSNESS**How to Awaken and Direct It**

In theoretical as well as applied psychology no term is more misleading, or confusing than the term consciousness. We use the term often in our conversation; we come across it in our study; but when we are asked to define it properly, to explain its significance, its meaning, or the idea for which that word stands, we are unable to do so. And that is because there are so many varied ideas concerning consciousness. There are so many aspects of consciousness, there are so many states of consciousness that we get mixed up—that is, we confuse one with the other. So we must know thoroughly the true significance of the term. Then we can make such distinctions as inner consciousness and outer consciousness.

What is truly meant by consciousness, or what is the principle back of that term? There are many ideas which cannot be expressed properly for lack of words, or lack of terms. The word consciousness is really derived from the Latin root *scio*, to know, and *con*, together; so the word consciousness from the derivative meaning would signify: to know together.

We use the term generally in the sense of being conscious of a fact. That is, consciousness means knowing an object, as it were; knowing something. But the word consciousness really indicates two things—subject and object. It implies the duality of existence. There is one who is the knower, the subject, the ego, the perceiver. I know it; I am conscious of it; I perceive it; I think about it. Therefore there is always the subject, the ego—I—as the background of any form of consciousness.

Then there must be something to be conscious of, something which we perceive, something which we know, something which we understand, and that something is the object. So, "knowing together" means we know the subject and object together—that is, they both exist; one cannot exist without the other. So wherever there is a subject, there is also an object. That means that wherever there is a thinker, there must be something to think about; otherwise there is no meaning back of the term "thinker". Whenever we use the term "perceiver", we must know that there is something to be perceived. The same is true of consciousness. Whenever we use the term "consciousness", we must know it includes both—the one who is conscious of something, and something of which that one is conscious.

Therefore the word "consciousness" implies duality.

There is another meaning back of "consciousness" which we often fail to understand, or about which we do not stop to think deeply. That is why we miss it. Consciousness not only implies the idea of becoming conscious of a thing, or the state of being conscious of something, but there is also the idea of identification back of it.

What is the meaning of identification? By identification we mean a state in which we become almost one with a thing. When we become one with a thing we become conscious of it. Of course ordinarily we may not be wholly identified with it, but the word consciousness indicates that, and judging our modes of thought, or observing the practical phases of our life, we shall see that there is identification.

Take for instance, the word "body-consciousness". What does it mean? It means that not only are we conscious of the body, but we are also identified with it. I can not separate myself from the body; I am almost one with it. I have become mixed up, as it were, with the body and its conditions. There the subject or ego is hidden; only the object of consciousness, the object of perception is there. So that is another meaning of consciousness.

The deepest and purest meaning of consciousness is this: the absolute consciousness. There is the Sanskrit word "chit". You will come across that word in the study of the Upanishads, in the Vedas, in the Gita, and in many such books. You will find not only ancient sages, but the sages of modern times have been using the term "Sat-chit-ananda", meaning the Divine Spirit. Sat-chit-ananda—what is its meaning? It means absolute existence, absolute consciousness, absolute bliss. These three are not the qualities of the Divine Spirit, but they are the essence—one with it. So chit is the word of pure consciousness. In the understanding of pure consciousness, we have to eliminate the duality of existence, the duality of subject and object. It stands alone; it is that of which the subject and object are lower manifestations, or expressions. It is that which makes everything possible, which gives life and soul to the subject and object, as it were. So that is pure consciousness, the basic, the fundamental, the principle back of everything that is indicated by pure consciousness.

There is a beautiful Sanskrit verse which expresses this idea.

"Na Tatra Suryo bhati na chandra tarakam
Nema Vidyuto bhanti Kutoyam agni

Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam
Tasya bhasha Sarvamidam bibhati" (Kathopan-
ishad, Chap. V. 15).

In describing the pure, the basic, fundamental principle of life and creation—the pure light, the self-effulgent, self-caused Divine Intelligence—Vedic sages sang in this way: "There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the lightning, what to speak of the mortal fire. That shining, everything shines; by its light everything is illumined",—by its essence everything becomes full of consciousness.

There is another Sanskrit word which expresses the same idea, Kaivalyam, the state of being alone; that which is self-caused; that which is not dependent on anything; that which is freedom itself; which is above everything. Do you see? There all differentiation vanishes—differentiation of subject and object, I and thou. All these ideas are merged, as it were, in that absolute consciousness. So the pure consciousness is that.

However, when we apply the term consciousness in our daily lives, in its varied relation to various channels of existence, in our varied experiences, in different states and conditions, we have to understand it from a dualistic standpoint, and we also have to study other