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Our conscious, waking state, carried on by its own novelty, can keep us externalized life after life after life

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All my life, since the time I was seven years old, I have made a great study of the mind. I have always held the perspective that I am pure awareness, flowing freely through all areas of the mind. Observing the great vastness of the mind, we can say that there are five states of mind: conscious, subconscious, sub-subconscious, subsuperconscious and superconscious. Today let's look at the conscious mind, the state of mind in which we perform our daily routines. When awareness is in the conscious mind, we are externalized. This means we take our direction mainly from memory of past experiences, from other people, from newspapers, magazines, radio, television or our emotions. The average man is aware in the conscious mind from the time he awakens in the morning until he falls asleep at night. That's what makes him average. Only when he becomes mystically inclined does he become consciously aware of some of the other four states.

When we are in the conscious mind, we are like a donkey with

a carrot in front of our nose. We are always walking to try to get that carrot. We are never satisfied, and we are never happy. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. No matter how much money we have, we want more. No matter how many clothes we have, we need more. No matter how many television programs we watch, there is always a better one coming up. No matter how many sights we have seen, the next one may surpass them all. No matter how much food we eat, there is always the next big wonderful meal to enjoy. No matter how many emotions we experience, the next set of those emotional experiences will be the high point of our entire life, and we are sure of it. That is the conscious mind.

When we live in the conscious mind, we only surmise. We make guesses. We are never quite sure if we are right. Therefore, we are insecure, because the conscious mind only knows what has gone before it. It is certain only about the past. If it has been provided with a good memory, then it knows the past very well. But without a good memory, the conscious mind doesn't know the past well at all. So, when we are in the conscious mind, we have one predominant and solid quality that we really can be sure of and that is fear. We are afraid! We're afraid of the future. And many of the things in the past petrify us, for we don't want them to happen to us again. We don't know quite how to avoid them, because with awareness caught in conscious-mind concerns, our superconscious faculties are temporarily cut off. The superconscious mind is seen as a figment of imagination, a product of superstition.

The conscious mind is the real enemy, the real barrier, the real

distractor to someone on the path of enlightenment. It is intriguing. It is the temptress. It leads us on and on and on, life after life after life after life after life after life after life. It is a wonderful state of mind, however, as long as our superconscious faculties are also available for awareness to flow into once in a while to become refreshed and renewed by a change of perspective and influx of energy. Otherwise, the conscious mind is a difficult and onerous state of mind in which to live, day after day after day. The spiritual path leads us out of the morass of the darkness of the conscious mind into the mind of light, which we call superconsciousness.

It really hardens a person to live in the conscious mind all the time, because he has to build an ego shell around himself for protection, and that makes him insensitive and rough. One of the biggest protective influences of the conscious mind is anger. Anger makes a person cunning in his thinking, and of course the predominant underlying quality of anger is fear. He is always afraid of something. It is generally something that may happen or is going to happen. He is always in conflict with someone. These are the motivating forces of the conscious mind: anger and fear. Most people live in the conscious mind unconsciously.

The conscious mind is the area of the mind where memory and time are Gods, and reason is the Supreme Ruler. "If it is not reasonable, it is not acceptable," declares the conscious mind, and "If we can't measure it, it does not exist." That is the conscious mind. It is active. It is alive. The conscious mind perpetuates itself, and we all help it to do that. It is carried on in ramification by its own novelty. We can always find in the conscious mind some distraction to please us, to intrigue us, to

dominate our awareness of other states of consciousness. And we don't have to look very hard to find it.

The mystic's goal is to control awareness while he is in the conscious mind--to know where he is in consciousness. When he finds he is aware in the conscious mind, and the five senses have become his ruler, he then controls his awareness within the conscious mind itself. He does this in a number of ways. One way is through the control of breath. Breath is life, and life is breath. Breath is the controlling factor of awareness. Awareness rides on breath. Breath is also a controlling factor of our willpower. A seeker must develop a dynamic will to walk the path of enlightenment so that he does not stumble or falter, but continues onward no matter how difficult the path seems to be for him. Spiritual unfoldment leads us along the path into the illumined knowing of where we are in consciousness at any point in time. There are many methods through which this may be accomplished. Carefully choose one path and then stay with it with extreme loyalty. For this, a preceptor is needed, a spiritual guide, to answer questions, to raise questions for you to find answers to within your meditations. It is an arduous journey. The rewards come only near its end.

To live positively in the conscious mind each day, exercise at least a half hour. Keep the vital energies of the body high and healthy. Eat simply and follow a vegetarian diet, feeding the stomach rather than the mouth. Be considerate of others always and live inconspicuously, almost transparently, by not ruffling your surroundings, by keeping the home neat and clean, by passing through a room or place and leaving it in a nicer condition than before you arrived. Seek fresh air and

learn to breathe deeply. Get out in the sun. Move the physical body, walk briskly, dance, keep the energies vibrant and buoyant. Be close to nature. Grow food. Develop an art or craft so the hands are active, creative. Of course, being neat and attractive in personal appearance keeps the thoughts of others toward you positive. This is the way to live in the conscious mind. Try to live life as though you are walking in the rain without getting wet, or carefully writing on water. No ripples, no disturbance, no reactionary residue that has to be faced at some future date.

When we live unconsciously in the conscious mind, we most often look at the physical body as who we are. We say, "I am hungry," "I am happy," "I am not feeling well," "I want to go to America" or "I have just come to Bangalore." Instead of "I am not feeling well," we mean our physical body is not feeling well. Instead of "I want to go to America," we mean we want to take our physical body to America. Our language is a conscious-mind language. The perspective of our language is constructed to make the conscious mind the real thing, the entire reality of the world. From little children we have been taught that the conscious mind is real and that anything other than this real, solid, conscious mind is to be doubted.

The mystic walks in the opposite direction. He goes against the crowd. He learns to swim upstream. It is a little more difficult for him, but oh so worth it. The seeker has to learn that the conscious mind is only a vast dream created by many, many people who are dreaming openly. They are dreaming, and every mystic knows it. They are forming the dream by what they say, by their emotions, by what they think and by that in which they involve themselves. The mystic knows there is no

enduring reality to the vast dream made up by people themselves, by their desires, their relationships, their cravings and their insecurities.

You have heard the statement "Being in the world, but not of it." This is done through detachment. It is an attitude. It is a perspective. It is how we hold ourselves within that really matters. Basically, that is the only difference in the beginning stages between one who is on the spiritual path and one who is not on the path it is how awareness is held within, the perspective from which the conscious mind is viewed and responded to.