

How The Mind Works?

By Nithyananda Paramahansa

(Source: Gita 14.5 to 14.8)

There are five jñānendriya and five karmendriya (senses of action) that are the means of communication between the external world and us. Jñānendriya are the senses of precipitation, the five senses of smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing. The karmendriya are five actions of elimination, procreation, locomotion, grasping and speaking. Each sense is related to one of the energy centers (chakras) in our body – mind system. Four instance, locomotion is related to the manipuraka cakra (energy center located in the stomach region) and the energy of fire.

We can take any of the five jñānendriya to replace the in the example. Through the eyes we see a scene. Let us say we see this scene of this discourse is happening. You see me talking to you. First your eye captures this whole scene like a picture and this picture goes to the caksu (the energy behind the eyes). Understand, we don't see with the eye, we see through the eye. There is an energy that is inside or behind the eye that actually sees. There is an energy inside or behind the ears that hear. The ears themselves cannot hear. That is why when we are engrossed in a book we may not hear the alarm or doorbell ring. If we are reading, we may not know if our spouse walks in the room. Of course, if it is late at night, all wives know when their husbands sneak into the house. That is a different matter!

A small story:

A man goes to the police station to meet a thief who had burglarized his home the previous night and taken all the cash. The officer on duty refuses to allow him to meet the thief, saying, "You cannot talk to him now." You can meet him in court tomorrow." The man pleads, 'I don't want to disturb him. All I want to do and no is how he entered my home without waking up my life. I have been trying to do this for years and have not been able to do it! How did he manage it?'

So there is an energy inside the eyes the sees. We call this energy caksu. The whole scene is converted into a file like in a digital signal processor in a computer so that our mind can process the data.

The caksu is almost like a Digital Signal Processor or the DSP in electronic systems. If we are to work on sound or light or a photograph, it must be first converted into a digital file. In a computer, whether it is an audio or visual file, it must be converted into a digital file. In the same way in our system, whatever we see or hear is converted into a bio-signal file like a digital file. This conversion happens in the caksu area.

Then the file starts moving up, step-by-step. The file goes to the part of the mind called citta (memory). If we understand this, our whole life can be transformed. We will know where and how we react. We will realize how we make big decisions based upon our assumptions and consequently suffer.

This is what happened in the story where the teacher imagined that alcohol was the liquid leaking from her gift and tasted it without thinking. We can understand how these mistakes happen by analyzing the diagram.

The files go to citta, the place where past memories are collected. This area is where the work of excluding happens. When the file reaches this place, the excluding process starts - Na iti, Na iti- not this. The process of neti neti (this is not, this is not) taken place in this area. Upon seeing this file, our citta starts eliminating whatever the object is not.

Take the example of this scene: First you see me, the whole scene is photographed. It goes to caksu and becomes a bio-signal file. The file is taken to citta. Citta says, "This is not a tree. This is not an animal. This is not a plant. This is not this. This is not that." The excluding process happens in citta.

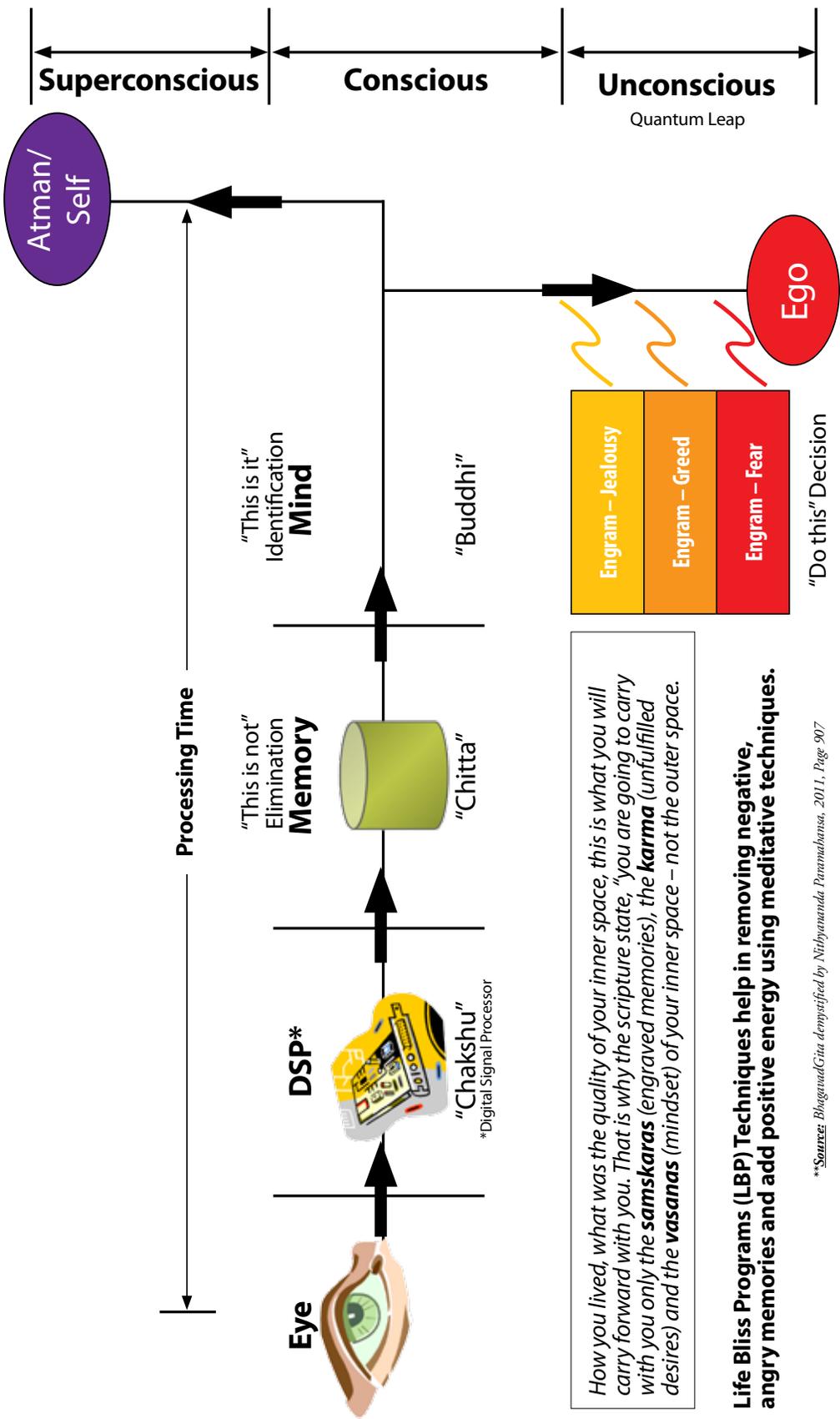
It is like searching for the word 'cow' in the dictionary. You first eliminate all other letters to reach 'c'. Then you search for 'o' and eliminate all other letters. Then you reach 'w' by eliminating all other letters. In this manner, you reach the word 'cow'. This is how citta works.

Next, the file goes to manas, another part of the mind. The manas tries to positively identified, "This is a human being. He is wearing a saffron robe. He is standing on the stage." The identification process, 'iti iti' (this is it, this is it) happens in manas.

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Our Decision Making Process



How you lived, what was the quality of your inner space, this is what you will carry forward with you. That is why the scripture state, "you are going to carry with you only the **samskaras** (engraved memories), the **karma** (unfulfilled desires) and the **vasanas** (mindset) of your inner space – not the outer space.

Life Bliss Programs (LBP) Techniques help in removing negative, angry memories and add positive energy using meditative techniques.

**Source: bhagavadGita demystified by Nithyananda Paramahansa, 2011, Page 907

In citta, 'neti, neti' or the 'not this, not this,' and elimination occurs.

Once the positive identification happens, the file goes to the third part of the mind called buddhi or intelligence. Buddhi is where the trouble starts. Here the analysis starts, "How am I related to this file? How am I connected to this scene? How is this relevant to me? How should I respond to this scene?"

If past memories about me have been good or pleasant according to your intelligence, you respond in a positive way. You immediately referred to those past memories and review, "It was so good at yesterday's discourse." Your intelligence refers to the past memory and makes a decision based upon these experiences. If past experiences with me have been positive, your intelligence tells you to stay and listen. If past experiences have been unpleasant and you felt bored, your intelligence tells you that this is not a place for you and that you should leave. These are logical decisions based on conscious memories retained by your mind.

Up to this point, transmission of what is perceived by the senses and what is registered by the mind are relatively straightforward. It is a conscious process. I explained earlier about conscious and unconscious minds. Psychologists talk about a subconscious mind is well. This does not exist. This is a term used to further confuse you.

If the processing of sensory data is stopped at this conscious level, at the intelligence level, we make decisions at the conscious level by using our intellect. This is alright; it is limiting, however, because the conscious mind is still only ten percent of the total mind capacity. This is what we call intellect-based decision-making. These decisions are based on logic and a rationale. We are proud of this achievement. The French philosopher Descartes said, "I think therefore I am." He didn't realize that he limited his potential to only ten percent. What a sad state!

Because of the limited capacity of our conscious mind, nature wires us to use our unconscious mind to decide many things. Unfortunately this unconscious mind is a conditioned mind. It is full of engraved memories, beliefs and value systems drilled into us from childhood. All that parents and elders have taught us plus all that we have been force-fed by religion and society from a deeply impressionable age are stored in this vault that is never open to us. It opens on its own when it chooses to, especially in memories of stress and trauma. Just as viruses and bacteria attack when our immune system is down, the virus of engrams and samskāras influence us when our emotional systems are weakened.

Ego decides

Samskāras do not accumulate only during this lifetime. The mental attitudes are carried over from previous births. Neural scientists tell us about the part of our brain called the reptilian brain that stores memories of our evaluation from the marina and amphibian creatures.

From this conscious mind, that information is passed to the unconscious region of the mind, the ego.

I call this unconscious region of the mind ego not because it is arrogant, it is because it provides you the identity of who you are. The word 'ego' is diverted from a Greek word that means 'a mask'. Your identity is a mask that you wear. It is not you.

Your identity stems from your unconsciousness. You project who you wish to be, never who you are. You do not even know who you are. Who you are is deeply buried in your unconscious. All the major decisions that shape your life are consigned to this unconscious zone. This is the repository of all of those emotionally-filled memories and beliefs about yourself, which constitute what are you and, therefore, create your identity. This is what I call ego.

The conscious mind does not make important decisions. It makes a few decisions that can be reached by its limited intellect. Anything important moves to the unconscious ego. Our unconscious handles all life-threatening situations, the so-called flight-or-fight decisions. Our conscious mind is too slow to handle them.

Let us go back to the incident of your watching me here. The problem arises if your conscious mind does not make a direct decision. If you have had past experiences with other persons wearing saffron robes, you will have engrams about that experience. You will not bother to see who this person is. You decide based on that memory that says, "No, with that master I suffered like this; with some other master, I suffer that." It will be a generalized memory. You make a decision based on your collected past samskāras.

That is where we create trouble. When decisions are made with a straight understanding, there is no major problem.

However, most of the times we collect and react based on engrams that are unrelated to each other.

For example, you see someone wearing a white dress. You may have been hurt in the past by someone wearing a white dress. The moment you see a white dress, the memory comes back even if you don't want to.

In the same way, if we are abused or disrespected in a house, the memory comes up automatically the next time we visit that house, even if the person who did it is not there. We had experience the same feelings, feel depressed and go into a low mood.

We connect and associate things with places, with triggers, with the memories, and put them into memory files. We are not able to work spontaneously. We must rely on some technique, some method to reduce our processing work. Naturally, we opt for some kind of arrangement in our memory. Consequently, we miss out on real life.

Only the first few days of marriage do we respond spontaneously to spouse. Within the first few months in living with our spouse, we form a clear idea about him or her. After that, we don't really live with him or her. We live with our imagination of him or her. We live with our understanding of him or her. After that, whatever our spouse does is wrong. We come to a predetermined conclusion that the spouse is always wrong. If our spouses does something right, we say that it happened by mistake!

So after a few months, we come to a conclusion about the other persons in our life. We create an engram related to them based on our judgment. After that, we judge whatever he or she does through the filter of the engram or engraved memory. Sometimes we create engrave memories in our system based on experiences that others have or from the media influences.

A small story:

One day, a funeral procession slowly made its way down the road. A man walking two bulldogs as he moved along ahead of the body of the dead woman. There was a long queue of people following slowly behind him.

And onlooker observed the number of people in the procession and thought, "She must have been a famous woman." He approached the man with the bulldogs and asked, "Who is the dead lady?" The man replied, "She is my mother-in-law."

The onlooker asked if the two dogs were the dead woman's pets. The man replied, "No. They attacked and killed her."

"Killed her?" the onlooker asked. "Yes," said the man. The onlooker asked, "Can I borrow the dogs for two days?"

The man pointed to the people following him and said, "Join the queue".

When we enter into relationships with preconceived notions, this is what happens! We collect so many memories that we never relate to people as they are. We only relate with the preconceived memory we have of the person.

People ask me, "Swamiji, is our life pre-destined or open to free will? Understand, the more engrams we have, the more our life is predestined. This is because we go along the same route repeatedly. The fewer engrams we have, the more freedom we enjoy.

The number of samskāras determined whether we have free will or if our life is predestined. For example, the file travels to the ego, and the ego gives the decision, and we execute it. If there are more engrams, the file travels to every table as it a bureaucratic office. Each engram places its stamp, put it signature and it writes its opinion.

People with many engrams never relax. Then don't sit quietly. So much physical restlessness is due to many decisions taking place inside their own conscious.

Take that example of smoking: According to the data collected at the conscious level, we know smoking is injurious to health. According to a simple, straightforward data that we have assimilated, we know smoking is injurious to health; however, when time comes, suddenly we decide to smoke.

How does the files such a quantum leap? How is the decision totally changed? When the file travels to the unconscious area, engrams say, "No, no! The last time I smoked, I felt really good; I feel relieved from all of the stress."

If you want to eliminate stress, wear a tight shoe instead of smoking. When you wear a tight shoe, you forget otherwise worries. By creating bigger problems, we try to forget about the smaller problems. If we wear tight shoes, we automatically forget smaller worries.

Here, in the unconscious area, all the past memories reside: 'I smoke. I felt good. I felt relieved. All the stress disappeared.' We suddenly make a decision that we did not want to make, because of these unconscious memories.

We made countless decisions based upon and engraved memories. Suddenly we shout and after ten minutes, we repent, "Why did I shout? I always wanted to keep a smiling face. I wanted people to acknowledge that I have a smiling face. Why did I shout?" We repent. We make a sudden decision. We react suddenly due to these engrams.

Krsna speaks of satva guna samskâras that lead to bliss and peace, rajasic guna samskâras that lead to restlessness and violence and tamasic samskâras that lead to depression. He further explains how these samskâras influence our decision-making process.

Let us say our radio suddenly stops working properly and we simultaneously connect with frequencies from three channels: One channel is playing in advertisement for a cosmetic product. The second channel gives instructions for farming. The third channel is playing a comedy drama. The result will sound like this to us, "Please spray a little bit of pesticide. After that wipe your face clean. Now brush your teeth properly and put on a little more pesticide. Finally jump up and down and laugh flailing your arms and legs!"

If we try to execute decisions based on these mixed, cross-wired instructions, just imagine what our plight would be! Similarity, when we try to work with different types of engrams – satva, rajas and tamas -and all three cross each other, they create hell in our lives. Please understand that intelligent people collect arguments to arrive at a fresh judgment while most of us collect arguments to support a pre-existing judgment.

If we look into our life we know how many times we will accept our mistakes? Of course, even to look into our lives and see how many times we have erred needs intelligent. We usually react out of arrogance or guilt. We say, "So what if I make a mistake? We brush it aside. This is our kind of attitude, the attitude of might is right. The other attitude is suffering from guilt.

Please understand that an unintelligent man never feels guilty. Of course I tell you to drop your guilt as well. That is in a different context. Only an intelligent man who thinks of dharma (righteousness) suffers from guilt. Only he feels guilt. A person who lives and feels only at the instinct level never feels guilty. An Arjuna or a Yudhishtra feels guilty. A Duryodhana will not feel guilty.

A person at the intelligent level suffers guilt. Someone at the level of intuition goes beyond guilt. He understands that the truth as it is. Krsna speaks of how to handle these three gunas properly and use them to the maximum. Getting a maximum out of these is an intelligent process.

A small story:

A young child swallowed a coin and was taken to the doctor. The doctor used different methods to no avail. The nurse also tried; still but the coin didn't come out. A friend standing nearby made an attempt without success. A passerby observed this and offered his assistance. The doctor asked: "What can you do?" The passerby said, "Give me a moment." He spoke with the child and came back smelling with the coin. The surprised doctor asked, "I am a doctor. I could not take the coin out. How did you do it?"

The passerby said, "I am a con artist. I can exert money out of anybody."

Krsna gives tips and techniques to get the maximum out of all three gunas! Before entering into these three layers of engrams, samskâras related to satva, rajas and tamas, let me illustrate how we are caught in them and how they work. Then, we will enter into each technique.

Source: *Bhagavad Gita* by Nithananda Paramahansa, Pages 907-916

The Winner of the senses

Krsna says repeatedly, “Vijitendriyah” (one who has subdued his senses). He gives us a method to solve the problem and go beyond. All we have to do is understand where we are caught where our problems lie. Our whole trouble is in the mind, the intelligence and the ego.

In this diagram, beyond the ego we have the ātman, the Self. Just the presence of ātman makes our ego work. The whole trouble begins when we judge for ourselves and start thinking, ‘What am I going to gain from this?’ If the ego and the intelligence are removed from the system the self starts radiating its energy directly through the senses. That is why enlightened people have sharp senses. Whether it is their vision or hearing, it will be sharp and deep because it is not corrupted by the ego. Only a person who’s being is clear will have pure senses. A man who continuously uses his senses abuses them. He will not have energy or tejas in his senses.

The first thing that happens to a man who has abused his senses is the loss of his sense of smell. If we lost our sense of smell, then we need immediate emergency treatment! We need to be admitted to the ICU of spirituality. We need a medication immediately. When our mind is under our control we develop equanimity. This happens when we reach in enlightenment. When we become enlightened there is nothing to be achieved. Our being will start respecting everyone automatically.

Here ‘equal’ is used, but the exact translation should be ‘unique’. We respect everyone as a unique being. Treating everyone equality is one thing. Treating them as unique is another. When we understand that each person is unique, we respect him or her sometimes when we say we treat everyone equally, we start disrespecting everyone equally! Instead of raising others to a higher level, we bring ourselves down.

Rāmakrsna Paramahansa, an enlightened master from India, was such a humble soul. If anybody came to see him, he would first do namaskār (bowing down with hands folded to show respect for the other person) even before they paid their respects to him. Once, an egoistic man, a well-read scholar came to see Rāmakrsna. A man who has read all the scriptures and not become enlightened has a lot of ego. He knows the tricks of the trade, but he does not have the capital our courage to do business.

Rāmakrsna , as usual, bow down before this well-read scholar who came to meet him. The scholar told the people standing around, “After all, he is younger than me. He can bow down to me, no problem.” Rāmakrsna said, by doing namaskār, I raise you to my level. But by accepting it in an egoistic way, you try to bring me down to your level!” So be very clear, when you treat people equally, we may bring them to our level. When we understand that every being is unique, we will begin respecting every being. We will understand that every being has its own unique place.

We are not all the same. God is an artist not an engineer. That is why he painted each one of us so differently. If he were an engineer, he would have just ordered ten thousand pieces of Mr. India or one million pieces of Miss universe so we all would look the same. But he is an artist, not an engineer. When we understand that each one of us is unique, we will start respecting every being.

One more thing we need to understand is that even our enemy is necessary for our life. We have possibly learned thousands of things from our enemies. Without them we wouldn’t have achieved what we have achieved. When we are depressed we can remember our enemies. Then we can come out of our depression and start fighting again! We don’t know in what ways people contribute to our life.

A small story:

There was a great s̄anyasi who was highly respected all over the world. Suddenly one day, his close disciple found out and important secret about him. The disciple happened to be in the s̄anyasi's private quarters and saw that he had his divorced wife's photograph in his room.

That disciple asked the s̄anyasi , "Master; I thought you were such a great person. I never expected that you are harboring such family achievements in your life. Why do you still have her picture in your room?"

The s̄anyasi just left and replied, "Whenever I want to give this life of s̄anyas, I just look at her photograph and I get it courage back to sustain this lifestyle immediately!"

So we don't know who is playing what role in our life!

Even our enemy might be playing it important and helpful role in our growth. We can't say why somebody is necessary in our life and why somebody is not necessary. Just like our friends, our enemies also play their role in our lives. When we understand that each and every being is unique, we will see everyone in the same way. Krsna here says about 'the pious and the sinners'. Be very clear there is no such thing as sin, except calling human beings 'sinners'. Krsna rightly states that the enlightened being sees only divine consciousness in everyone and so can never label anyone as being pious or a sinner.

Understand: God accepts each one of us as we are. The society created the idea of sin and merit. Immediately the next question will be, "Then can we do whatever we want?" A man who understands the spiritual signs will never disturb others. Again and again I tell people, our sin and merit should be based on our understanding, not out of greed for heaven or fear of hell. Let discipline happen to you as a natural flowering. If we are afraid of the police and follow the traffic rules, then whenever we don't see a police car, we are tempted to press the accelerator.

Actually stepping the wrong way is a deep temptation. Breaking rules can be exciting, especially when something is forbidden. It becomes really attractive. The forbidden fruit is always tasty.

Let our morality not be based on fear and greed. That is why Patañjali's Yoga sutras, there is a beautiful word yama. Yama means discipline. It also means death. If we understand that our life is going to end in death, we start thinking and meditating upon death. We will automatically be disciplined. In Sanskrit, the same word translates as both death and discipline. Let our discipline happen only out of understanding of death and not fear or greed.

Source: *Bhagavad Gita by Nithananda Paramahansa, Pages 367-371*