

A GRADUAL EXPANSION OF AWARENESS

Excerpts from 'Yoga of Unity' - -Paramahmsa Niranjanananda

In the process of meditation, when we begin to move from pratyahara to dharana, there has to be a gradual, systematic expansion of awareness. An experiment was done in the United States about seven years ago, in which a hypnotist hypnotised a person and asked the person to describe how many leaves there were on a plant, which was in the room. Consciously we may walk into any room and look around, but we do not consciously recognise the quality of the room or the objects that are in the room. However the subconscious mind observes everything. Under hypnosis the man actually gave the exact number of leaves that were on a potted plant in the room. He had not counted the leaves beforehand. He was in the room for the first time in his life. What does this experiment mean to us? The mind has the ability to observe. It observes all the time, every moment, but that process of observation is definitely not conscious, it is subconscious.

If we can make this observation process or the awareness a conscious activity, imagine the change, the transformation that will happen in life. Externally, to a person who has not developed that quality, this ability will look like a psychic power. It is not psychic power. It is the natural ability of the subconscious and the unconscious, or the total consciousness manifesting externally. I would say there is no such thing as a siddhi in this world, just a natural quality of the human consciousness which manifests after we have educated and trained ourselves. For an ignorant person this may seem paranormal but for the person who is experiencing it, it is a natural, spontaneous process. This is how we move into the meditative states through our personality. In meditation it is not only the mind which is involved. But each and every aspect of human nature, of human mind and human personality. This has been the aim of yoga, to awaken the entire human nature so that one can experience total fulfilment.