

The Evolution of the Five Senses within Expanding Consciousness

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Course 350

“The five senses are an externalization of the millions of nadis, those infinitesimally small threads of energy which radiate out from every part of the nervous system.” (EH 333) These nadis are conditioned by the astral and mental bodies, by the personality and by the soul. As consciousness expands it uses this energy network of the body to connect to the corresponding energies it is learning to use. “As consciousness expands into the inner planes the self recognizes the new forces coming in. The self works through the law of adaptation to transmute the senses into “one synthetic cooperation whole, for use in the great work.” (WM 139). “*In all these definitions it is necessary to bear in mind that the whole object of the senses is to reveal the not-self, and to enable the Self therefore to differentiate between the real and the unreal.*” (EP II, 652) I will discuss each of the senses and their evolution in relation to the expanding use of the bodies and the consciousness to provide a more soul-like perspective on Life.

Hearing. The First Sense

1. *Physical hearing.*
2. *Clairaudience.*
3. *Higher clairaudience.*
4. *Comprehension (of four sounds).*
5. *Beatitude.*

Hearing gives him an idea of relative direction, and enables a man to fix his place in the scheme, and to locate himself.

Hearing—The recognition of the fourfold word, the activity of matter, the third Logos.

Hearing--Beatitude. This is realised through the not-self.

The senses are related to the elements which are considered their progenitors. Akasha is the subtlest of the elements and from it come all the other elements. Hearing is associated with Akasha and with the Atmic Plane, the Plane of Will, according to *The Secret Doctrine*. The discussion there relates, I think to the cycle of devolution, the descent into matter. This makes hearing the highest, or subtlest of the senses. This implies that listening to the inner voice is the most appropriate means of experiencing any expression of divine Will. And since it also implies that sound is the creative tool on the atmic plane it must be the foundation of our existence, based on the Plan of Love expressed in mantra. All sounds and then all things evolve from this “uttered sound of the Creator” as

it is interpreted on the atmic plane. As I see it, sound begins the process of final unification as everything created is drawn back to its source. The creation begins with sound. It follows, therefore, that the sound uttered by the creator breaks up all imperfect things. That which cannot resonate with the creative WORD cannot exist within it. So the world begins its return to its source through sound. When we can hear the word from the atmic plane without distortion, we can take our place with those who interpret and implement the Plan.

The ability to experience all this is called Nirvana. Divine Will can be registered throughout all of creation, but hearing might be the purest means of experiencing the expression of its intent. On the atmic plane perfect hearing is experienced as beatitude, perfect blessedness or happiness. Surely this perfect hearing which allows perfect transmission of divine will does permit such a state of being.

Hearing is also associated with the physical plane, being the first sense developed by evolving life forms. Sound is produced by causing matter to vibrate. It cannot exist without the particles that make up the gaseous sub plane with which it is associated. It is the means by which The Thinker communicates with life existing at this level. The smallest of Earth's creatures, bacteria and amoeba, have no consciousness of their divinity but they can experience it in this most basic way. A baby responds consciously to sound first. The self within hears and responds to vibration and realizes Itself. It is sound that begins the devolutionary process and it is sound that gathers matter into life forms which then begin to evolve under the stimulus of sound as the Creator begins to call them back.

Through developing the hearing sense we can learn to detect the divine Presence in our lives. At the physical level we hear It speaking through other humans, through animals, through the action of the wind and waves. Getting out into nature and listening to its sounds helps us to experience that Presence and move to the next level of more subtle hearing, listening to the grass grow, perhaps. Clairaudience, the astral or emotional level of hearing lets us hear those more subtle message. As another speaks we listen on a deeper level registering their feelings and state of mind, perhaps. Sound evokes the imagining of colours or even music. Higher clairaudience is the mental response to sound which creates specific understanding of details, patterns and shape. It begins to form an understanding of how the sound was created and how it can be used. This might be how the third Logos works as it creates, responding to what has been created and devising new permutations of the creation which produce an expanding universe of beautiful things and experiences. Comprehension is the result of this understanding as the place of every atom of each element is heard and blended and shaped into forms, each of which has specific meaning and a necessary place in the whole.

The final level of hearing, beatitude, allows one to listen to the perfection of creation, the symphony of the whole, and to enjoy the blessings that achieving harmony with all things allows. We reach for these higher states by remembering that everything is as it should be, where it needs to be to evolve, and that every circumstance is an opportunity to learn and grow and work toward perfection. Beatitude is realised through the not-self. It is achieved by listening to the Inner Voice, the silent sound of the soul which will answer any question if we but listen. This highest form of hearing is the sublime and eternal delight and the triumph of The One as its creation is reflected back into Itself. As man progresses from physical to atmic consciousness this is the progression of his sense of hearing. This progression illustrates the benefit of silence and of careful, discriminating

listening to what is inside as well as outside. Hearing is the voice of conscious, the inner soul which guides, directs and controls our lives and evolving consciousness.

Touch or Feeling. The Second Sense

1. *Physical touch.*
2. *Psychometry.*
3. *Planetary psychometry.*
4. *Healing.*
5. *Active service.*

Touch gives him an idea of relative direction, and enables a man to fix his place in the scheme, and to locate himself.

Touch-- The recognition of the sevenfold Form Builder, the gathering together of forms, their approximation and interrelation, the second Logos. The Law of Attraction between the Self and the not-self begins to work.

Touch—Service. The summation of the work of the Self for the not-self.

Touch is associated with the buddhic plane in the creative or devolving scheme. The buddhic plane being the fourth or middle plane is related to the plane of the 4th ether of the physical plane by the number four. Four is the meeting ground for past, present and future. They are all in the present, the eternal “now.” The buddhic level of consciousness is the highest in which mind can function. This plane is reached through meditation where a man learns to touch matter of a rarer quality. On this middle plane his mind is quickened and the path of ascent accelerates. Recognition and awareness result and mind begins to experience intuition instead of thought form creation. On reaching this plane one can become aware of his past, present and future and gains a grasp of a greater span of the continuity of life. The buddhic plane is the home of soul and the Hierarchy and this is the level of consciousness they use to communicate among themselves through intuitional awareness. Here the experience is “one of group fusion with the greater whole, and not so much individual fusion with the whole.” (EP II, 364) Through intuitive awareness one is in touch with the whole group and with its place in the whole. This is how the masters think and work.

In the evolutionary scheme, touch allows mind to understand something about the things outside oneself, such as their quality, size, shape and direction. It allows him to make comparisons. At the lower levels, its use can create separation. The development of touch gradually dissolves separation as consciousness penetrates into the things around self and learns to recognize the Greater Self of the Whole. Touch is the second sense to which a baby responds as a conscious being. Touch is a closer contact with a thing than hearing. It brings an awareness of not-self, what is beyond or outside self. As it comes from the air element touch is particularly associated with mind. Mind, as it registers consciousness, is always in touch because consciousness underlies all of creation. Through consciousness, depending on its breadth, we can reach to the ends of the universe. Touch is the innate recognition of contact with the not-self by mind, using recognition, memory or anticipation. It enables one to establish his own value in relation to others. On the physical level this touch reveals size and texture. Touch becomes an aspect of mind which allows one to experience the not self through the expansion of consciousness toward it. (CF, 201) On the astral level touch allows the mind to register the quality and

condition of things as one's feelings contact the feelings of another. On the mental level touch registers as planetary psychometry, the ability to sense the quality and condition of the whole planet and the various groups which exist within it.

Touch has a particular affinity with the buddhic plane where the mind functions as intuition. On that level the consciousness can penetrate the various levels of a thing or person, detect any imbalance and contact the appropriate energy needed to correct it, touching it with the vision of wholeness to heal. This is expanded at the atmic level to an awareness of what service is needed and appropriate in the administration of the Will of the Logos. It is the intuitive grasp of the pattern of the plan, the use of natural cycles and the ability to manipulate matter at the elemental level in carrying out that Plan. Service is the summation of the work of the Self for the not-self.

One can imagine that through touch the Logos is connected to and aware of even the smallest atom within the space in which it has created life. Every one of our thoughts, feelings, hurts or joys is experienced by Him through touch. It also enables him to know what we need at any moment as we move into our proper place within the Plan. Touch guides us through the periods of gradual spiritual unfoldment, the Paths of Probation and of Discipleship right up to the door of initiation. By revealing the nature of whatever we contact touch gives us information needed to make the right choices. Through touch we learn to contact higher vibrations and feel the response of the soul as we extend our consciousness inward. Through it we recognize our group and our Master and learn to live in contact with the Ego.

Sight. The Third Sense

1. *Physical sight.*
2. *Clairvoyance.*
3. *Higher clairvoyance.*
4. *Divine vision.*
5. *Realization.*

Sight gives him an idea of proportion, and enables him to adjust his movements to the movements of others.

Sight—The recognition of totality, the synthesis of all, the realization of the One in Many, the first Logos. The Law of Synthesis, operating between all forms which the self occupies, and the recognition of the essential unity of all manifestation by the means of sight.

Sight – Realization. Recognition of the triplicity needed in manifestation, or the reflex action of the Self and the not-self.

Sight comes out of the fire element and is related to mind on both the ascending and descending cycles of creation and evolution. Sight and mind both began to function in man during the 3rd root race. This allowed the establishment of the relationship between self and not self. Hearing is particularly a function of the 3rd Logos and the activity of matter, active intelligence, the known, form. Touch is related to the 2nd Logos, form building, love-wisdom, consciousness and the relationship between Self and Not-Self, realization. And now we have sight related to the 1st Logos and of Will, Spirit, The Self,

Life. With sight, the law of synthesis can reveal the essential unity of all manifestation as we ultimately learn to see the One Thing in everything around us. (CF 196).

Sight is the third sense which a baby learns to use consciously. Sight allows it to realize what has been heard and touched. Sight allows one to compare and relate oneself to others, to correlate ideas and discover their relationship. On the physical plane it gives a sense of proportion and enables one to adjust his movements to those of others. Sight manifests as clairvoyance on the astral plane, through use of the solar plexus, allowing one the first vision of inner worlds. The astral plane is the place of glamours, unreal fantasies which can trap the seer on a wrong path which leads to separation from the real self. Clairvoyance is not useful for the aspirant, probationer and its practice is discouraged.

Later as a disciple one learns to use higher clairvoyance as a function of mind on the mental plane. It reveals truth as thought forms, usually symbols, which bring light, information and inspiration. This can be experienced as illumination, a mystery unveiled as hidden wisdom in an idea becomes certain. Reflection on these flashes of inspiration produces definite belief through contemplation. When the personality focus begins to wane and consciousness begins to function on the buddhic level, the disciple gains some real awareness of what soul knows, what it can see. This is intuition, the key to soul vision and to wisdom. Higher clairvoyance has opened to a new world of experience which has always been there but not known. The life, nature and activity of the kingdom of souls and the Hierarchy become real to the higher senses. Finally, sight becomes realization on the atmic plane and Life is seen at its most subtle and basic level. This realization allows one to see the basic nature of an idea and its relation to the symbols seen in higher clairvoyance and so be able to construct an image of it. This becomes a thought form which can be precipitated as matter. Atmic realization allows the initiate to see through the eyes of The One, Self and not-self working as a unit, joined through the triplicity of Self and not-self and the relationship between them. It is sight which brings finally the recognition of the essential unity of all manifested things. This inner sight has always existed, but like the baby who at first sees without comprehension, we have to await the sufficient expansion of consciousness gained through experience before we can use it.

Taste. The Fourth Sense

1. *Physical taste.*
2. *Imagination.*
3. *Discrimination.*
4. *Intuition.*
5. *Perfection.*

Taste gives him an idea of value, and enables him to fix upon that which to him appears best.

Taste—Perfection. The evolution completed through the utilization of the not-self and its realized adequacy.

Taste and smell are derived from touch. Taste is associated with water and the astral plane. It is a very personal and emotional thing. We remember the taste of mother's cooking with feelings of love and security. Things that taste bad evoke quick, repelling

actions, like a baby spitting out what is strange or unpleasant. Taste leads to discrimination. Taste gives one an idea of value and allows one to choose what seems best. Taste determines what we wear and how we furnish our homes. Spices give value to food by making it taste better and were once used as a medium of exchange. While salt is not technically a spice it is the most vital means of adding flavor to food and is necessary to life. While a man can function well without taste, such a condition must take away much of the enjoyment of participating in living. But without discrimination, he will not evolve. He will have to go within to the higher planes to find the path to perfection.

Taste is basic to making choices of acceptance or rejection. At the physical level taste helps us decide what to eat, what we take in to nourish and build our bodies. Having derived much pleasure or disgust through food tasted, we begin to imagine ways to reproduce or improve its flavor. On the astral level taste is experienced as imagination. With much of Humanity functioning to a significant extent on the astral level, we note the popularity of cooking shows, the passion for wine tasting or the enjoyment of eating out, as imagination leads to a search for new, exciting flavors. These illustrate how, as the fourth sense, taste is related to the 4th ray of Harmony, Beauty and Art. Taste has become important as mind replaces emotion and discrimination is used to destroy illusion. It allows one to decide what is real and what is unreal.

Taste helps us decide what we take into our feelings by deciding who we associate with. Those with similar tastes makes for more compatible relationships. Taste helps to decide what we take into our thoughts, what we think, how we judge what is good or bad for us. This leads to discrimination which ultimately allows one to distinguish between the Self and the not-self, taste working on the mental plane. We learn how to choose between right and wrong. Discrimination leads to recognition of illusion and so to its dissolution. The process of learning discrimination leads to intuition. Intuition reveals the Unity within all beings and leads to appreciation of our contact with others and with soul on the buddhic plane. Taste has a particularly affinity with the buddhic plane. The development of buddhi is the basis for the development of the higher values of group awareness, selflessness, spiritual service. Eventually taste leads to perfection, the realization of the One Self within who is the True Self. All imperfection falls away in this revelation. "As the sense of taste on the higher planes is developed, it leads one to ever finer distinctions till one is finally led through the form, right to the heart of one's nature." (CF 201)

Smell. The Fifth Sense

1. *Physical smell*
2. *Emotional idealism.*
3. *Spiritual discernment.*
4. *Idealism.*
5. *All knowledge.*

Smell gives him an idea of innate quality, and enables him to find that which appeals to him as of the same quality or essence as himself.

Smell – Perfected Knowledge. The principle of manas in its discriminating activity, perfecting the interrelation between the Self and the not-self.

Smell is the last sense to develop. It adds new dimensions to the experience derived from the other senses. It prevents us from eating spoiled or poisonous food. It leads to what is most delicious. It detects what is not perfect. It also detects what is perfect and beautiful, like the scent of roses or pine trees on a warm day. Smell comes out of the element Earth. It is the highest of the purely physical senses; so in the vegetable kingdom a certain series of perfumes are evidence of radiation in that kingdom. It is said the Masters each have their own particular scent such as roses or lavender. Appreciation or distaste of certain smells is a very individual thing and allows one to find things of a quality or essence which are particularly his. As his consciousness rises through the planes, smell leads him closer and closer to his true home, his source, on the archetypal plane. Just as turtles use smell to find their breeding grounds over thousands of miles or pigeons to return to their roost, so can man find his place of origin through innate spiritual recognition. Taste led to the perfection of experience while smell leads to the experience of perfected knowledge. Just as culture determines taste in clothing, food or structures, so it can determine the preferred smells or modes of knowledge which make sense in relation to life's experiences. Having experienced a wide range of knowledge, each person finds that knowledge which he can turn into wisdom, because he can relate to it intimately on many levels.

On the path of devolution, as the last sense to be developed, smell relates to the physical plane. Life forms need the physical elements of water and air to experience the sense of smell. On the path of evolution, smell is related to the atmic plane where it finds its greatest expression. As man expands his consciousness on the astral plane smell becomes a sense of emotional idealism based on an intuitive reaction, just as smell on the physical level stimulates a desire to move closer to the scent or to withdraw violently from a disagreeable smell. On the mental plane, this brings spiritual discernment which allows one to respond to a group vibration or a telepathic perception of what is good or evil. This evolves into idealism on the buddhic plane. The sense of hearing as idealism and emotional idealism suggest a relationship to the 6th ray. On the buddhic plane the relationship between Self and not-self begins to be the focus of consciousness. On the atmic plane that becomes all knowledge, perfected knowledge, mind having chosen the truth of the One Reality. Smell has led one through recognition of one vibration to the place of origin.

The senses allow us to choose the experiences which give us the greatest satisfaction, those which "feed our soul." Gradually we direct our experiences away from those that are crude and unpleasant, those which do not bring contact with our inner self and an appreciation of it. Mind coordinates the senses, organizes the knowledge gained by them and synthesizes the five aspects of knowledge into purposeful activity. Eventually all the senses are absorbed into mind and intuition as one sense which leads to a "place" which is home, the place of origin, Unity with The One.