

## Chapter 6: Harmony in the Self (I) – Understanding Myself

We saw in the previous chapter that the human being is co-existence of the Self (I) and Body. We studied about the needs and activities of the Self and the Body. We also saw that the Body is my instrument and I am the seer, doer and enjoyer. I am continuously active to fulfil my need for happiness. Now, we will study more closely about the activities in the Self and the state of harmony in the Self in this chapter.

### ***Why should I study myself?***

This may be a question that may come to your mind at this juncture. Let us explore into this: In our search for harmony in all the spheres of our life, the first stage we come across is ourselves. We are human beings and so it becomes our need to understand – What is the human being? What/who am ‘I’? Towards this – we study the feeling of (our) Self – the constant presence of what we refer to as ‘I’. It seems quite amazing to believe, but many of us spend an entire lifetime without knowing the first person we live with – ourselves! That’s right, we spend the maximum of our time in ourselves, ‘with’ ourselves – we keep having thoughts and feelings and plans and are mostly lost or preoccupied with ourselves most of the time.

But have you ever attempted to know about yourself? Chances are, your answer is in the negative. Here are some questions you could ask yourself:

- What am ‘I’ like?
- What are the activities in ‘me’?
- What is my ultimate goal in life?
- How can I achieve it?
- Why do I have problems- whatever they are? How can I resolve them?
- Why do I get angry, frustrated or depressed? Why do I get scared?
- What is happiness and unhappiness and how is it caused?

Would you like to find out the answers to these questions, and many more such questions? Would you like to know these answers in your own right? If the answer is yes, then we can journey into an exciting place – ourselves! Knowing ourselves better helps us in the following ways:

- The Self (‘I’) is the basis of everything we do. All the desires and expectations we have:-be it to be famous, get marks, get a great job, become a politician, having good relationships in our family, or wanting rasgollas, or gulabjamun, it is all beginning in ‘I’. Hence, it becomes important to understand these desires, thoughts and activities in ‘I’, so that we know whether they are right!
- Happiness and unhappiness are states in the Self (‘I’). Hence, we need to study ourselves to understand happiness better, and the causes for unhappiness.

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- Studying ourselves helps us have more clarity about how we are within. As we gain clarity about ourselves, it helps us become self-confident.
- Since we are in relationship with other people, the more we understand ourselves, the more we understand the other person as well, and our relationship with them.
- Lastly, it allows us to better understand our Program, i.e. what is valuable to us, or what do we ultimately want and how do we fulfil them; What is our program?

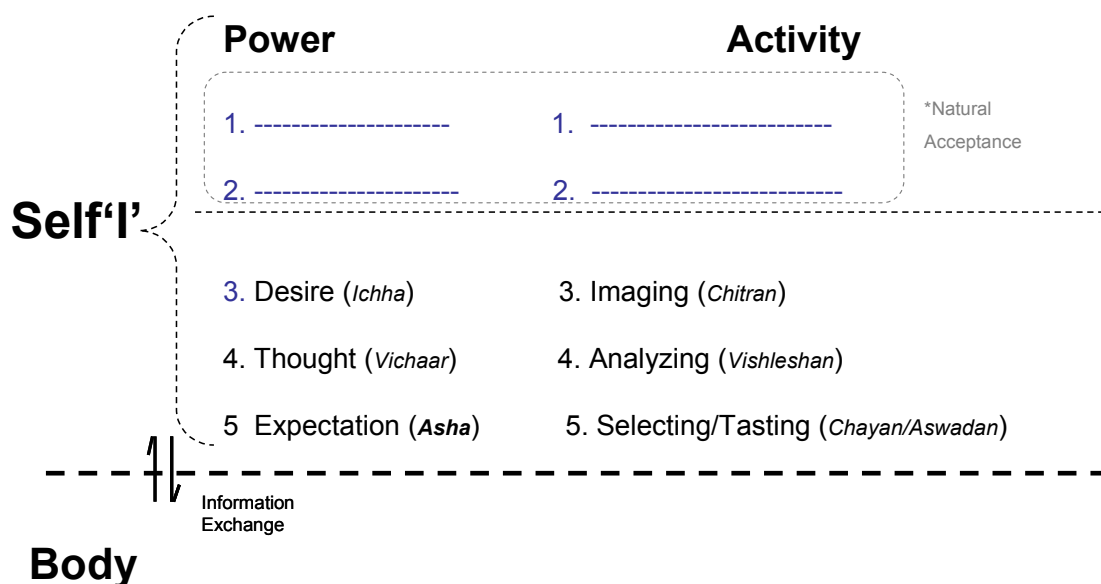
We shall learn more about ourselves in this chapter, so pay attention, this is one of the most important and interesting things you will get to know! Since all the learning we are going to do in this chapter is about ourselves, we shall start '*watching within*'- we shall start *observing ourselves!*

Let us begin this journey.....within...!

### **Getting to know the Activities in the Self (I)**

All of us are engaged in a variety of activities through the day. While we may recount these activities as studying, playing, eating, sleeping, etc, if we were asked to precisely answer the question 'what are the activities taking place in you?' – We may feel a bit lost. Perhaps you have not paid attention to it, or perhaps, you have tried to, but have not been able to make much progress. We may broadly say, that thinking is something 'I' do, 'I' can imagine, 'I' can taste, etc. However, just guessing about the activities in 'I' is not good enough for us, we need to understand them more clearly... let us now look into the activities in 'I' and understand each one of them in detail!

### **Activities in Self (I)**



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We shall be initially studying the 3 activities of the Self ('I') shown above. Activities 1 & 2 have been left blank; this is the source of the natural acceptance we have been discussing so far, and we shall discuss these activities later in this chapter.

At this point, we need to remember that the Self ('I') is conscious in nature while the body is physico-chemical in nature. We can each verify this for ourselves. The interaction between 'I' and the Body is in the form of exchange of information.

Let us look at the figure above:

- You can clearly see the Self ('I') and the Body, and that the interaction between the two is in the form of exchange of information.
- You can see 2 columns or headings:
  - Power: This means the basic capacity in the Self ('I'). They are:
    - Desire (*Ichchha*)
    - Thought (*Vichar*)
    - Expectation (*Asha*)
  - Activity: The activities listed above are:
    - Imaging (*Chitran*)
    - Analyzing (*Vishleshan*)
    - Selecting/Tasting (*Chayan/ Aswadan*)

We understand the Power from its Activity, or, the power is the *capacity* for that activity. i.e. the *capacity for the activity of 'imaging' is called 'desire'*. What does this mean? For example: Our desires are in the form of images. Every desire you have: to have respect, to have knowledge, to do something useful with your life, is in the form of an image. From the image (the activity), you conclude that you have desires (the power). Hence, when we study the activity, we understand the power behind it. *The power is the basic capacity for that activity.*

Now let us try to understand these activities and powers. When we do so, we will look at each pair of Power and Activity. i.e. we will look at Desire and Imaging together (Desire is a power, i.e. it is the *capacity of imaging*) and we will then look at Thought and Analyzing together and then Expectation and Selecting/Tasting together.

A simple example to understand these activities is as follows:

- We may have a desire to have respect by being the owner of a big house. This is in the form of imaging – we have an “image” in us of ‘this need for respect via a house’.
  - Here, the *power* is ‘desire’, and the *activity* is ‘imaging’.
- Based on this desire, this image, we start working out the details of the house. The house will have rooms and a verandah, it will have a porch in the front, there will be a kitchen garden on the backside, it will have storeys and you will stay on the topmost storey and keep renters on the ground floor, etc. Here the image of ‘wanting respect from the house’ is broken into many parts - this is called analysing. When I have an

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image in me of myself being a house-owner, it is a single image, but after analysing, we can see its different parts. The activity of analyzing thus means breaking down the image into various parts, or, “to open it up”

- Here, the *power* is ‘thought’, and the *activity* is ‘analyzing’.
- Now that we have worked out the details of the house, we go about choosing the size, colour etc, of the rooms: what the dimensions and layout of the rooms will be – will it be rectangular, oval or, square, what will the colour of the house be- will it be yellow, white or creamy colour, etc.– this is called selecting/tasting. The selecting/tasting is with the expectation of fulfilling our desire.
  - Here, the *power* is ‘expectation’, and the *activity* is ‘selecting/ tasting’.

It is important to note here that when it comes to understanding the power and corresponding activity, it is the activity which we are able to see within ourselves and hence understand it. Therefore, as we go ahead, we may focus on activity only (we may relate it to power sometime). Let us now explore into these activities in greater detail:

#### **5. Power of “Expectation” or Activity of “Selecting/Tasting” in I:**

We do this all the time! We are expecting some ‘taste’, we are making some ‘selection’ from our environment all the time. We ‘select’ whether to eat a samosa or kachori. On what basis did we make this selection? Ans: We had the ‘taste’ of both items in us from before, and on that basis made a ‘selection’.

Similarly to take another example of Selecting/Tasting: you planned your career. You could have selected engineering or medicine or accounts or management. When you selected engineering, you again selected whether it would be computer science or electrical or mechanical or some other stream. Within that stream, you selected what specialization you will have after the completion of your program and you started selecting your electives accordingly! In this example as well, with every selection made, you had a ‘taste’ associated with it. You wanted to lead a good life, and the ‘taste of a good life’ got associated with engineering as a career!

We can thus each see that this selecting and tasting is going on in us continuously, through the day, all the time.

- A Selection is always made *in order to fulfil a Taste* we already have in us .
- The *activity* here is “selecting/tasting” (*chayan/asvadan*), and the capacity for that activity, or its *power*, is called “expectation” (*asha*).

We can take numerous more examples from daily life to understand this activity of Selecting/Tasting. For example, we decide (Selecting) which motorcycle to buy based on an earlier assumption (Taste) of which motorcycle looks better. We decide which movie to watch (Selecting) based on our prior experience of the hero (Taste). We have been sitting on a sofa for a long time, and we then change our position (Selecting) based on the comfort (Taste). All the time, throughout the day, every day, we are constantly engaged in the activity of selecting and tasting. [The content presented here is part of the book copyrighted to Prof. R R Gaur, Prof. R Sangal and Prof. G P Bagaria, and being printed by Excel Books, New Delhi. It is the text book for the course ‘A Foundation Course in Human Values and Professional Ethics’ offered by UPTU.](#)

tasting, i.e. we are constantly “expecting”. We may not always be aware of it, but it is happening, all the time, and it is happening in us, in ‘I’, all the time!

We can also see that Selecting and Tasting are complimentary. For example, based on a Selection, our taste changes, then the next selection we make is with this changed taste, which may again change our taste i.e. you have the taste for a rasgolla and you like it. Then one day, you go to a shop and taste a gulabjamun, and you like this better. The ‘Taste’ in you has now changed from a rasgolla to a ‘gulabjamun’. Based on the new taste (gulabjamun), your selection also changes and hence the next time you go to the sweet shop, you select in order to fulfil this *new* taste: you prefer the gulabjamun to the rasgolla.

You can start observing yourself now, and you will see that you are doing this all the time. You only have to pay attention to it to see it. Once you start paying attention to it you will start seeing that you get the feeling of happiness/unhappiness from the taste, i.e. sometimes we like the pleasure from the selection/taste, sometimes, we do not. Selection/Taste thus has an impact on our happiness. It is important to note that Selecting/Tasting happens in the Self (‘I’), or in your Self (‘I’), and not in the Body!

The activity of Selecting/Tasting is the basic level via which the Self (I) interacts with the Body. All the inputs/information from the Body are taken into I via Tasting, while all directives to the Body from ‘I’ (like lifting the hand) are from the activity of Selecting. You will see that this activity happens very quickly, it may be hard to ‘catch’ it. For example: decide to lift your hand and you will see your hand moves. Try to notice the decision in you to lift the hand and then try to notice the relation between the decision and the hand moving. This will give you a better idea of the co-existence between you (or, ‘I’) and the body!

#### **4. Power of “Thought” or Activity of “Analyzing”**

We all think throughout the day. For example, you keep thinking of how to solve a problem, or what the design for your house should be like, how to secure a good life, how to get a good grade, how to make good relations with your friends, some old incident that happened with you, some numerical that you are not able to solve, etc. When we look at it carefully, it turns out that what we call as “thought” today is actually “analyzing”. In analyzing, we break the image we have in desire into smaller details – or, detailing out is called ‘analyzing’, and the *power* is called thought.

We can each check this for ourselves – we only have to start observing ourselves, start becoming aware of ourselves and our activities, and we can observe this activity of analyzing. If you explore into yourself, you will find that your desires are in the form of images, and these are constantly ‘being expanded’ and you slowly start observing them part by part. This expansion, or ‘making into parts’ is nothing but thought or analysis. This expansion, this activity of analysis is the basic way in which we plan, we schedule, manage things, we explain a phenomena, we work out the bits and pieces of our responsibilities, etc. This activity of analyzing (*vishleshan*) takes place in us all the time.

#### **5. Power of “Desire” or Activity of “Imaging”**

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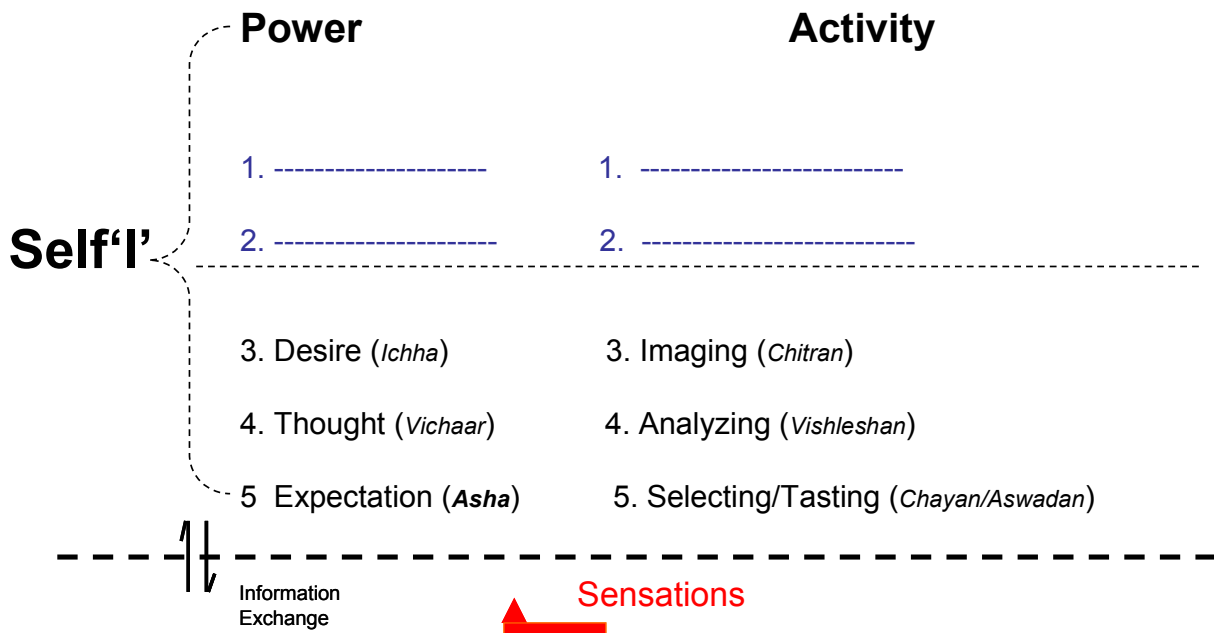
There is no human that does not desire. All of us have desires. Right from childhood to old age, each one of us desires. Desires are in the *form* of images. Hence, the *activity is imaging, while the power is desire*. For example, you can have the desire to “feel respectable by owning a large house”; the desire to “do well in life”; to “become knowledgeable”, to “be successful” - each one of us can start listing down our desires and we shall see that we have a lot of these desires or images in us.

When we study desires, we see that they are in the form of “images”. In the examples listed above: of wanting respect, success, become knowledgeable, etc., each of these desires is in the form of images. Each one of us has these images, these desires, and we are constantly trying to fulfil these desires.

**How are the activities in ‘I’ related?**

We had a brief overview of the activities in ‘I’ in the previous section. We will now see how these activities are inter-related.

**Activities in Self (I)**



The flow today is from outside to inside. i.e. based on sensation, thoughts are set, and based on these thoughts, for these sensations, the desires are set. This means we are enslaved by the thoughts and sensation

**There are 2 possible flows of the activities, and both keep taking place:**

**From outside (the body) to inside (in ‘I’):**

- ‘I’ receives sensations from the Body and this is tasted in ‘I’ (activity #5).

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- Based on this taste, thoughts could be triggered (*activity #4*), and
- Based on these thoughts, desires may be set (*activity #3*).

A desire may be set in me through the above process.

For example,

- we may see a car (Taste in 'I' from information obtained via 'eyes' in the Body); this is Selecting/Tasting or (*activity #5*),
- Based on this we start Thinking about the car (*activity #4*), and
- It slowly forms an image in us as we "leading a good life" by using a car, and in this way, "a good life by having a car" becomes a desire in us (*activity #3*).

***From inside (in 'I') to outside (the body):***

In the scenario above, we saw that selecting/tasting can lead to thoughts, and thoughts could lead to desires. The flow is also possible the other way round: i.e. based on desires, thoughts are formed, and we then make selections/taste to fulfil these thoughts.

Going to back to the example of the car;

- we now have the desire of "a good life via the car" in us (*activity #3*) and
- we go about fulfilling this desire for a good life, which means we start thinking about how to get the car, how much money it would take, how we can have that money, etc (*activity #4*), and
- based on that we make selections (*activity #5*), and actually choose the car, its shape, colour etc. and then end up buying it

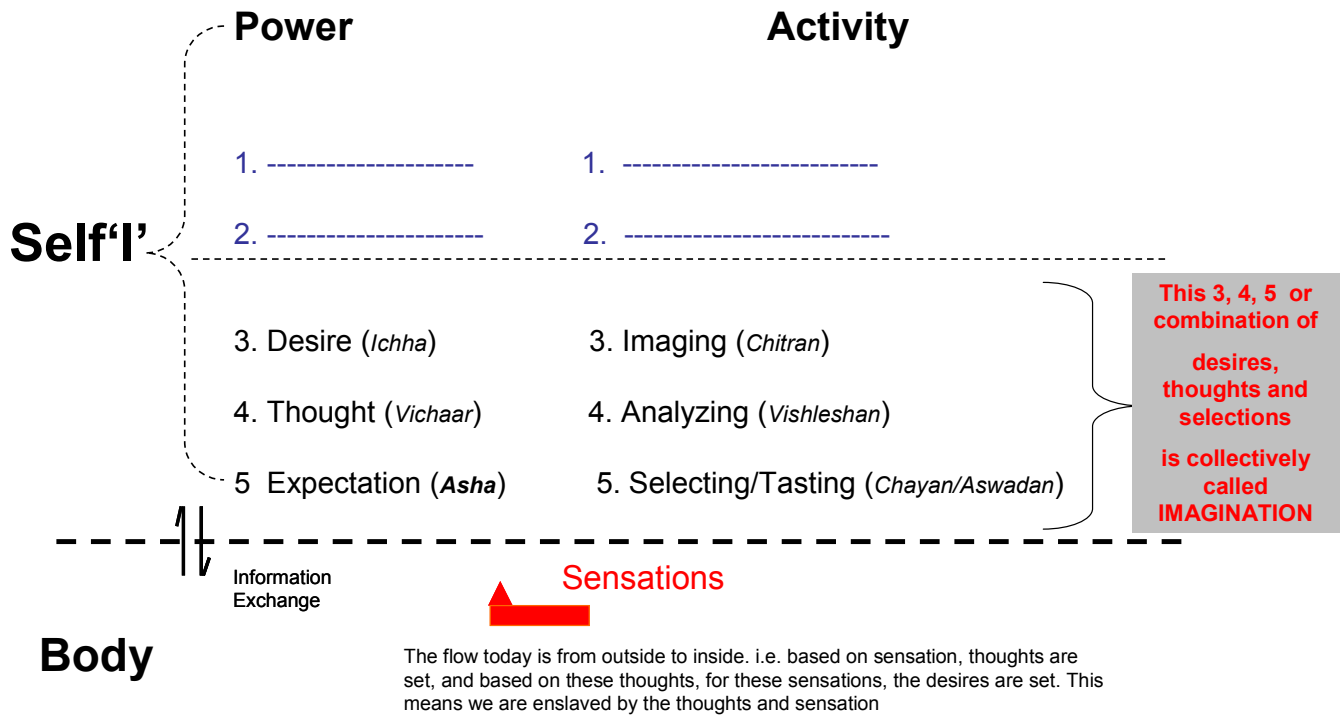
This flow is from inside to outside.

In this way, our flow of operation is largely: outside – setting inside – in turn going outside; and this happens continuously.

It is also possible that after seeing the car, we did not even *Think (activity #4)* of it, rather, just kept admiring it and liking the way it looked (*activity #5*). In this case, we were only selecting/tasting (*activity #5*) and did not even *think (activity #4)* of the car. Thus, while sometimes we end up thinking, many a time, we keep operating just at the level of Selecting/Tasting (*activity #5*). We can each observe ourselves and find out which activities are going on in us, in this manner.

These activities of desire, thought, expecting (selecting) are *discernable* i.e. we can make out they are happening. Together, we call these activities *imagination*. We all imagine, and most of our activities (in our Self) today can be mostly clubbed into imagination.

# Activities in Self (I)



We make choices with the external world, based on our imagination today.  
Imagination = Desires + Thoughts + Expectations.

## The activities in 'I' are continuous

We saw that there are various activities in 'I'. Now let us find out whether these activities in 'I' are continuous or temporary. Let us take the case of 'imaging' (*activity #3*). Start observing yourself, ponder over it and ask this question: "Is imaging a continuous activity; or does it go on and off with time?" You will find that imaging continues with time – it is taking place all the time. You are imaging throughout the day, even at night. During the day, we keep having desires, and these desires don't stop even at night (we will explore this later, when we talk of imagination)

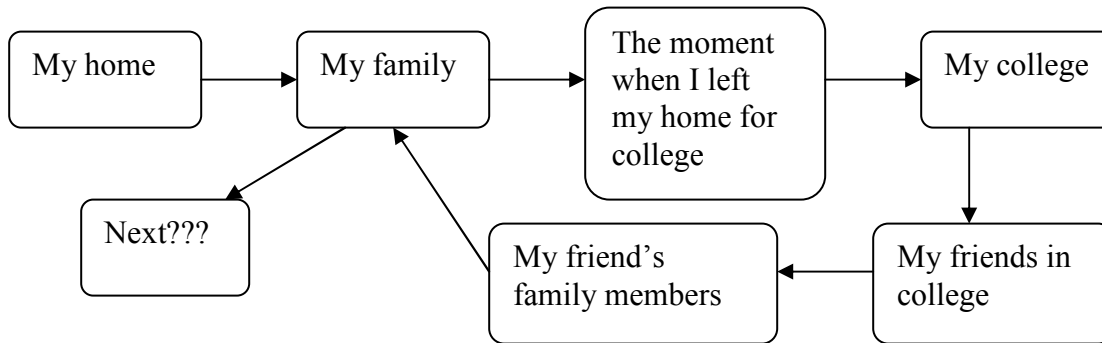
The activity of Selecting/Tasting is also continuous. We are 'expecting' something all the time. In this, we see that while the object of *taste* may change (taste of rasgolla, taste of engineering, taste of nice looking bike, etc), the *selection* that you make may focus on different items (the rasgolla, engineering, or bike) at different times – but the activity of selecting/tasting is continuous.

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The activity of analyzing, takes place all the time as well. For example, I may be analyzing my personal life at one moment, then, my attention may shift to the surroundings and I may start some other analysis or thought, and then after sometime I may start thinking about my relationship with people. In this way, while *what we analyze* may keep changing, *the activity of analyzing* is continuous.

Let us carry out a fun exercise now. Take a pen and put ‘content of imagination in I’ on the paper. Write down what is going on in you. As your attention keeps shifting, as you keep changing your expectation and your thoughts, keep writing them down, and connect them with lines. I have done this below for myself: See how our imagination keeps shifting from one object to the other!



Do this exercise. It is worth doing it. You will become aware that you keep on doing this all the time. You are continuously active. In other words, the activities and powers in me are ongoing and continuous. I can become aware of them just by paying attention to them. So it's not like these activities suddenly started in you after you started with this book! These activities were anyway going on in you, and in all of us. It may be that you were not aware of them, that you had not paid attention to them in this sense. When we start paying attention to them, when we start observing ourselves, we become aware of them.

We also find that we do not have to ‘start’ these activities of analyzing, or selecting/tasting or imaging. Neither can we “stop” them. *These activities keep going on in us, irrespective of whether we want them or not!* This is what happens when we say ‘I didn’t mean to do this, or; I keep thinking about this, and I wish it would stop!’ or, ‘I was going to the exam, and that song kept repeating itself in me, it was so distracting!’ – These situations happen in all of us ! – There is ‘something’ going on in us, and it is continuous. These activities affect us. We shall now see what effect these activities have on our state of being and how we can resolve this issue, in the coming sections.

## ***What is the problem today?***

### **Desires, thoughts and expectations are largely being set by pre-conditionings or sensations.**

In the previous section, we explored into the activities in I. We shall now look into what is the problem we have today – the problem of unhappiness, of stress, of discomfort we feel – and what its possible causes are.

#### **Let us take two scenarios:**

##### ***Scenario 1: Desires set on the basis of preconditioning:***

When you see an advertisement for a big bike, what happens? You pay attention to the advertisement, and then you think about it. As you think, you start warming up to the idea, it plays on you, and slowly, you decide that you ‘want’ this bike because having this bike means you will be seen as a ‘bike-walla’, i.e. you have associated the bike with some notion of greatness, speciality of your being, i.e. it has become your Desire (Activity #3 in ‘I’). This is the meaning of a preconditioned desire. Preconditioned means, we have *assumed* something about it on the basis of prevailing notion about it. We have not self-verified the desire in our own right. As a result, we are not clear about what we will get out of fulfilment of that desire. In fact, we may not even be aware that such a desire exists in us!

What is the problem with that, you may ask? Well, the simple answer is, unless you verify your desires, you may not even know whether they are yours! You may end up spending an entire lifetime accumulating desires that are not yours, and in running about trying to fulfil them! Which means, your entire lifetimes goals and activities may be ‘borrowed’...with the result that we would never know whether we did the right thing. There are more problems to this, and we shall discuss these further in this chapter.

##### ***Scenario 2: Expectations set on the basis of sensation:***

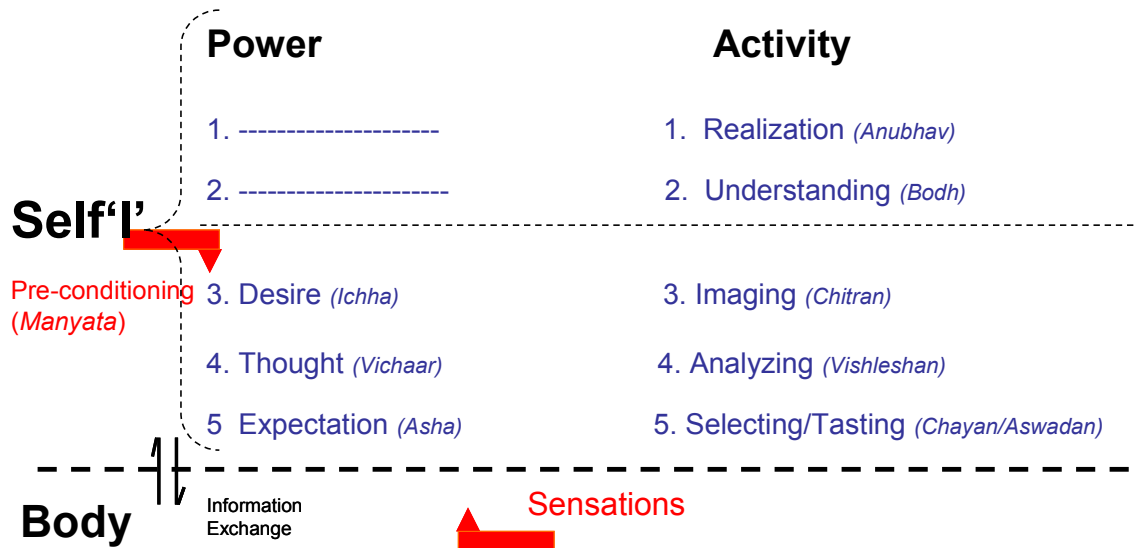
In the example of the bike in the earlier section, suppose you had seen the bike, and not associated it with “greatness”; rather, you only liked the way it ‘looked’ – then this is based on the sensation. i.e. the looks alone of the bike, the ‘taste’ of the bike is what is appealing, and there is no notion of greatness associated with it as in the previous case. This is an example of ‘expectation being set on the basis of sensations’.

This is largely the case with us today: Either we are operating on the basis of preconditioned desires (set from outside), or on the basis of sensation (coming from the body). As long as we are operating mostly, or solely on the basis of preconditioning or on the basis of sensation, we cannot be sure of ourselves, and it may also lead to contradictions in us. This is explored in further detail later in this chapter.

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We can see below how the desires in 'I' are set by preconditioning and the sensations:

## Activities in Self (I)



### Effects of the problem...

We saw in the previous section that today our desires, thoughts and selections are largely driven by preconditions/beliefs/assumptions prevailing around or by sensations from the body. This leads to problems in the Self ('I'), and we shall explore this further in this section:

#### 1) Conflict or contradictions in 'I' as a result of preconditioned desires

We have desires, thoughts and expectations and this is called imagination. Very nice! What then is the problem today? Think of your state of mind about a month before your examinations. You have to study, but you feel lethargic about it. You would rather go watch a movie with your friends. Even as you sit down and try to study, you start thinking about the movie and keep getting disturbed. On the contrary, had you gone to the movie, you would have been thinking about your studies all the time, and hence felt guilty.

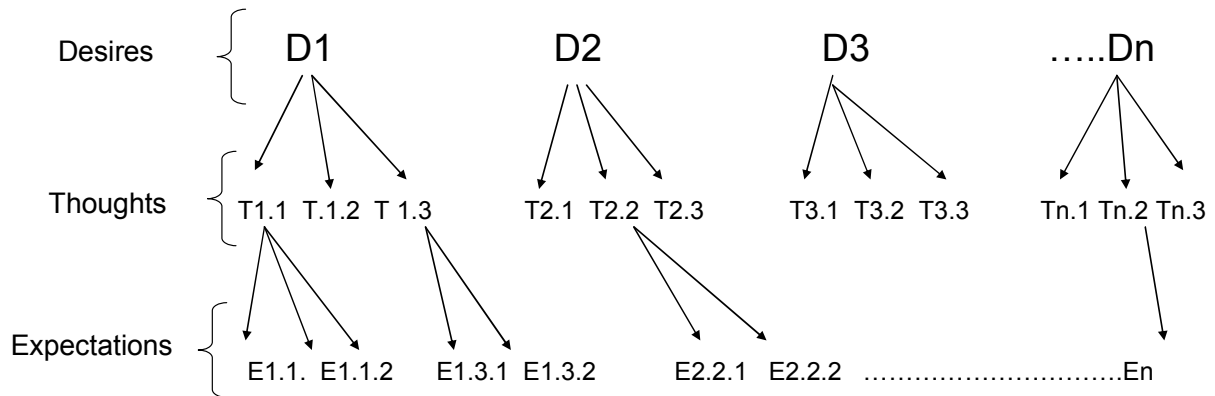
What is happening? We are undecided, unsure – we call this 'conflict', or us having 'conflicting tendencies' within. This happens to us most of the time. Each one of us is faced with such conflicts; and we face them through the day: it is conflicts that lead to stress and unhappiness in us. This is because:

- a) We are largely even unaware of the activities of imaging, analyzing and selecting/tasting taking place in us

We have not verified the desires, thoughts and expectations in us on the basis of our own natural acceptance. As a result, we don't even know whether they are ours, There is always

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some conflict within us, as we have conflicting desires, thoughts and expectations, as shown below:



\* In the diagram above, prefix D is for Desires, prefix T is for Thoughts and prefix E is for Expectations. We have multiple desires. Each desire gives rise to multiple thoughts. Each thought gives rise to multiple expectations (expectation is a power in 'T', the activity is selection/taste). Hence, we can also say that each thought gives rise to multiple selections.

*We can see that we have conflict at multiple levels –*

**Desires are in conflict:**

- Example: You want to become a great man, but have both desires: to be great by having a very large, fashionable house, for which you might have to use the wrong means, and at the same time, be great by having the trust of the people with you, by not cheating them.

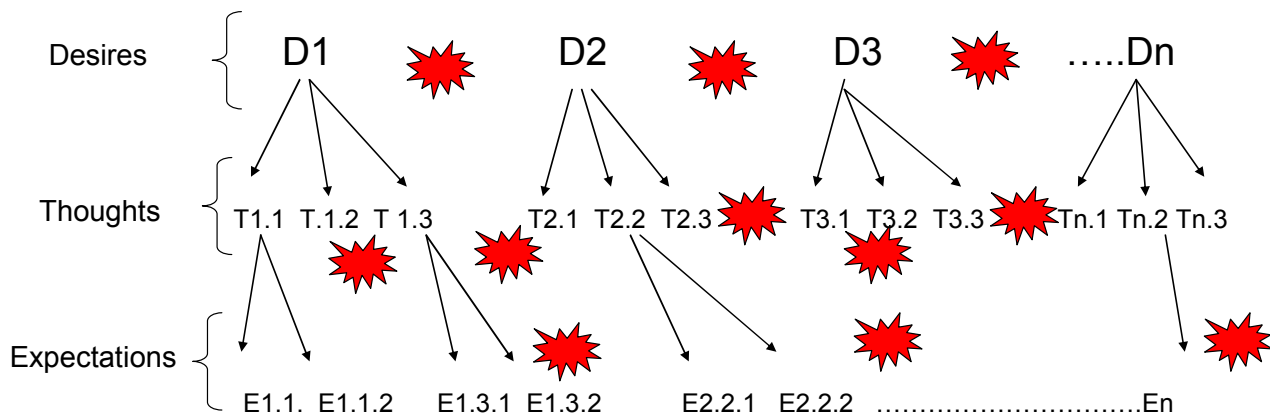
**Thoughts are in conflict:**

- Example: You are designing the rooms in your house and feel on the one hand that it must look better than your neighbour's house, and on the other hand, it should be like a house you saw in some magazine.

**Expectations are in conflict:**

- Example: You are not able to decide the colours of the walls in the house – whether it should be bright, or whether it should be dull.

These desires, thoughts and selections are in conflict. Since the desires are in conflict, the thoughts they give rise to are also in conflict and in turn, the selections from the thoughts are also in conflict:



- Desires are in conflict with each other
- Each desire give rise to thoughts which are in conflict with each other as well as with the thoughts from another desire
- Similarly, thoughts give rise to expectations which are in conflict...for each thought, and between expectations from other thoughts. This leads to tension, confusion, unhappiness...

\* Prefix D is for Desires, prefix T is for Thoughts and prefix E is for Expectations.

During this process, do we ever refer to our natural acceptance to find out what is right for us? Seldom do we do this today...we hardly ever ask ourselves, what do I really want to be? Since this question is never asked, since we hardly ever investigate into it, we keep on desiring, thinking and selecting, but with conflicts and contradictions!

Thus, it becomes clear that since our desires, thoughts and expectations are based on pre-conditionings or sensations and not on our natural acceptance, they are in conflict and this becomes the cause for our unhappiness.

**Let us summarize the problems we face today due to these preconditioned desires, thoughts and selections:**

**Wavering aspirations:** Since our desires are being set on the basis of pre-conditionings and are inputs from the outside (*they are borrowed, or from external influence, they are not our own*), our goals keep shifting as the inputs from the outside also keep changing (*the influence from the TV may be different from the influence from the magazine; different magazines may say different things!*).

Our desires thus keep shifting, because their source is 'outside' and these preconditioned desires may come from what we read, see, hear, from media, friends, society, etc. Hence, we are always wavering in what we want; we are not able to be certain about it. For example, at one moment, we are told that gentlemen put on well-creased garments, finely knit and weaved, and we hence aspire to be a gentleman of that kind. We come to college, and watch friends wearing faded or even torn jeans, which are termed to be the 'look of the season', and we rush

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to the shop to get a pair of similar jeans. We join engineering, and aspire to go for higher studies. Suddenly, we read in a newspaper that a student of management gets paid in seven figures per annum in his first job, and our goal changes. No longer do we want higher studies, we only want management now! *And thus it is, that our aspirations, what we really think we want to do, may be nothing but some influence we picked up from outside, with the result that it keeps wavering.*

**Lack of confidence:** Since our desires are shaky, we are not sure about them, and don't know what it is that we ultimately want. As a result, we lack self-confidence, in the true sense. Our confidence seems relative i.e. *we keep comparing ourselves with others in order to feel confident.* For example, I feel confident of my torn jeans when I feel others appreciate it or I feel confident of myself if I can speak English as well as the others. My source of self-confidence is not in myself (i.e. it is not absolute). Rather, my source of self-confidence is outside, as long as others feel I am fine, I feel good (i.e. it is relative)

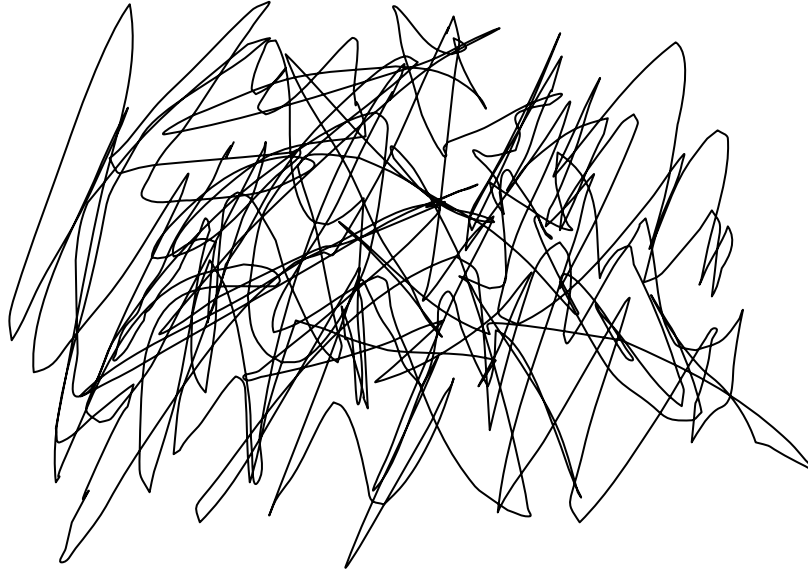
**Unhappiness/ Conflict:** since our desires, thoughts and expectations are in conflict, it becomes cause for our unhappiness, leading to stress and tension. Moreover, our desires may also be in conflict with our natural acceptance, thus guaranteeing our own unhappiness. For example: we may strongly believe that the only way to succeed is by cheating the other person – and thus, have a program of cheating for our entire life. But when we try to cheat, when we try to exploit, it creates conflict in us at that very instant – since exploiting the other is not naturally acceptable to us, thus leading to conflict and unhappiness in us.

**Lack of qualitative improvement in us** – This is because, we get conditioned to ignore the need of the 'I' and focus largely on fulfilling the needs of the body. As a result, we live with a sense of lack of fulfilment. We are doing many things, accumulating a lot, progressing on paper, but we don't feel that *we have improved*, that *we have become better*. It seems that only the things around us are changing! For example, I now have a great job, a good title, a doctorate degree, many research papers to my credit, a big house, plenty of money, **but I am still the same** i.e. there is little or no **QUALITATIVE** improvement in me, only **QUANTITATIVE** changes in the external world.

**State of resignation:** Many of us try to understand the meaning of life, and our place and purpose in the scheme of things, as we seek solutions to the problems that concern us, be it social problems, or environmental problems, or regarding the purpose of life. However, because we do not understand ourselves properly and have contradictions within, we slowly start getting disillusioned. We feel that there are no solutions to these issues, and end up in a state of resignation.

To sum up, if our desires, thoughts and expectations are based on preconditioning, we are generally in a state of great confusion. Given below is a representation of the way our desires, thoughts and expectations look today!

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### **Living with pre-conditionings:**

- Desires, thoughts and expectations keep changing as new inputs keep coming and the activities in 'I' take a zig-zag path as shown above.
- This leads to confusion, unhappiness, conflict and stress
- We have lack of clarity about the self, relationships, society, nature and existence.
- We have a lack of self-confidence.
- We have a feeling of being unfulfilled, unsettled.
- We operate largely on the basis of the environment, driven from the 'outside' – either from sensations, or based on preconditioning!
- This is just an illustration. You can make the same diagram for yourself: Close your eyes, right now, and become aware of the thoughts in you – as you trace your desires, thoughts and expectations, you can see what pattern comes out!

## **2) Short lived nature of pleasure from sensations**

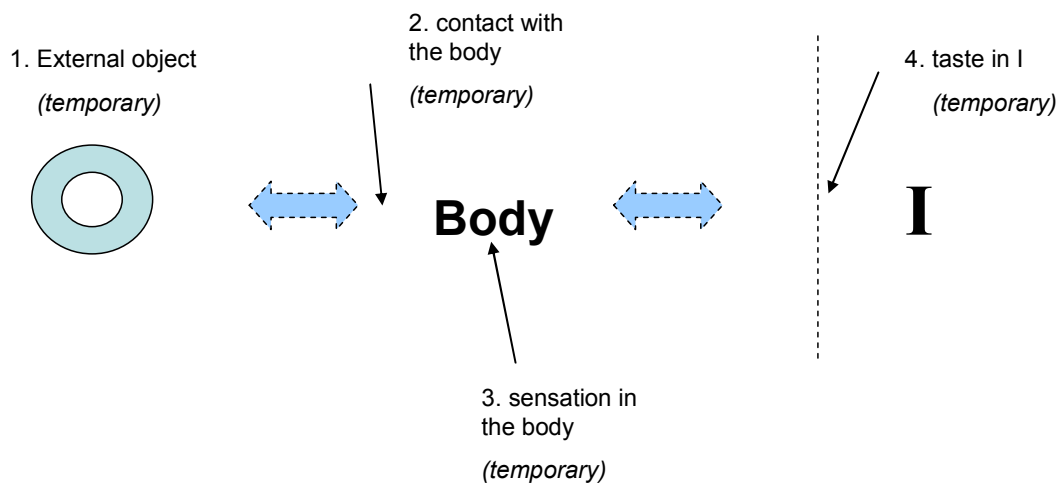
The pleasure obtained from sensations is short-lived. Let us take an example to clarify this point:

Your friend takes you to a sweet shop one day. You eat some sweets. You like it so much, that you keep coming back for it. So much so, that you now need the sweets everyday, else you feel something is wrong, and you finally fall sick because of this. This is the sensation from the body and we have ended up being conditioned by it. Note that eating the sweet, by itself is not

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so much the issue; the issue is that we have become so dependent on it, that instead of giving us some sensory pleasure, it becomes the source for our unhappiness!

There are numerous such examples from daily life. While the example we took of the sweet is somewhat extreme where someone falls sick, we are all driven by the sensations from the body – from the five senses in the body (sound from the ears, touch from the skin, sight through the eyes, taste from the mouth and smell from the nose). We are driven by these five sensations and most of the time we are busy trying to get pleasure from sensations, from the senses. Here again, you may wonder what the issue with this is. This can be understood as follows:



In the figure above, there is an external object, the sweet, there is the body and there is the (Self) 'I'. The sweet comes in contact with the Body. There is sensation from the Body to 'I' and then there is tasting in 'I'. We can note that

- [1] The sweet is *temporary* in nature, it does not last for ever
- [2] The *contact* of the sweet with the body is *temporary* in nature (you can't keep the sweet in your mouth for ever!)
- [3] The *sensation* from the Body to 'I' is *temporary* in nature
- [4] The *taste* of the sensation from the Body in 'I' is also *temporary*

Hence, this whole sequence of events in taste from the body is temporary.

The need of the 'I' is *continuous*. I.e. we want to have happiness, and its continuity. Therefore, if the *source for our happiness is temporary by definition*; then our *need for continuous happiness* will never be fulfilled! Hence, any sensation we have from the body can't be the source for our lasting happiness.

You can observe this in yourself; through the day. You will find that no matter how much you try to become happy via the senses, or via bodily sensations, it does not last. This does not mean that we stop these sensations from the body, or that we stop tasting from the senses! It

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only means that we need to understand the *limitations of happiness or pleasure got from the sensations* from the body and need to understand what is their use or purpose. If we confuse this purpose with happiness, we are in trouble, since something that is *temporary* can't be the source for our *continuous* happiness.

The role that sensation plays is that it tells whether the object in the external world (in this case, the taste of the sweets) is suitable for the body or not. If something is rotten, the sensation of smell gives us the information of it not being suitable to eat. As we become more aware of 'I', we are better able to judge the suitability of physical facilities for the health of the Body.

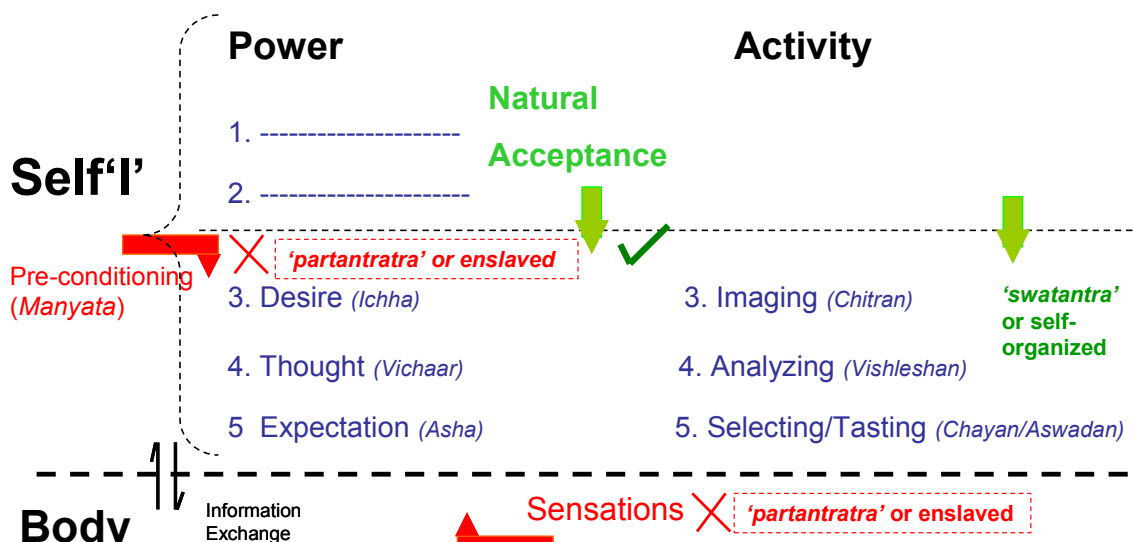
**We can thus see that living on the basis of preconditioning (“good life means having a nice car”) or sensation (happiness out of taste from the Body ) means being in a state of being decided by the other or outside i.e. enslaved (partantrata). We are at the mercy of the preconditioning and the sensation. Whereas, we want to be in the state of self-organization, of being decided by our own self, in our own right (‘swantrata’).**

Let us now look at how we can resolve this situation!

### What then is the solution?

Okay, so we have all these problems. What is the solution? This is exactly what we want to discuss now! The solution is to start verifying our desires, thoughts and expectations on the basis of our natural acceptance. We have already seen that this natural acceptance is in each one of us, and it is invariant and unchanging. It is the basis for us to verify how we really want to be. As we start verifying our desires, thoughts and expectations, if we find that they come from pre-conditioning or from sensation and they are something we don't really want, they get dropped by themselves. On the other hand, if we find them naturally acceptable, then we know they are right for us.

## Activities in Self (I)



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Let us take the same example that we took earlier. Ask yourself this question. Is trust acceptable to me in relationship, or mistrust? Now observe yourself in daily life. You shall see that very often, we end up having a feeling of mistrust for people, and since this is not in alignment with our natural acceptance, *at that very instant*, we become unhappy. Similarly, we can find numerous such examples where our desires, thoughts and expectations are not in alignment with our natural acceptance, and cause us unhappiness.

In addition, as we have seen earlier, there is also conflict amongst desires, thoughts and selections, and this only adds to the problem. So, how does the accessing of natural acceptance resolve this situation?

- As we access our natural acceptance, it becomes possible for us to have the right understanding of the harmony at all levels of our living (*remember our program!*).
- When we have the right understanding, we are able to see our “true nature”, and what we truly want. We are also able to see and understand the harmony at all levels of our living. Our desires thus start getting set on the basis of this right understanding – instead of being driven by preconditioning/sensations.
- Since our natural acceptance or right understanding is based on “reality”, on the harmony at all levels of our being, which is definite, our desires, thoughts and selections get aligned with this understanding of the harmony at all levels of our being. They become definite and they are in harmony among themselves.
- This puts us at ease. We are no longer struggling or are in conflict at the various levels of our living. This leads to harmony within, and in our living: with the body, family, society and nature/existence.
- Further, we can see on investigation that this natural acceptance turns out to be the same for everyone.

### **Realization and Understanding**

There are 2 activities in Self (‘I’) [placed at point 1 & 2 in the figure above], that we have not discussed so far. These are:

- 1) **Realization:** Means to be able to ‘see’ the reality as it is.
- 2) **Understanding:** Means to be able to understand the self-organization in all entities of nature/existence and their inter-connected organization “as it is”. We are able to see the harmonious interconnectedness at all the levels of our living.

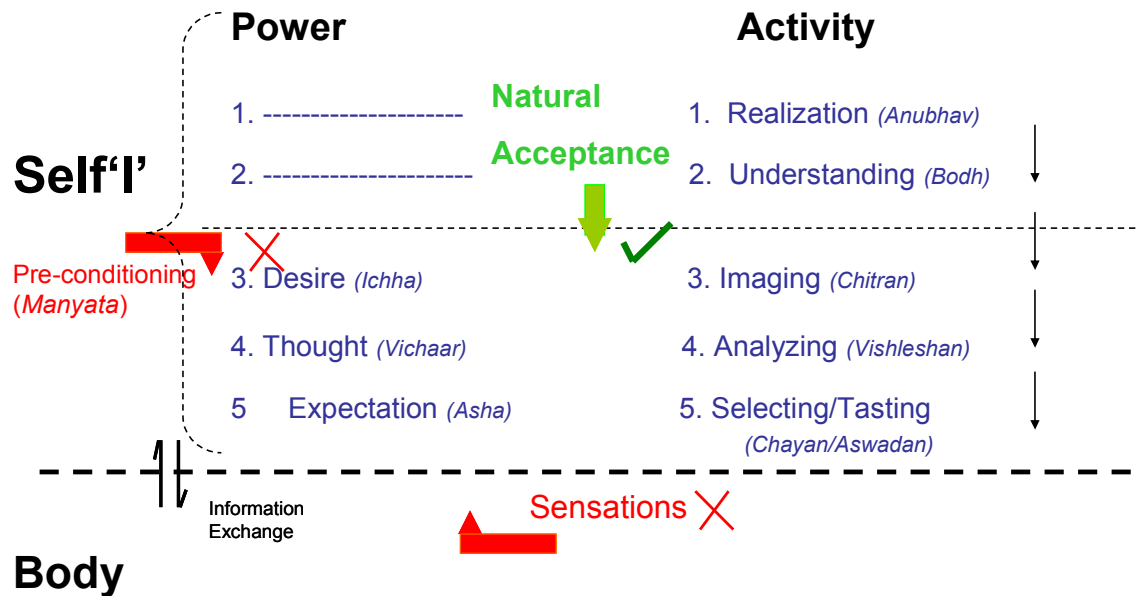
‘Operating on the basis of our natural acceptance’ thus *leads to* ‘operating on the basis of our ‘Realization’ and ‘Understanding’. So long as activities (1) and (2) are not activated, we have conflicting desires, thoughts and expectations and they are not in conflicts with our natural acceptance, and this results in what is called unhappiness.

But constantly referring to our natural acceptance (using the proposals we are discussing in this book), leads to the activation of (1) and (2), and this is what we are working for in this course. Having said that, we should keep in mind that to activate (1) and (2), we have to keep on going

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through the process of self-exploration. It starts as something we have to ‘remember’; and then slowly becomes a regular exercise for us!

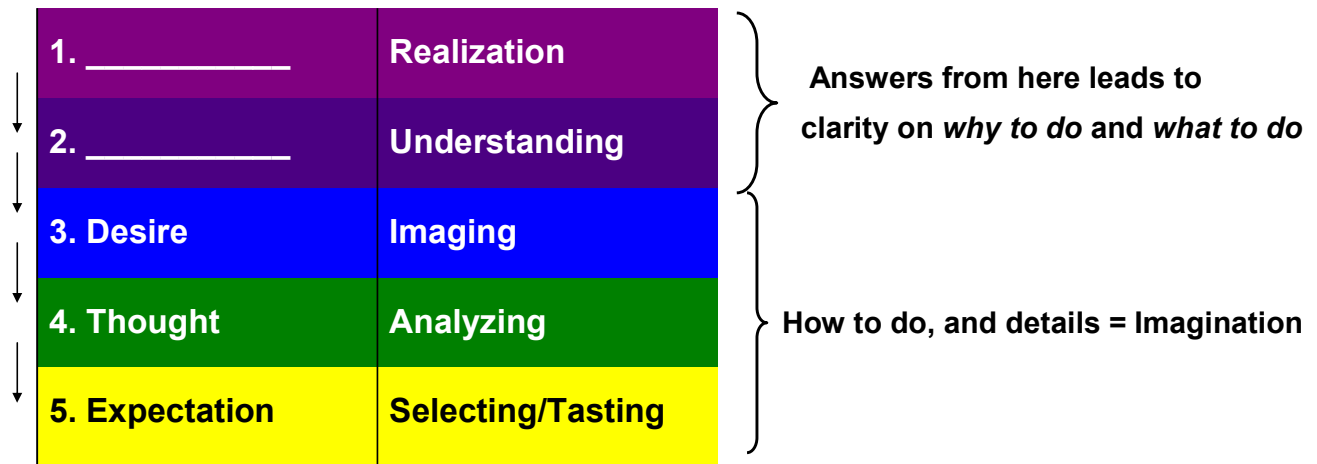
## Activities in Self (I)



\* Notice above the arrows to the extreme right in the diagram – when we have 1) Realization; then 2) Understanding becomes according to the realization. When this happens, then 3) imaging or desires get set according to this understanding. Consequently, 4) analysis or thoughts become according to the imaging/desires and hence, the 5) expectations or selection/taste are according to the thoughts/analysis. This is called self organization or ‘swatantrata’. This leads to happiness & its continuity. There is no conflict now, since we have understood the harmony at all the levels of our living, and our desires, thoughts and expectations have become definite and are in harmony – according to this understanding.

In Realization and Understanding, we get the answer to “What is reality?”, which is essentially the innate harmony in the existence, and our participation in this innate harmony. This, for each one of us, translates into the answers to “What to do?” and “Why to do?”. Then, what remains to find out is, “How to do?”, which comes from imagination [activities 3, 4 & 5]. If we see today, we are focusing on “How to do?”, without trying to first decide or define “What to do?” and “Why to do?”! It is just like travelling in a comfortable AC vehicle on a smooth road without knowing where we have to go! This may seem humorous, but we need to verify whether we try to evaluate our efforts and plans in terms of our basic aspirations or not.

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The ‘natural acceptance’ we have been discussing so far may initially seem to be somewhat vague. But, as we continue to observe ourselves and keep asking ourselves the question of “whether this is naturally acceptable to me?”, we are able to access our natural acceptance. This process of accessing our natural acceptance ultimately leads to realization and understanding.

The proposals being put forth in this book are in order to aid this process. We need to take each one of these proposals and evaluate them, and understand the meanings; or the harmony that these proposals are pointing to in our own right. These proposals essentially point to ‘meanings’ or ‘realities’ in existence. When we are able to ‘see’ or understand these ‘realities’ and ‘meanings’ in our own right, then we understand ourselves, we understand what the rest of nature is like, and what our role and purpose in all this we are living with is – we understand our value, what is valuable to us. We then understand what the true source for our happiness is. Our desires, thoughts and expectations, thus get set according to this understanding, and this results in happiness.

The problem today is that our activities of [1] Realization and [2] Understanding are inactive, we are unaware of them. As a result, we are not able to operate on our own right and keep operating on the basis of preconditioning and sensations. i.e. we are operating only at the levels of [3] Desire, [4] Thought and [5] Expectation today. This is not sufficient for us, as human beings. We thus need to operate at the levels [1] Realization and [2] Understanding as the basis on which [3], [4] and [5] get definite. We will study this in the next section.

### ***Result of realization and understanding - living with definiteness...***

We saw in the previous section that the solution to resolve the conflict, the contradictions in us is to start verifying our desires, thoughts and expectations (selections and taste) on the basis of our natural acceptance. This process ultimately leads to realization and understanding – two activities that are in us, but that have not been ‘activated’ so far. We need to ‘activate’ them, and this process of self-exploration is the starting point. In this section, we will see that the

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result of living with realization and understanding is living with definiteness, living with happiness:

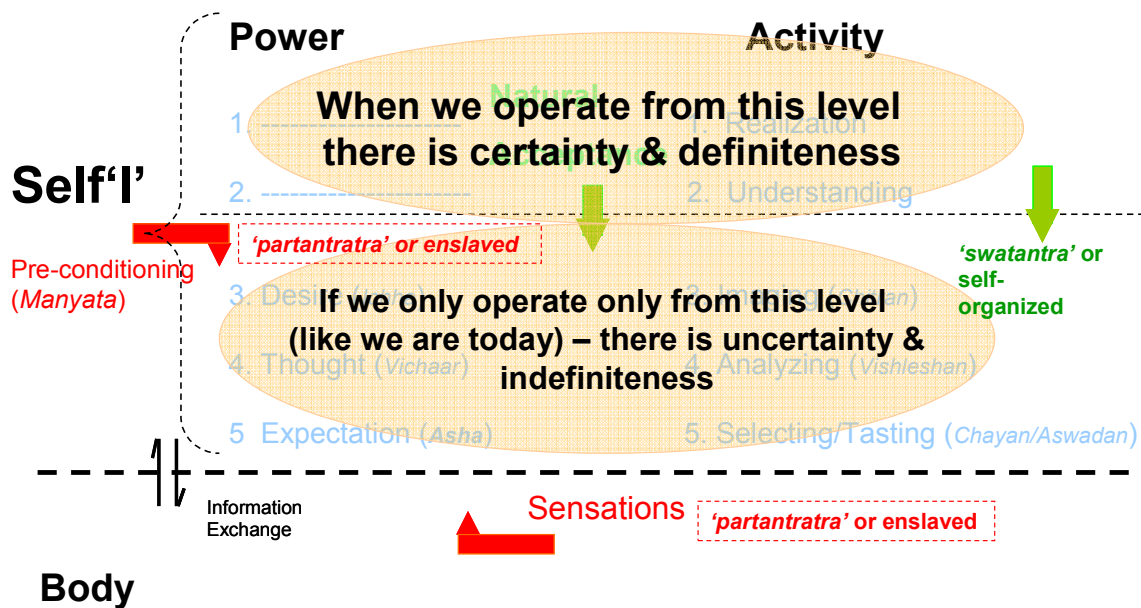
We see today that our behaviour is highly unpredictable and changes with who we are interacting, our state of mind and many other factors. We often do things that we are ourselves embarrassed about! We have thoughts that we don't want to have. We end up doing things we don't want to do! It is a reasonably confused state of affairs, of conflict and contradiction, of unhappiness. This is called as having an 'indefinite conduct'.

However, if we ask ourselves, we see that we all desire definiteness in our conduct. For example, whenever I meet you, you expect that I treat you with a feeling of respect. Disrespect is something you don't find acceptable. However, if I treat you with respect sometimes and with disrespect on other occasions, then you would consider my behaviour to be unpredictable and would be wary of me!

Similarly, if I greet you by saying a warm 'hello' sometimes, and then completely ignore you on other occasions, you would not find it acceptable. The same applies for me, in that I have the same expectation of you. All of us have this expectation from each other. This is our desire for definiteness. We don't find unpredictability acceptable – in ourselves, and in others. How then, do we have definiteness?

When we operate with realization and understanding, there is *certainty* in our behaviour and our conduct. If we continue to operate only on the basis of our preconditioned desires, thoughts and expectations (activities 3, 4, 5 in Self ('I')), there is uncertainty in our behaviour and conduct i.e. we are one person in the morning, and have changed into another person by the evening!

## Activities in Self (I)



When we do not have the right understanding, our desires keep shifting, and this indefiniteness is reflected in our thoughts, and selections we make and finally in our behaviour and work. Thus, while on the one hand, we talk of protecting nature, and on the other, we have a way of life that depletes natural resources and pollutes nature. While on the one hand, we talk of world peace, on the other we keep preparing for war. You can take numerous such examples to see the problems we are facing on account of this indefiniteness in human conduct or behaviour. Such examples of contradicting desires, thoughts and actions can be seen at the level of Self ('I')/ourselves, in our relationships in family, general issues in society and in our interaction with nature.

### Note:

There is a difference between having **definite** behaviour and **same** behaviour. We are talking about the former and not of making everyone express the feelings in the same way! For example, two people may understand that trust is acceptable in relationship and always behave with a feeling of trust, but that does not mean they say the same things, or express the feeling in the same way!

Similarly, some people with 'definite conduct' might want to enrich nature by planting trees and others may want to do this by practicing natural farming. It does not mean that all of them will only do one activity, plant trees, and they would plant the same trees and in the same way!

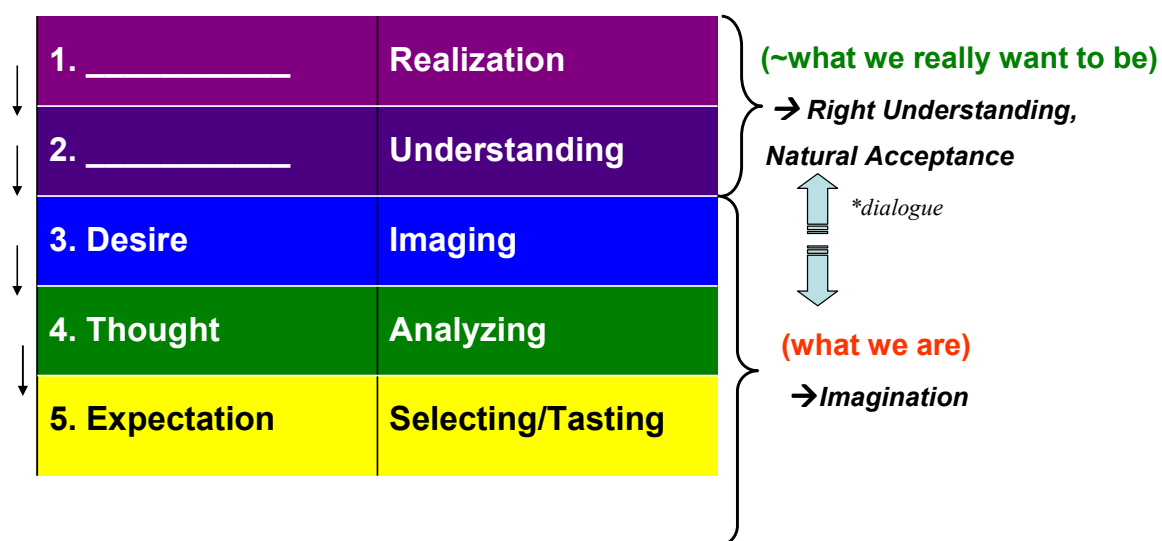
The underlying intention or feeling is definite, its expression and its details could be different. This is what we mean by definiteness. i.e. when we have the right understanding and definite desires there is room for creativity in thoughts and selections and finally in its expression in behaviour and work. For example: We know that our technologies have to be environment

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*friendly. There are numerous creative ways to go about this. Similarly, having known that trust is acceptable in relationship, there are numerous ways to express this feeling of trust.*

Going back to where we started from, we started by self-exploring. We started a dialogue between ‘What I am’ and ‘What I really want to be’. We found that what we really want to be is our natural acceptance. ‘What we are’ today is living with preconditioned desires, thoughts and expectations.

We then found out that there is a faculty of realization and understanding present as a potential in each one of us, on accessing which (through process of self exploration), we can have the right understanding. Having the realization and understanding leads to harmony in the activities of the Self, as a result of which, they get self-aligned. This is shown below:

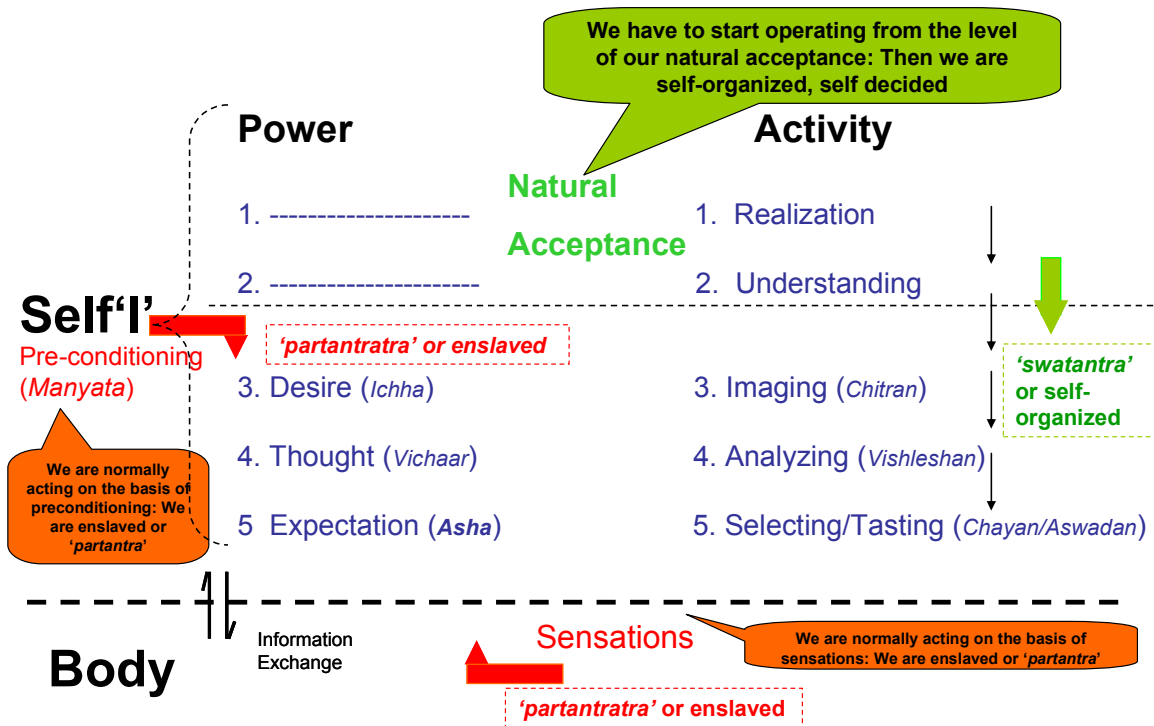


As we understand the reality for ourselves, without preconditioning, our basic goal becomes to live with that understanding. Subsequently, our desires get set to fulfil this goal. Since the understanding is invariant, the desires are also definite, and the thoughts and selections arising out of such desires are also definite. Hence, our behaviour and expression is also in harmony.

Each one of us has to do this by himself. No one else can do this for us!

***We can summarize these points in the figure below. Additionally, we can see that when we operate on the basis of our Realization and Understanding, we are ‘self organized’ and when we operate only on the basis of our preconditioned imagination or our preconditioned Desires, Thoughts and Selections, we are not self organized.***

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Today we largely operate on the basis of

- Sensations from the Body, or
- Preconditioning (*Manyatas*)

This is the cause for our conflicts and contradictions, i.e. our being enslaved or '*partantra*' – is because we operate solely at the level of 3, 4, 5 (Desires, Thoughts & Expectations) which are based on sensations or preconditioning (*Manyatas*).

We have to start referring to our Natural Acceptance, i.e. we have to start operating on the basis of Realization & Understanding at levels 1 & 2. Then we get self-organized, or become '*swatantra*', which is what we basically aspire to be.

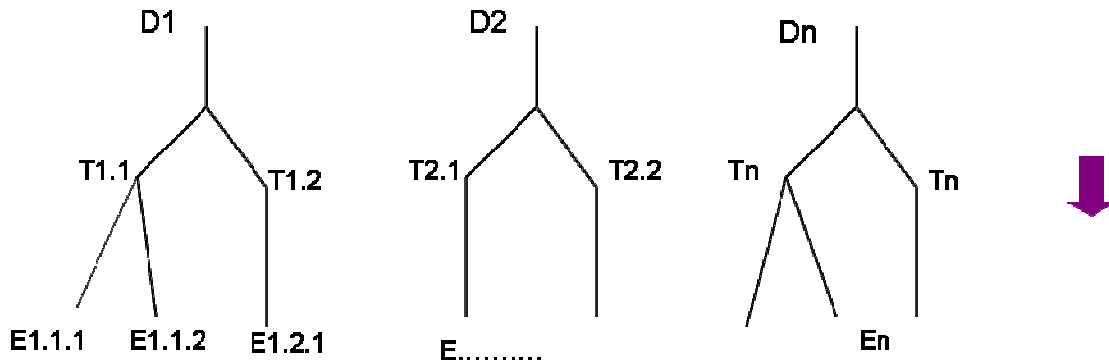
**The way to ensure Harmony in the Self ('I') therefore is a four step process given below:**

1. Becoming aware that human is the co-existence of 'I' and the Body.
2. Becoming aware that the Body is only a means of 'I'. 'I' is the seer, doer and enjoyer.
3. Becoming aware of the activities of Desire, Thoughts and Expectation and pass each of these desires, thoughts and expectations, through your natural acceptance.
4. Understand the harmony at all levels of our existence – by verifying the proposals being placed at the level of our natural acceptance. This leads to realization and understanding, which in turn becomes the basis for Desire, Thoughts and Expectation- this leads to harmony in 'I' in continuity..

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*When we have the right understanding, i.e. when we operate on the basis of our natural acceptance, our desires, thoughts and expectations are streamlined (as depicted below) and not confused, or in a zig zag fashion (as we saw in the previous diagram).*



**The outcome of this process is thus:**

- Desires, thoughts and expectations are definite, and have a clear flow, and thus there is no contradiction.
- We have clarity about ourselves, our basic aspiration and the way to fulfil the basic aspiration.
- We have understanding about all the levels of our living and we live accordingly.
- We live in a state of *swatantrata*, we are self-organized in our imagination, behaviour and work. This results in continuous happiness and prosperity.

**Footnotes**

*Some points to keep in mind:*

- As we start observing ourselves and start becoming aware of our desires, thoughts and expectations, we may not ‘like’ or find acceptable what we see within. It is important that we do not try to ‘fight’ with these contradictory desires, thoughts and expectations. We need to keep being aware of them and passing them through our natural acceptance. As we do this and have the right understanding, these contradictory desires, thoughts and selections would start dropping off by themselves, since one can see that they are no longer meaningful, purposeful, no longer important.
- We have to start paying attention to the various aspects of the reality around us including ourselves – at all 4 levels of our living (in ourselves, in the family, in society and in nature/existence) - as put forth by the proposals. As we do so, we begin to equip ourselves with the ability to understand this reality, verify it in our own right and live accordingly.

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*There are 10 activities in all, in the Self ('I'). For the purpose of ease of understanding, we only discussed 5 of the activities and only 3 of the corresponding 'powers'. For a detailed discussion on this topic and to know about all the 10 activities in the Self ('I') and the corresponding 10 'powers' and 'forces', please refer to the Appendix.*

## **Summary of the Chapter**

- The basic human aspiration is to have continuous happiness and prosperity. Happiness is a state/situation in which there is synergy, there is harmony. We are unhappy when there is a state of conflict in us.
- We see that this conflict is primarily inside us. To understand why these conflicts arise and how we can get rid of them, we need to understand ourselves, the activities in our Self ('I').
- Activities of imaging (desire), analysing (thought) and selecting/tasting (expectation), are constantly taking place in 'I'.
- These activities are related. They are together called Imagination. We are largely unaware of these activities in I today. (*This is because we are not paying attention to I at all, leave alone the activities in 'I', since we are operating on the assumption that 'I' = Body!*)
- Today, our desires, thoughts and expectations are being set either on the basis of some preconditioning or on the basis of sensation – i.e. from the 'outside' – these are not self verified by us on the basis of our natural acceptance.
- As long as our desires are being set by the outside (from a sensation or a preconditioning), there is a chance that we may be in conflict. If our desires are being set either by a precondition (*manyata*), or by some sensation from the body, we are enslaved (*partantra*).
- In this state, not only are our desires, thoughts and expectations in conflict amongst themselves, they are also in conflict with our *own* natural acceptance and this creates unhappiness in us. This is the basic issue. The basic issue is that our imaginations are in conflict with our natural acceptance:
- Through the process self-exploration, the activities of realization and understanding get activated. Once we start operating at the level of [1] and [2], our desires, thoughts and expectations get aligned with [1] and [2] (our *own* natural acceptance), and we are *swatantra* (self-organized). There is self-organization in my activities, leading to continuity of happiness. This is harmony in the self ('I').
- It is possible to have this Realization and Understanding by starting this process of self exploration on the basis of our natural acceptance and exploring into the proposals being put forth so that we are able to see the reality, see the harmony at all levels of our living. This Realization and Understanding of the harmony at all levels of our being and living accordingly becomes the basis of continuous happiness - the basic human aspiration.

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