I do wish human beings would make up their minds, for once and for all, whether they are good or bad! One way or the other! Black or white! No greys, no in betweens! If I know where people stand, I would know how to relate to them!

Instead most are like the weather in England! One moment sunny, the next pouring rain. Unpredictable, that’s what they are, these “featherless bipeds,” (As Aristotle termed them!) Consistency, thy name is not mankind! One day my corner fruit seller meets me with a big smile, a laugh and a generous discount. The next time I come he growls and snarls forcing me to keep a safe distance. This second my grand child bubbles and gleams with shrieks of joy! Next minute a huge howl of protest wells up from the dining hall as two egos rub sharp edges against each other!

Last night in Satsangha all the students were on fire, aglow with inspiration. This morning they sat glumly in darkness pretending to meditate but really inwardly protesting the 4:30 am wake up bell. Some time later, no one can please him! “I’ll be grateful forever“doesn’t really mean that. That feeling lasts only as long as each request is met with a cheerful affirmation.

Best friends today! Best enemies tomorrow! Relationships of convenience and to serve money and purpose. Infidelity, thy name is human! A touching gesture of sensitivity is made which imprints the heart. Some time later, the same person throws a shovel of mud in our face.

Which is the real self? What self should we relate to? The same person can perform the most unselfish of acts, yet turn around and steal the very shoes under your feet! What to say! What to do? All seems to exist on a spectrum, fluxuating from great goodness to downright evil!

Pondering these ironies I recall a concept which classifies the “Stuff of Consciousness” usually called “Chitta Bhumi”. Chitta Bhumis are five in number: Mudha, Kshipta, Vikshipta, Ekagrata and Niruddha. This idea when examined gives a new perspective of this perplexing question of instability in human relationships. The wise sages said that the mind stuff evolves through five stages in its development. These stages, in a fascinating parallel, mirror the unfoldment of life on earth.

The first stage is mud, pure and simple, slime and the creatures which emerge from slime, like worms and grubs and snakes and snails. The consciousness is called “Mudha” or clouded, unclean, dull, tamasika, caught up in automatic patterns in a stimulus – response mechanism. At this stage the organism is unpredictable. It can attack or retreat as survival demands. There is scarcely any light, or intelligence and virtually no feeling at all. It is a dull mechanical existence, a field of blind conditioned responses. As consciousness unfolds, the second stage emerges: this stage is Kshipta, or scattered, diffused, unstable, the movement wild as a chicken running haphazardly here and there. A frightened deer dashing in panic across a highway at night caught in the headlights of an oncoming car. A wild rabbit being chased by a fox and darting without reason from side to side. The third development of the Chitta is Vikshipta, or partially distracted, partially scattered. Higher levels of animal life which have more development in consciousness represent this stage. A lion capable of...
stalking its prey, waiting in patience for hours to make the strike; an alert dog which is focused on its object for some short time, then reverts to aimless barking. When mind stuff starts to settle itself and become refined, it gains capacity to concentrate, to one-point itself, to fix itself in one place and dig deeply into that place. This level is called “Ekagrata “or one-pointedness. More developed animals exhibit this when they are fixed one pointedly on their prey, such as a cat hunting a mouse, or a hawk preparing itself to swoop down upon a rabbit. In the human state Ekagrata is manifested when the mind is consciously brought under control and brought to bear in full force with the concentrated power of its focus. Anyone who possesses skill of any kind has cultivated this power to concentrate. Animals can possess concentrated focus, but it is an automatic survival mechanism which allows them to trap their prey.

The last level of refinement of the Chitta Bhumi is Niruddha, or the complete quietude. A meditating Yoga has reached that state. It can also be attained by an experience of profound love, when the mind-stuff empties itself and becomes free of the sensation of self. For basically it is the sense of self, the ego, the Ahamkara which agitates mind stuff. The stronger the Ego, the more agitated the mind.

In this way the five levels of the Chitta Bhumi parallel the evolution of consciousness up through the mind stuff from a level of mud, to a level of wild distraction, to a level of partial distraction, to a state of concentration, to finally, a state of total quietude.

Now, let us back track to where I started, complaining about the fickleness of human behaviour, the unpredictability of most people.

The average mind hovers between loitering in a pile of mud, occasionally lifting its nose out to sniff the air. Some manage to climb out of the mud, and run wildly here and there, without rhyme or reason, resembling headless chickens. A few more can escape the mud pile and occasionally stay in one place long enough to concentrate a bit before getting distracted and running off again. A few evolve far enough to train their minds to concentrate, to go deeply into things, to stay still, work hard, dig deep, penetrate the world’s mysteries and understand. A blessed few have lifted their “crowned heads” to the sky and sit quietly in blessed peacefulness.

Now tell me! What kind of consistency can one expect from creatures dwelling in the mud and slime? From a chicken? From a restless animal? Almost zero! There is no steadiness of mind; hence there can be no consistency of behaviour. The Vikshipta type may one day keep the promise, and one day not. The Kshipta type may never keep a promise. The Mudha type will not even know it has made a promise!

High beings have a control of their mind stuff. Hence, they are able to consciously choose their behaviour and conduct their life along a set of fixed principles, such as Yama and Niyama. When one is loyal to his moral and ethical code, then one can be assured that person’s behaviour is predictable.

Given that one has also reached that same level or portal of complete mastery, one may then create a stable, predictable satisfying relationship with one’s equal in consciousness.

Trying to form relationships with those stuck at Mudha, Kshipta and Vikshipta, is like trying to form a relationship with a worm, a snake, a bat, a chick or a fox.

Who would be so stupid? I can give many real life examples of Mudha, Kshipta and Vikshipta levels of mind stuff development as they are the most commonly found! One classic example of a mixture of Mudha and Kshipta comes readily to mind. It is amusing but at the same time, quite pathetic!
A close associate of ours has what can only kindly be called as a dysfunctional family. Once they had to make an out of town trip to attend an important family function. Family members were father, mother and five daughters (teenagers and in their twenties). They resolved to leave early, by 6 am. By the time all woke up, had bath, got dressed, did puja, it was almost 8 am. So mother said “No use, we will have breakfast, rest a bit”. When preparing to leave, mother said,” We cannot go now. It is Rahu Kalam. We will have to wait till 1 pm. (Rahu Kalam is an inauspicious hour in which nothing should be done). So, everyone settled down to wait. When the clock struck one, they got ready to move, but mother said, “Better we have lunch before we go “. By the time lunch was finished and everyone had a rest, it was 4 pm. All felt tired; the trip was about a five hour journey so they all agreed it was too late to go! “We will go early tomorrow, “said the mother and all agreed and settled down to watch television.

I do not know if they ever attended the family function or not! I lost patience in hearing the story by this time! This instability and inability to stick to a schedule was extreme in their case, but I am often surprised how many people go round and round in similar traps! It is remarkable how easily people change not only their minds, but also their hearts.

Actually I could relate a large number of stories like this as the lowest three levels of evolution of mind stuff are so common. I cannot resist relating my favourite one; however, this happened about 45 years ago, when I was in my twenties, helping Swamiji run our Ashram in Lawspet.

One of our young American girl students, was wildly infatuated with me, and gushed to me day and night.” Meenakshi, I want to devote the rest of my life to serving you- I will wash your clothes, clean your room, massage your feet – all I want is to serve you as my Guru’s wife.” I was, I admit, quite flattered to hear all this. She had only been in the course for two weeks, but she was so enthusiastic. I felt happy I would have someone to help me out. One Saturday night she was especially devoted and reiterated again her desire to devote her whole life to my service. After Hatha Yoga class the next morning I happened to look out the balcony, and saw her and one of the boys who had joined the course loading their luggage into a taxi. She ran to the window and called, “O Meenakshi! You will be so happy to know that Joseph and I have fallen in love. We’re going off to Nepal for a trip! Wish you all the best!”

She blew me a kiss and drove off into the sunrise with her new lover, So much for devoting her whole life to serving me!

Well! I hope you have gained a new perspective from this private Satsanga with me! Life – consciousness is a marvelous magic journey, isn’t it! The wonder, O the wonder of it all!

Be always cheerful! That is the best mantra!

Affectionately Yours in Yoga,

AMMAJI