The Mind

The mind is the center of human experience. It contains our will, memory, reason, intuition and it is the center of our perception. Recent scientific study has traced the mind’s attributes to the functions of different parts of the brain. These parts of our brain process what we see, hear, taste, feel and smell. Our brains also store and process countless memories of these perceptions. The total of these functions, we are told, make up our awareness.

The historical view of the mind is tied to religious and spiritual beliefs. According to most spiritual beliefs, the soul is that part of our awareness that transcends physical being. God is said to be spirit, and He has a mind, or a will, that we must follow if we are to be on the right path. Mysticism and eastern faiths teach about a spiritual path to enlightenment.

Will

The human will is what makes us achieve greatness or great evil. Much speculation about what makes us will to do shocking and barbaric things. Also great achievements throughout history are made because the will helped someone to overcome all opposition and adversity. The human will can defeat disease and it can overthrow entire societies.

Traditionally, someone who does great good or evil was thought to have been acted upon or supported by a spiritual force. Satan controls the will of the evil, while God controls the will of the good. To enslave a person, it is necessary to break the will so that they do not act of their own accord. In society, Law-abiding citizens follow the will of their lawmakers. Corporate will dictates the actions of employees.

In part, then, the will is our perception of the desires of humans. If we seek to obtain that which we desire, we are acting on our own will. A willful child is one what ignores the rules set for him or her by authority. In other words, the child who ignores the will of a parent or authority figure in favor of his own will is willful.

Perception

Human perception is known by science to be the way our brains process information. We encounter sights, sounds, tastes, and physical feelings. These perceptions cause us to react with emotion that we also perceive. The things we remember are perceived. The way everyone processes all of this information is different, and based on our own memories and our perception of experience.

Cognitive behavior therapy is a therapeutic science devoted to changing our negative perceptions, and the resulting negative reactions. Recent science tends to dismiss the existence of spiritual forces at work in the minds of people. Rather, people tend to do good and bad things regarding their perception of the world around them.

Rather than a moral dilemma, insanity and criminality are now seen by science as dysfunctions of the brain. A chemical imbalance causes neurons to function incorrectly, causing distortions of perception. The way our brains function is by neurochemical process, and a disruption in these processes can cause serious delusions or disruptions of perception. Reality as we know it is perception. So if our brains cannot process perceptions correctly, what the outside world sees is a loss of contact with reality.

Memory

Our brains are able to store countless pieces of information. The purpose of this, from a scientific standpoint is the ability to survive. If humans were not able to process past experience and make quick decisions based on memory, we would neither have survived nor advanced as a species. The pathways of neurons that store this information are accessed, and the memory is reconstructed based on our current perception and needs.

In religious traditions, memory does not seem to be addressed as such. Some religions believe that our spirits lived other lives before this one, and can carry those experiences into this life in some ways. This would serve the path to enlightenment, so long as we are able to keep learning. The ability to remember and learn laws and parables has been essential to a successful spiritual walk. Those who were unable to learn the required patterns of religious observance would be shunned, or worse.

The ability to learn is a function of memory in modern society. Socioeconomic status depends greatly on a person’s ability to process and follow expectations. The human will often necessarily becomes the will of society as they learn how to survive within its limits. There are implications for this corporate will in legal matters and a corporation or large group can operate outside the law contrary to the will of society or the individual.

Reason

The ability to reason is the human mind’s ability to apply memory and perception to the present task. Those with different beliefs can define reason differently. To say someone is unreasonable implies that their ability to perceive and process a set of facts is not the same as our own. To a monk in Tibet, reason can mean something entirely different than to a corporate executive.

The purpose of education is to teach people accepted methods of reason. This can also mean different things to different societies. What we see as reasonable, then, is the sum of what we have learned is reasonable in our lifetime. Scientifically, the seat of reason is the total of our learned experiences and the way our brains process the information. To a spiritualist, we receive the ability to reason from our soul.

Imagination

The creative imagination is credited with human invention, art and music, culture and many great things. The imagination of the creator is said to have brought all of creation about, generally speaking, in most religious circles. Science has once again found that imagination is part of how the brain operates. How humans come up with the things we imagine, is beyond speculation. The imagination has served to advance the human race in countless ways in recent history. How we experience the world around us, and our will to create, is what we call imagination.

Intuition

Intuition is a very helpful tool for survival. Humans can process the actions of other people and formulate a reaction based on our prediction of their behavior. This is called intuition. Part of the spiritualist’s ability to look into the future and predict things, is based on a strong intuitive sense. Our processing of current situations based on perception and memories of past situations is what gives us intuition. Being able to intuitively predict a situation accurately is a great benefit, and results in social success.

The human mind is a complex and fascinating thing. Studying its functions and learning how it works, what can go wrong and why, is perhaps the greatest mystery to be solved.