

## **Role of Sense Perception in Life | Its Damages and Functions**

### **The Meaning and the Role of Sense Perception in Life**

First and foremost, it is better to understand what senses are and the role of sense perception in life. In general, our body receives external stimulus from the environment and becomes aware of or recognizes them through our senses. But the role of sense perception in life goes beyond this. In fact, our senses shape our awareness of the material world around us. The five senses are one of the ways to gain knowledge, and this knowledge prepares our soul for higher perceptions.

As we mentioned in the previous lesson, the human soul is made up of sensate, imaginary, estimative, intellective, and supra-rational faculties, each having its own beloved or match. In fact, the inner peace of each dimension of our existence depends on being with its own beloved. Each sense finds peace in the sensory form with which it is in harmony. For example, the structure of our eyes is designed to perceive only wavelengths. Our ear only demands frequencies within a range that is compatible with it, i.e., between 20 Hz and 20 kHz. Our tongue is only interested in flavors, and it is not familiar with wavelength and frequency.

### **A Challenge to Understand the Role of Sense Perception in Life**

Are you ready for a challenge to understand the importance of the role of sense perception in life? Have you ever imagined the world without one of your basic senses? Let us say, the sense of smell! Initially, we may think that we would simply lose the ability to enjoy the fragrance of flowers, but in reality, without the sense

of smell, we would be exposed to dangers that may have never crossed our minds. For example, we would barely distinguish gas leak, fire, or spoiled food. Or we would become severely underweight due to the loss of appetite or change of food preferences.

Now imagine what would happen if we were not able to hear? We would be surrounded by absolute silence! Inborn hearing loss would also impair the ability to speak. The risk of car crash would always threaten us; poor communication with others and intrusive thoughts are only a part of the world of silence and darkness that we would face because hearing-impaired people are even deprived to hear their own voice. Meanwhile, experiments have shown that people hardly tolerate staying in the quietest room (anechoic chamber) in the world for more than an hour. Helen Keller, the American author who was both blind and deaf, expressed the hardships of deafness by stating: "Blindness separates people from things; deafness separates people from people."

Likewise, if our sense of touch was not active, we would not receive information about our internal and external environments. We would not notice cuts, burns, and insect bites, and we would not be aware of the position of our body parts. In this case, we basically would not feel anything to react to it and protect ourselves.

So far, you must have stripped the veil of habit in your mind and understood the importance and role of sense perception in life. Now, you can easily imagine what problems we run into without vision or sense of taste.

The examples we have mentioned so far are all important and highlight the importance of our five senses. But since sense perception is the gateway to other

faculties and forms their basis, it plays a vital role in life. In this article, we will explore this faculty in more detail.

### **Damages to Sense Perception**

While each sense is the beloved of one dimension of our existence, none of them are our true beloved. Our true beloved is the beloved of our human dimension, which we will discuss separately in future lessons. The role of sense perception in life is pivotal, and the absence or deficiency of any of them puts pressure on the respective part and closes a door to gaining knowledge about the universe. But excess and overindulgence in any of the senses bring nothing but harm and burden to us.

For example, if we overindulge in eating, drinking, or sensory experiences such as seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching; indulge in forbidden (*haram*) acts; or even overindulge in permissible (*halal*) acts, we disrupt our balance and cannot deal with or progress in other faculties of our existence.

Perhaps the most tangible example is someone who, due to overeating, cannot even move. Or someone who, because of watching too many movies, loses the ability to concentrate and think, constantly bombarded by images she has seen. These are just a few examples of paying too much attention to sensory forms.

### **The Connection between Sense Perception and Other Existential Dimensions**

To better understand the relationship between sense perception and our other existential levels, imagine a newborn. A newborn has only sense perception. She

even sees the faces of her parents vaguely; over time, through repetition and practice, she learns to differentiate between different individuals. The rest of her senses are also strengthened through repetition and practice. In essence, until the infant's five senses are strengthened, the next level of existence, i.e., imagination, cannot form images and cannot become powerful in its domain.

If we acquire knowledge and wisdom, we control all the inputs and outputs of our soul and do not allow every beloved to enter our sensate, imaginal, and intellectual parts. It is because we know that what is put into the soul acts as raw materials for higher dimensions of our existence.

No matter how professional a factory's productions are, it cannot produce quality products without quality raw materials. Similarly, having quality raw materials is essential for our soul. Because the levels of our soul are interlinked, the slightest defect or problem in any of these levels disrupts the overall balance of the soul. The growth of our intellectual and supra-rational dimensions depends on having powerful imaginal and estimative dimensions. To build strong imagination, estimation, and intellection, the first step is to pay attention to the body and its input data, i.e., the five senses.

In this article, we discussed the importance of the role of sense perception in life as the first level of the human soul. We became more familiar with sensory forms as the beloveds of our sensate dimension. We also highlighted the damages of excess and neglect in our sensate faculty. Finally, we touched on the role of sense perception in life and stated that it is the soul's input that strengthens other levels of our existence.

In the next article, we will explore the role of the imaginal faculty in life.