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Section IV

4. Science of Soul

*“... it is instinctually recognized that Jivatman
denoted by the pure form of “I”
has its abode in the heart,
and in Samadhi there is direct realization of this.”
(Saraswati, 1987, p. 69)*

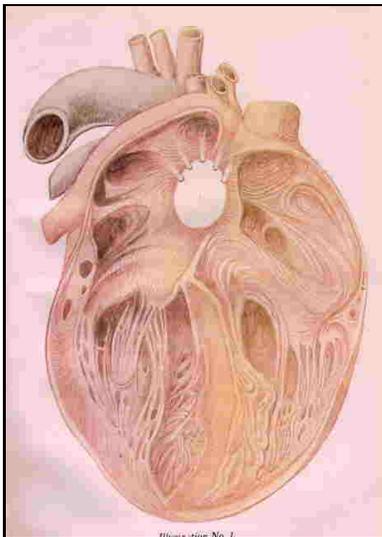
Swami Yogeshwaranand Saraswati, in his text Science of Soul: A treatise on Higher Yoga (1987), provides one of the most thorough and comprehensive accounts of the nature of the soul, its relationship to the physical and subtle bodies, and the various dimensions of the heart, mind and body. The science of soul is based upon Saraswati's studies of the Upanishads, the Vedas, the yogic aphorisms of Patanjali, and most importantly, upon his own attainments through meditation, raja yoga and direct experiences of varied levels of “samadhi”—enlightened states of super-consciousness.

Saraswati elaborates Atma Vijnana, the science of soul. The term Atma is defined as the soul, while the term Vijnana refers to knowledge or science. The term *jiva* is also defined as soul and as a being having life. The combined term, *jivatma* thus refers to the individualized or embodied soul. In contrast, the *Paramatman* refers to the Supreme God or Over-Soul. Whereas Paramatman is infinite, the jivatma is infinitesimal. Both are depicted as enthroned within the palace of the heart and to be known through

awakening within the heart. Sarawati quotes the Upanishads,

“Jivatma (the Individual Self), that is subtle and minute,
and Ishwara (or Paramatman, the Supreme Self) who is greatest of all,
both dwell in the cave of the heart.” (p. 13)

According to the science of soul, the gross material and subtle worlds are created for the enjoyment and eventual release of the jivatma, (the individual soul), the immortal son of the unborn. The Lord or Father of the universe created a beautiful temple within the heart similar to His own illimitable divine abode, and installed the individual soul therein. The consciousness principle, *Purusa*, lies down within material nature, *Prakriti*—the feminine principle and goddess. The three modes of nature produce different substances, elements and realms which can be experienced by the jivatma. The jivatma can also be liberated or released, so as to recover the experience of its essential nature. Of course, the jivatma always exists within its own nature, but the origin and nature of consciousness becomes obscured by the veils of nature, the sheaths and bodies, and all of the activities therein. Thus, humankind live in a state of forgetfulness and ignorance of this Self.



The seat of the individual soul is in the heart. The jivatma is likened to “*an infinitesimal poppy seed,*” which has no form or color. This atomic or indivisible entity is said to be embodied in “*a hollow the size of a small thumb in the heart.*” (p. 36) Saraswati elaborates:

“... the golden sheath of the divine city ... which is a mass of light filled with bliss, has its abode in the subtle area of grape-sized hollow of this physical heart, the repository of blood. It is in the castle of this causal sheath that the immortal individual soul abides with its supreme protectors, all-powerful, omniscient, adorable father – God. The temple of a yogi is inside the heart alone. There ... the vision of Divinity ... the nectar of bliss ... the Bliss Sheath (or Anandamaya Kosha).” (p. 37)

In Figure 1, a hollow egg shaped sphere within the heart is depicted as emanating or radiating five luminous white rays. These rays are those of the subtle Pranas which irradiate life and vitality throughout

the individual human being.

The science of soul and of yoga is extremely subtle and complex. The jivatman—the Purusha principle of pure spirit and consciousness—is embodied within Prakriti, or nature, composed of the three gunas or “modes of nature.” Saraswati describes various orbits of influence within the heart, in addition to seven chakras, three bodies and five sheaths, all of which compose the human being. The jivatma is embodied through the elements, sheaths and bodies in a complex manner, which can be understood through meditation, and the consequent attainment of discriminative knowledge and self realization.

The Atman (or spiritual soul) is conscious and abides in, or is hidden in, the material elements, which are likened to a cave and castle. The jivatma is the Lord of the castle which is composed of three bodies (the physical, the astral and the causal) which are composed of five different sheaths. The causal body is composed of the Bliss Sheath, or Anandamaya Kosha. The astral body is composed of the mind sheath, or Manomaya Kosha, and the intellect sheath, Vijñanamaya Kosha. The physical body is composed of the food sheath, or Anandamaya Kosha, and the vital air sheath, or Pranamaya Kosha.

Within the Bliss Sheath, there are orbits of different principles which mediate the interface between the divine atom, or jivatma, at the center, and the dimensions of the sheaths and bodies. Through yogic practices and austerities, consciousness can be freed from the outer sheaths, and come again to rest in the bliss sheath—in its essential nature. As these processes of liberation occur, varied states of super-consciousness and realization (or samadhis) are experienced. There are subtle distinctions to be made between experiences of self, cosmic and divine realization which can be attained through the awakening within the heart.

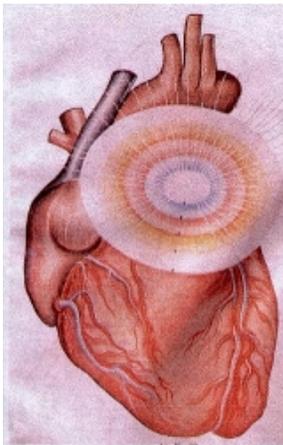


Figure 2 The Bliss Sheath depicted as five orbits of influence surrounding the jivatma as a point within the centre.

In Figure 2, the Bliss Sheath appears as an oval mass of light and is described as being composed of five orbits of influence surrounding the jivatma at the centre. The first two outer orbits are the most inclusive, those of Brahman (or Purusha) and undifferentiated Prakriti (the womb of creation). The orb of Brahman is omnipotent, the substratum of an eternal, omnipresent, all pervading consciousness. The orb of Prakriti is a non-manifest aether, the root principle of material creation, which maintains the other orbits in its womb. In the orbit of undifferentiated Prakriti, the three modes of nature are in perfect symmetry and hence unmanifest, or signless. The orb of Prakriti is the ultimate Aether of the heart. Saraswati explains that this "... ether of the heart is the mirror for the vision of Brahman." The two outermost orbits are those of Purusha and Prakriti, the ultimate substratum of spirit/consciousness and matter.

The Atman (or jivatma, the divine spark) is within the center of the Bliss sheath. Saraswati describes it as "*an extremely subtle point or dot*" and most similar to Brahman in its subtlety. The Atman is then surrounded by three orbits of Chitta (Mind Stuff), Ahamkar (the Ego principle) and Subtle Prana (vital energy). The jivatma, within the heart, has these three servants: mind stuff, the ego principle and subtle prana/vital energy.

In the orb of Chitta in the Bliss Sheath, in the deepest mind stuff, there are usually constant ripples or Vrittis, like waves on an ocean. The chitta is the "revealer of the consciousness of the soul ... as it is in this cave of the heart that Atman abides." (p. 208) The orbit of Ahamkar, the Egoic principle, is a grosser form of Asmita (the principle of 'I'-ness), inherent to the jivatma. Thirdly, the orbit of subtle vital energy or Prana is described as a luminous vapor, which plays a role in infusing consciousness and life throughout the subtle and material bodies. These five orbs, two of the underlying cosmic principles, and three modifications of individual existence, exist as an aggregate in the region of the heart and together appear as a "mass of light," the Bliss Sheath. This is the true heart center from which emerges the consciousness and life principles from within the metaphysical substrates of a human being.

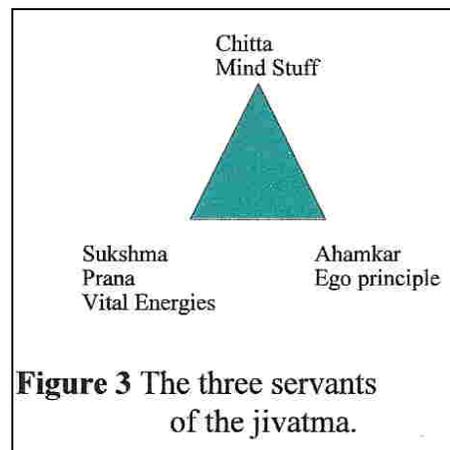
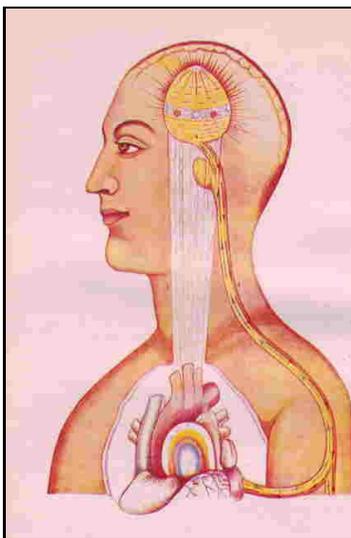


Figure 3 The three servants of the jivatma.



Saraswati explains how the rays of the Bliss Sheath illuminate and enliven the other sheaths and bodies. These descriptions link the heart to the head brain and mind through the subtle dimensions. Whereas the Bliss Sheath within the heart is the size of a small seedless grape, the sheaths of intellect (Buddhi) and mind (Manas) are the size of a peacock egg centered within the skull, in the middle of the brain (Figure 4). The mind and intellect sheaths are associated with the crown chakra, the Sahasrar or Brahmrandhra, the thousand petalled lotus. The Intellect-Buddhi, lord of the mind-is the smaller white sphere on the top of the peacock egg, while the mind-Manas-is the larger yellow sphere underneath. Buddhi, as the intellectual and reasoning faculty, is the leader of the mind and senses. The smaller spheres located in the band across the mind sheath represent the different sensory and motor nuclei present to the mind. However, the true mind and intellect are actually behind the "subtle senses" which underlie the material sensory nuclei, as they are more subtle than the neurological activities.

Generally, this model of the heart and mind enables us to link the origin of consciousness within the heart to understanding the dynamics of consciousness within the mind and intellect. Saraswati's explanations are quite in keeping with modern attempts to depict the neural correlates of consciousness and the mind within the brain, but these dynamics are secondary to those of the Bliss Sheath, and ultimately to the spiritual or divine spark.

Saraswati describes the mind as "ever engaged in bringing knowledge and action as perceived by the

senses,” which it offers to Buddhi, the intellect, “like a servant to his mistress.” The mind then functions to carry out the instructions of the intellect. Both the causal and astral bodies have knowledge and action principles enabling experience within the subtle realms. The third force, in relation to these, is filled by the subtle Pranas (vital energies), which pervade the causal, astral and physical bodies and are related to the blood and breath.

The causal body exists before the astral, and both underlie the physical. The embodiment of the jivatma within the elements is from within the most subtle causal body into the astral and physical bodies. All of the bodies and sheaths can expand and contract from their centres. Thus, there is an inner circulation of consciousness, light and sentience which originates from the heart and is distributed from various centres throughout the bodies and sheaths. Sarasvati depicts the complexity of the inner circulations of light and subtle forces:

"Luminous rays emanate from the senses, subtle organs of action, mind, intellect and other orbs also. These rays are of different kinds and they are seen to perform different functions. ... Mind Sheath– Intellect Sheath and the orb of five Tanmatras (or subtle senses) ... and the luminous orb or mass belonging to the Bliss Sheath – all these are light, (weightless) like wind waves, short and light as fire, transparent as the sky, shining like lightening ... very charming and beautiful, full of consciousness and the wonder and grandeur of life, pleasing They are ever in movement." (p. 146)

Sarasvati’s science of the soul depicts a variety of subtle substances, light and vital principles which allow for the embodiment of the Jivatma and the circulation of consciousness within the inner cosmos. In this teaching, consciousness and life originate within-without from a zero point, rooted into Brahman and subtle Prakriti within the mysterious Bliss Sheath of the heart center.

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