

Science of Soul

by Shri Yogacharya Ajita (Philippe Barbier)

Finally discover your Self, the meaning of life and the path towards paradise. This exciting work is a clear guide for every serious Yoga practitioner, who wants to fully and systematically engage himself in Yoga, knowing what he is doing, as to reach Enlightenment, Self-realization and Liberation.

Thanks

Thanks to Swami Yogeshvarananda Sarasvati whose pioneering and extremely difficult book to read, “Science of Soul”, has inspired me so much that I have chosen to adopt the same name for this book.

It is also my wish to thank my pupils for their incessant demand since 1984 for a written version of my interpretation of that book. Out of compassion for their need I have committed myself to this work. And naturally also because my wife Lida is begging me since years to do this.

A very special thank also to Ester Eriksen and particularly Ron Katwijk, my loved pupil teaching Yoga in Seoul (South-Korea), who translated this book from Dutch. They made the edition of this book in English possible.

At last I have to thank the God Ganesha for his support. Without him I would not have had the power to write this book.

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Content

Page

Thanks	2
Content	3
The unconscious start	6
The conscious search	14
The Cakra's or energy centers	14
Sahasrara Cakra (the crown centre)	15
Candra Bindu (the moon point)	18
Ajna Cakra (the forehead centre)	20
Vishuddhi Cakra (the throat centre)	24
Anahata Cakra (the heart centre)	27
Manipura Cakra (the navel centre)	31
Svadhithana Cakra (the sacral centre)	35
Muladhara Cakra (the root centre)	37
The seven most important or primary Cakra's	41
Sharira's or energy bodies	42
Kosha's or sheaths	43
Annamaya Kosha (food containing sheath)	43
Pranamaya Kosha (the vital sheath)	44
General description of Prana or subtle energy	44
The different kinds of Prana present in Pranamaya Kosha	46
The functions of Pranamaya Kosha, the vital sheath	49
The mutual relation between mind, subtle energy and gross body	50
Manomaya Kosha (the mind sheath) and its science	51
Antahkarana Chatushtaya (the fourfold internal organ)	52
The meaning of Antahkarana	53
Antahkarana is the seat of all experiences and realizations	54
The view of the Scriptures	54
Manas, the first part of Antahkarana	55
Buddhi, the second part of Antahkarana	57
Ahamkara, the third part of Antahkarana	60
Citta, the fourth part of Antahkarana	62
Physical Antahkarana	64
The parts of Antahkarana and their analysis	66
There are two kinds of flow within this Citta	67
The functions of Citta	68
The relation of the Vritti's	69
Nidra (sleep)	70
Smrti (memory)	72
Explanation of the Buddhi Vritti's	73
The Vritti's of Manas	74
The Vritti's of Ahamkara	74
Conclusion about Manomaya Kosha (the mental sheath)	75
Description of Brahmarandhra (the cavity of Brahman)	76
The relation of Brahmarandhra with the physical body	76
The vision of Brahmarandhra through introspection	79
Visualization of the functions of Brahmarandhra	80
Ascertainment of the position of Brahmarandhra	81
The sequence of inner vision of the functions of each Karmendriya	83

The organ of excretion	83
The organ of generation	83
The organ of locomotion	84
The hands	84
The organ of speech	84
The Jnanendriya's	85
The organ of smell	85
The organ of taste	86
The organ of sight	86
The organ of touch	87
The organ of hearing	87
Vijnanamaya Kosha (the intellect sheath)	88
The power of Samyama	88
Is such overcoming of obstacles right and rational?	90
Realization is possible through the divine eye	90
The essential nature of the five gross elements and the way to realize them	91
The realisation of the gross element earth	92
The gross element water	93
The gross element fire	94
The gross element air	95
The gross element ether	96
The process of realizing the Tanmatra's (the subtle elements)	97
Some realizations pertaining to Vijnanamaya Kosha (the intellect sheath)	98
Anandamaya Kosha (the bliss sheath)	99
The parts of Karana Sharira (the causal body)	99
The origin of human life	99
The duty of man	100
Description of Atman (the Self)	100
Means of enjoyment and release	101
Release from bondage	102
Realization of the colours and forms of Citta	102
Realization of the second modification of Citta	103
Realization of knowledge and action	103
Realization of various facts	103
The realization of the Samskara's (impressions)	104
Samskara's and Guna's	105
Indifference towards the Samskara's	105
The burnt-up state of Samskara's	106
What is the nature of Ananda (Bliss)?	108
Realization of the subtle and causal bodies, apart from the gross body	108
Individual bondage	109
Finding the passage in the sheaths and the bodies	109
The realization of Viveka Khyati (discriminatory understanding)	111
Viparyaya (wrong knowledge) and Vikalpa (imagination)	111
The logical sequence of Svarupa Sthiti (essential nature)	112
Bhoga (enjoyment)	113
Apavarga (release or liberation)	113
The vision of Hiranyamaya Kosha (the golden sheath)	115

The experience of “I am”	115
The vigorous search of the spiritual world	116
Abhaya Dhama (the fearless abode)	115
Formless vision	116
Realizations pertaining to death and rebirth	116
Moksha (liberation) is the final goal of the whole Sadhana (practice)	118
Conclusion	118
Bibliografy	120

Science of Soul

The unconscious start

June 1955.

The stewardess came along with bubblegum. “For the pain in yours ears”, she said. The sound of the four engines of the DC 6 airplane was deafening and almost drowning her out. I swallowed the bubblegum. The pressure in my ears became bearable. I looked to my neighbor. He was sleeping, the lovely Mister Rahier. He was so friendly. When my father asked him if he could take me with him to Belgium he immediately agreed. His house was next to ours, according to African standards: nearly one kilometer away. And my father had heard that he was going on leave. Especially the story of my bad health has moved him, I think. Now he was snoring.

The white carnations, which I had bought during the stop in Nice for my grandmother, were slowly starting to hang. Mister Rahier had advanced me the money, on my request. I had done just the same as the other passengers, who were running between the little flower stalls and shouting to each other for whom they bought all these flowers. I had to have carnations for my grandmother, even though I did not knew that person. And obviously the colonials found these carnations to be something exceptional.

Soon the plane should land on the airfield of Melsbroek, next to Brussels. Congo was now very far away behind us.

My pappy and mammy had brought me to the station car of Mister Rahier and said me goodbye. I had to convey their greetings to the whole family in Europe. My two little sisters and my brother were at school in Watsa, at 100 kilometer distance. So only my parents waved to me, when the car left. The journey to the airfield of Juba in Sudan had been long. The dusty roads were bad. And nobody has believed me when I saw that black panther laying on a branch of a tree. It was a beautiful animal watching us bored driving along with the car. One leg hung down listless.

There were shouting's in the plane. People ran to the portholes.

“The lights of Brussels!” one shouted. I got a wonderful feeling from this excitement. Finally we were reaching our destination. And that was also what I wanted. To come home. To come back home. The same feeling I got the first time when my parents were telling me of “Putu”, the name for Belgium in the Bangala language.

“What is your problem?” had they asked me. “We do not understand. You do not want to eat, you are so thin and always sick. Maybe do you want to go back to Putu?” The way they said “Putu” was just as they were talking about heaven. And that feeling attracted me. Finally light in the tunnel. “Yes”, I had said with a sight, “I want to go to Putu.” I was seven.

Do you recognize that feeling of homesickness?

Everybody has it, I discovered later. It simply lies concealed deep in our heart. It is linked to a memory of times long ago, when we were living in paradise, I think.

Fourteen months I have been taken care of by my uncle and aunt. They gave me so much love that I slowly recovered. She was pious and exceptionally disciplined. She made me become a believer. I felt that this was the path, which I had to follow.

1960. Rupture with the church.

In that year I stopped to visit the church on Sunday. I was thirteen.

My father was very angry and my mother said that I would go to hell. But on my defense they were not able to bring anything forward. I told them that I had enough of the visit of the church, because the people were not listening to the preacher, they only were looking what hat others were wearing and were whispering among each other in a sneaky way during the sermon. By the way, the priest was always telling nice beautiful stories, but it was not coming out of his heart. His words sounded hollow. I had no trust at all in the man.

The week after our whole family no more went to the church.

1963. Light out of a Yoga book.

After a few years of vacuum on spiritual level I felt again a religious need rising in me. I visited many bookstores and bibliotheca. One day I came home with a small book about Yoga. In fact I did not understand it at all, but I kept reading it. A late afternoon the booklet lied open upon my little bureau against the wall. My bedroom was quiet and I sat down on the chair. "What a difficult words are these all" I thought. The page with the various Sanskrit names for the eight steps of Yoga started to radiate. Light was coming out of the book! A nice white light, so sweet that I was not even scarred.

My Yoga practice has started then. It was just like come home again. My brain was not able to understand yet, but my heart had recognized it.

1966. Suicide.

My great sensitivity was the cause of my problems. What I found important, where my heart was longing for and that what my surrounding imposed me did not fit together. The inner struggle was too great.

The big questions about life kept me busy: Who am I? Where do I come from? What is the meaning of life? Family, friends and comrades at school thought I was crazy. Act normally, adapt and live as superficial as we are doing, that was their message in essence. The contradiction between what I felt and what I lived daily I could not overcome anymore. My disgust of life grew more and more.

In the family father and mother were both very busy to earn money. At home they had to spread their attention over four children. The girls got priority. I was alone.

At school I had to learn a new language, Dutch, instead of my loved mother tongue French. The information process remained therefore difficult. Most of the time I hardly could understand the teachers. The violent and artificial ways of the education system also made me sick. Repeatedly and more and more often I got very bad notes.

At home they reacted with sledgehammer blows. I did less and less and sunk deeper and deeper. Nobody cared for me. I did not see the meaning of all of this anymore. I was fed up with life.

One Wednesday afternoon of March I came home from school, totally devastated. For Mathematics I again got a 2 upon 10. Nobody was in the house. I went upstairs. In the bathroom I took a handful of valium tablets, the remaining of a box, and swallowed them with some water. I quietly to bed and laid down. I was done with life. Slowly I felt sleep come over me. Delightful.

I woke up in the hospital with a probe in my mouth and my penis. Unpleasant.

My brother had saved me on time and called for the ambulance. My stomach had been flushed out immediately.

My mother came to visit me, but I did not wanted to greet her. Why was she caring for me now and previously not? Because I committed suicide? Ridiculous!

I had to go to therapy afterwards, to a neuropsychiatrist. For my sickness of life he had an immediate solution. He said simply: "You are a danger for the society. If you do not change your behavior I will let you give electroshocks. What do you want?" "So with him I was also ready very quickly.

Happily I realized soon later that I could choose freely: to stop living or to go for it. Why I have chosen for the later is still not clear. In each case I engraved the text "I am free to choose for life or for death" in the wood of the front end of my bed. That gave me an enormous feeling of power. I had found a fundament of honesty: I have to consider both sides of a problem and not one side.

One month later I had the guts to register for a parachute jumping course of two weeks in Schaffen. There I jumped 5 times and received my civil certificate. My problem was over. My ego was under control again.

1966. The bankruptcy of the philosophy.

At a work meeting of the latest year of the high school a visiting lecturer, a Jesuit, who was Professor in Philosophy, gave a lecture about life.

I could not help to hand him over what was keeping me so busy. "What is the meaning of life?" I asked him.

His answer was, I shall never forget it: "That nobody knows."

1969. First leaving out of my body.

It was one night in the month of June. The next day was the examination Economical Topography of my specialization course “Market study and Distribution” in Gent. I was totally absorbed in the matter. My attic room – my “kot”, as we call that – was dark. Only my desk lamp was shining on my books. A great bottle of Coca Cola stood on the floor next to me. Now and then I took a sip to stay awake. I was tired. I looked to my hand, who was resting upon my bloc note. Suddenly I saw that hand 50 cm further away. I had left my body! Funny. Let me repeat that. This way I left my body several times that night as it was a game. I have understood then that I can also live outside my body.

1971. Military service at the Para commando’s.

Although I was slightly build and weak I had to join the elite troops. Not wise, people shouted in my surrounding. And when I also expressed my wish to become an officer, everybody declared me crazy.

That I was able to succeed in achieving all my goals was because of Yoga. Especially thanks the systematic practice of relaxation after each effort, which permitted me again and again to restore my strength on time. One day I realized that the possibilities of my physical body, using this method, were almost unlimited and especially dependent of my spiritual attitude.

After a short stay at the 3rd Battalion Parachutists in Lombardsijde I came back to Flawinne, now as Platoon Commander at the 2nd Battalion Commando. Though I received the weakest platoon of the 3rd Company to command, I was able to train successfully these 36 recruits, with the help of my 4 sergeants. After a few months 16 of them got the famous Red Beret. They worshipped me. I radiated.

At the same time I felt I was done with the army.

1972. Marketing specialist.

The public interest, I thought, can be better served by studying Marketing. After my study in Gent, which I rounded off with distinction, I got my first job as marketing advisor at Végé in Brussels. Thanks to my systematic research of the store locations I was responsible, in one year time, for a strongly improved future development of the discount stores. Soon I was praised for my success. The most important members of the voluntary chain store first entered my office, before they visited my boss, obviously causing him great irritation. So one day he ordered me to color topographic maps as a child. He had found my weak spot: pride. When I asked him in a memo to find someone else to do that job he was in a position to fire me immediately for refusing an order.

I quickly found a better job at AKZO, where I stayed as a honorable product manager until 1978. Here also the dishonesty of my director broke me up. Bribes were normal for him, not for me.

At Beecham Products in Amstelveen I thought again that my impressing results after one year would promote my career, until my own group product manager stole from me. He took my credit card out of my wallet and tried to use it in Germany.

It lasted only three months before I realized as Marketing/Sales Manager Benelux at Avery in Utrecht that my director was deceiving me. He simply ignored the contract we had. I had to give up my function in a company reorganization plan. So my career as an employee ended in 1981. Cunning and deception were not my cup of tea.

Then I became a successful independent marketing consultant.

1974. Second leaving out of my body.

My wife at that time and I drove back from Bruges to Brussels, where we lived. Our red Simca 1000 Rally was a good car and steered very sharply. There was a lot of traffic. Tough we still drove hard at nearly 120 km per hour. The row cars before us was very long and red lights flashed repeatedly. Again and again I had to use my breaks. A little bit scary in fact.

Suddenly I felt that my being was leaving my physical body and raised approximately two meters above the car, stabilizing there. Nice indeed, because from that point I was able to clearly see the row cars much farther before me. A pretty safe feeling was that. The repeated braking I was able to see now long beforehand. The connection with my body, there beneath in the car, was remaining and I was able to steer, brake or accelerate peacefully. Just like a remote control of my body.

“Honey”, I said to my unsuspecting wife, “I am here two meters above the car”.

She was scared like hell and pressed me to come back immediately.

“But this is so easy to drive from here above!” I tried to argue.

Then I came back, because I did not wanted to frighten her.

But again I had the confirmation that there was more in life.

1979. How I became a Yoga teacher.

I remembered the nice feeling I had years ago during my Yoga practice and started searching a teacher. I found one in Amstelveen. A date was agreed. I was on time and joined the class. Marvelous. Everything went smoothly. The exercises were easy. Afterwards the teacher asked me not to come again to the classes. “Why”, I asked her, “have I done something wrong?”

“No, on the contrary”, she answered, “You are much farther in Yoga and you disturb my lesson. You are too much present and the people have the tendency rather to look at you as to me. You have to teach yourself.” But that was not my intention. I only wanted to find that nice feeling of Yoga again. So I searched for another teacher.

I made an new appointment with a woman in Maarssen, who was giving gym also. She welcomed me heartily. Middle aged, plump and tough sporty. Cup of tea. We talked and soon she said to me: “In fact you have to teach me. You know a lot more about it as I do.”

“But, that is not what I want. Let me simply attend your classes.”

“No, better not. You have to teach yourself.”

Sad I went home. Again a disappointment.

Some time later I saw an advertisement in the local newspaper: “Yoga teacher wanted in the community centre.” A little voice in me said: “Is this not the moment to start giving instead of receiving?” I grabbed the phone and dialed the president of the community association Fazantenkamp in Maarssenbroek.

He came to my home to meet me and had no objection that I had had no formal teacher training course. He only let me promise to look for some. A few weeks later I gave my first Yoga class. That was the most beautiful day in my life. After it I even wanted to pay the pupils for the opportunity.

I had found again the way home.

1980.

Since one year I was giving Yoga classes. Marvelous.

One day I came home and my wife said that someone had phoned. The subject was a Swami, who I could receive or something like this. Later it turned out to be a Dutch man, who had invited Swami Yoga Anand from Katmandu (Nepal) to come to Holland, but who was not able at the last moment to receive him. If I could help him?

O.K., that felt good.

One week later I got a letter from the Swami with a lot of thanks. At the same time he asked me to sign a document, which would permit him to have a visa. I had to stand surety for his person. Without hesitation I put my signature. That was at once the first big quarrel I had with my wife at that time. How could I for god sake vouch for some complete strangers financial reliability! Did I became mad? A normal human being does not act like this.

But my decision was made. She was furious.

The Swami came and our marriage went on the rocks.

1981. The hanged man.

‘It was a long road with trees and houses around them. I walked calmly further. At a distance on the left side of the road I saw something strange. It looked like a man, who was hanged by his feet on a gallows. I came closer and horrified I saw that the person was skinned. At the level of his ankles there was a cut around his legs. The skin was pulled downwards from there, up to over the head. I could not see the persons face because of all these rags of skin hanging. It was a horrible sight, such a bloody body. Out of curiosity I raised the pieces of skin hanging before the face of that person. Maybe he was still alive?

And yes, he still appeared to live. But I knew that face well. It was my face.

I was terrified and woke up.’

Only much later I understood the meaning of this dream, when I studied tarot cards. The hanging man is the hermit, who sees everything upside down. Instead of the effort he finds the relaxation of the total acceptance more important. The hermit has climbed the mountain, to find God; the hanging man is God who comes down from the mountain to meet him.

1982. Involvement and account.

The Falkland war was raging. At one side Admiral Galtieri who had promised the Falkland islands to the Argentines, at the other side Margareth Thatcher, who was leading the British in the re-conquest of these meaningless islands on the Argentines. Great danger threatened because the Argentines had called in the help of the Russians. A third world war was on the verge, I knew.

Regularly I sat in meditation and called in thought both protagonists to peace. Especially Thatcher was a tough one. She was difficult to mollify.

“Peace, peace!”, I shouted repeatedly mentally to her. She barely reacted. I kept repeating it. Galtieri was also not a picnic, but in him I felt doubt.

The one night I got a dream.

‘I had to appear in court, it looked like. Two men sat in a sunken sitting area. I had to sit in front of them. They said nothing. They wore long white garments and had a wrinkled old face. One of them looked like someone coming from the East and the other, the boss obviously, looked very much like Ronald Reagan. They looked at me. But they did not look in a normal way, they looked straight in my eyes. Remarkable was thereby that they did not even blink with the eyes. They looked straight through me, inspected me to the bottom of my being. I felt very uneasy. Their persistent piercing look made me angry. I have always been sensitive to roughness and rude behavior. So I returned them the same look. What they can do, I can also. “I challenge you!” I thought meanwhile. But I could not come through it, so strong they were. And they not reacted even. Who remains silent accepts, I thought. Probably I got so their approval. Suddenly the dream was over.’

The war was averted at the very last moment.

Later I would hear from professor Harry Upadhyay, an Indian guest teacher, that holy men can be recognized by two things: they do not blink with their eyes and they float about 10 cm above the ground. I have not noticed in the dream if they were floating, but I am sure that I have met two holy men!

1984. Start of my Teacher Training Course.

My marketing consultancy bureau was not successful anymore. Whatever I tried, the income was diminishing. During some years I had success with selling the financial modeling software package “Insight” for IBM mini computers to great companies. The upcoming PC caused the fall of my product. I tried all sorts of solutions to earn money.

One day I caught myself to be greedy, to think constantly of having, having, having. A little voice in me then said: “You will only solve your problem if you give something to the people. Then you automatically will receive.”

But what could I give to the people?

In that time it happened also that I looked at the bad quality of the existing Yoga schools and Training Courses. I got so angry. Then the little voice said: “If you have so much criticism on them, then do it better yourself!”

A few weeks later, in March 1984, I started my Yoga Teacher Training Course in Amsterdam with 24 pupils, after two advertisements in the newspaper “Volkskrant”. Purely out of anger. Divine anger.

1984. Holiday in Spain.

With a small tent and my new girl friend, Louise, I went to Spain. In my white Opel Rekord with Sunroof, which I was so proud of, I laid the book “Science of Soul” of Swami Yogeshverananda Sarasvati. Impossible to read that book. What was that man telling in fact?

Why does he use all these difficult words. Though I kept to be attracted. I felt that what he was trying to explain was very important indeed. But I could hardly understand it. Then not.

1986. Subtle Anatomy.

Here are the first great revelations about the human being I received. You maybe have read that little book. Otherwise you simply make a free download of it from my homepage www.xs4all.nl/~rajayoga/EN or www.raja-yoga.org before you go on.

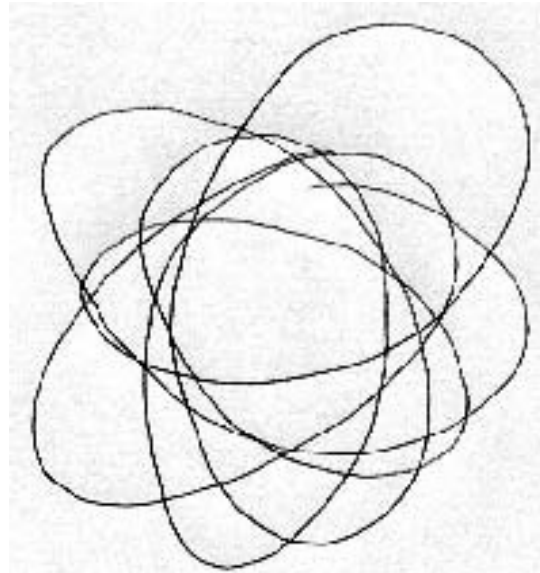
The conscious search

Even though I've had all these beautiful revelations about subtle anatomy, and though I've realised the importance of the knowledge received, I still didn't know what I was searching for. I was in fact just following my nose. Fortunately I continued to listen to the little voice in my heart.

A major step forward was then my realisation of the energy centres. It's not the different organs or body parts that are playing a leading role in our bodies, but the energy centres as described in Yoga.

The Cakra's or energy centres

In 1987, while on holiday on the Canary Islands, I had the privilege of realising in a dream what an energy centre actually is:



It was a beautiful sight, the stream of energy rhythmically and continuously forming one ellipse after another (expanding and contracting).

The so-called “flower petals” are being formed by the successive ellipses of the stream of energy. It is surprising that an energy centre like this – or a Cakra as it is called in Sanskrit (literally “wheel”) – consists of only one (double helix) stream of energy.

In an ordinary human being the path is elliptical as a result of impressions on the energy vibration having damaged the original perfect spherical form. The more harmonious a Cakra the more spherical the ellipses. Finally they form a perfect sphere. The “flower petals” then disappear.

Because of our limited visual perception (that is if we are able to see them at all) these Cakra's look like flat disks slowly and continuously rotating first clockwise and then anticlockwise. However, all Cakra's are in actual fact spherical and pulsating.

A Cakra is created from an energy body. Inside each of the seven energy bodies a vortex is formed. From this vortex a certain power is emitted. That (particular) energy centre regulates the energy on that level.

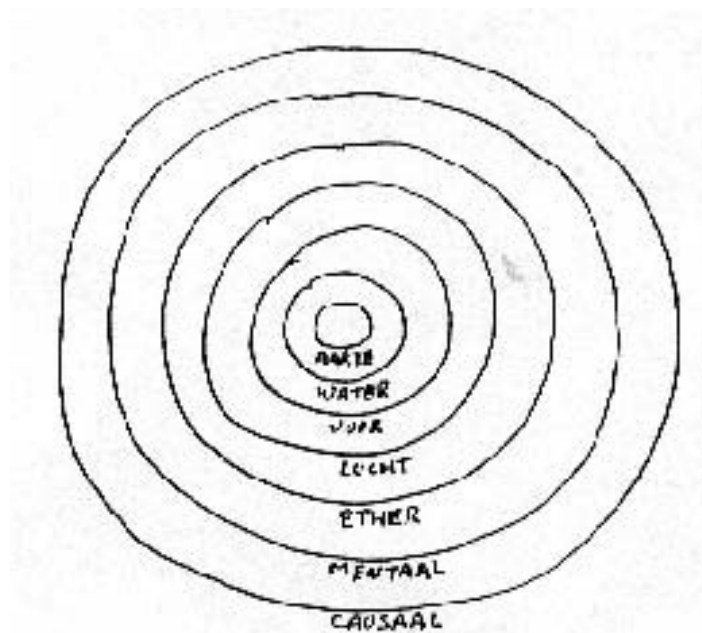
Every now and then we also notice that the flow of the energy in our Cakra's changes direction. But in actual fact what we are "seeing" is the current dominant stream of energy. Even though we are unable to see it, the other stream of energy is still present.

There are in fact many Cakra's in our being. Hundreds even. Maybe even more. Every cell in our body could be seen as a Cakra! In Yoga we limit ourselves to the seven major Cakra's. That is enough to schematically understand the overall functioning of our being.

Sahasrara Cakra (the crown centre)

Inside Anandamaya Kosha – the bliss sheath – a vortex of energy is formed called Sahasrara Cakra (thousand-petaled centre).

This Cakra consists of seven encapsulating energy balls. Structurally it looks like this:

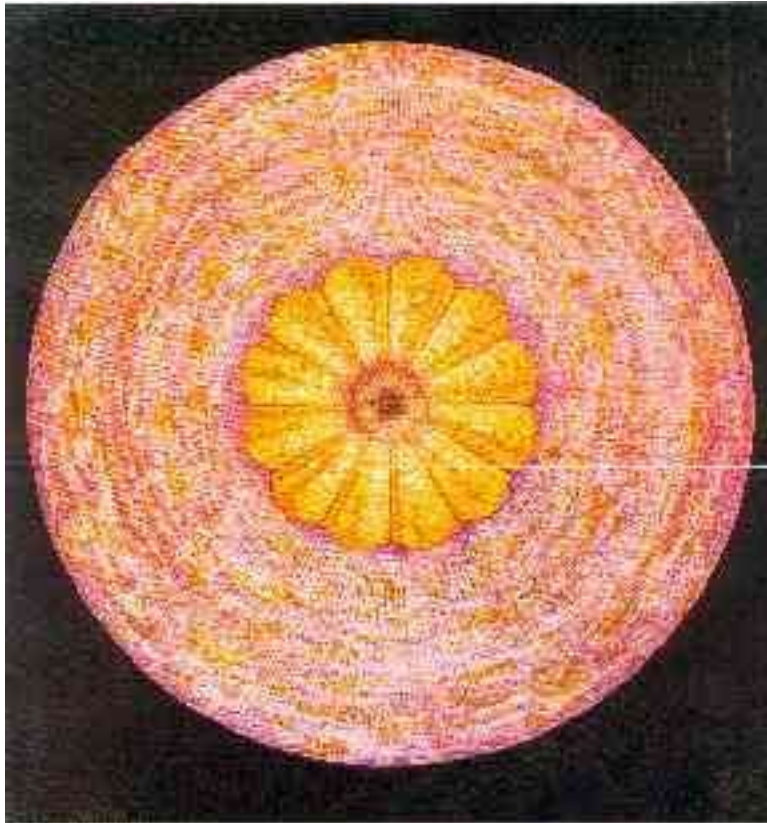


Earth
Water
Fire
Air
Ether

Mental Causal

The seven energy balls are further divided into 960 petals, representing the original Sanskrit (literally Samskrita) root words. Later on these were differentiated into masculine and feminine variants - the roughly two thousand root words familiar to us. Each of the original Samskara's (impressions of a root word) therefore represents a different path of energy. Hence the so-called petals.

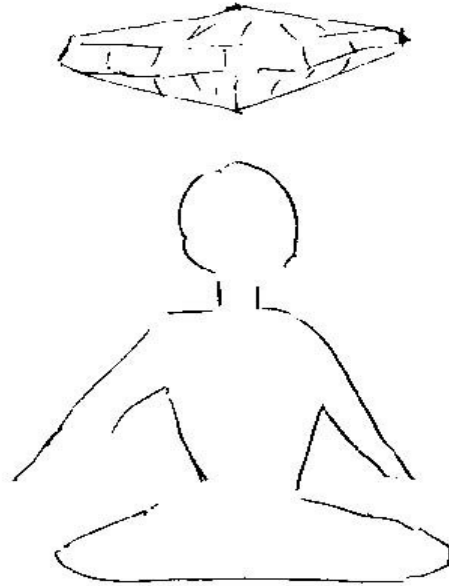
According to Leadbeater (the clairvoyant) the Cakra is supposed to look like this:



According to him the thousand bigger petals are orange in colour, and the twelve central petals yellow. The centre of this Cakra is located about 20 cm directly above the head. It has a maximum diameter of 70 cm when fully open.

My first experience with this Cakra is still fresh in my mind. It happened during a workshop with Dr. Sharma from Jodhpur. As a result of prolonged Mantra singing, followed by deep meditation (using silence as a focal point), I suddenly felt the top of my head opening up. It felt as though I was being “scalped”. This was accompanied by a cool feeling, comparable to being naked there. At the same time I had a sensation of a lot of space, and a light tingling feeling. Lovely! It lasted quite some time and then slowly disappeared. What a pity. I’ve had similar experiences since, but never this powerful. However, a couple of times I clearly sensed a “huge sphere” above my head.

Another experience worth mentioning happened during meditation:



A gigantic blue white diamond appeared above my head! It was perfectly cut and glowing. It hung motionless above my head for a couple of minutes.

The extremely luxurious headdress of the Red Indian chiefs, the Inca's and other chieftain from ancient cultures is another illustration of the value people attach to this Cakra. Our crown is another weak symbolic representation of the royal authority inherent to this Cakra.

Few people have a perceptible functioning of this Cakra. These happy few are characterised by: intuition, vision, creativity, inspiration, wisdom, universal love, and an exceptionally good memory. Obvious leadership qualities. In Yoga we call someone who has complete control over this Cakra a Buddha. Such a person would then possess all possible supernatural powers. Notice the traditional "knot" of hair on top of the head:



Not only are higher feelings of bliss, ecstasy and peace developed in this Cakra, but also other higher feelings relevant to our own Karma, our genetic make-up. These are outwardly expressed as Dharma (characteristics). They form Svarupa (our true nature). Their discovery is called Svarupa Sthiti (Self-realisation).

In order to activate this Cakra the four types of Sabija Samadhi (contemplation with seed) are also useful. Contrary to meditation, one focuses on the emotional value (the seed) of the thought during these Samadhi's.

These are:

Vitarka Samadhi – contemplation based on reasoning

Vicara Samadhi – contemplation based on (a feeling of) ecstasy

Ananda Samadhi – contemplation based on (a feeling of) bliss

Asmita Samadhi – contemplation based on (a feeling of) just being

The colour violet can also be used to activate this Cakra. And, provided someone is sensitive enough, it is possible to use the musical note “si” as well. That was my experience during singing lessons with an Indian teacher in Amsterdam. I had to sing “do, re, me” – in other words “sa, re, ga” – and I could feel my Cakra's responding to that. I could even control the sounds according to the feeling in my Cakra's! The note “si” had a wonderful effect, particularly on my crown centre.

From the outset it's also possible to activate the opening of this Cakra by practising Salamba Sirsasana (headstand) or any of its many variants. These Asana's stimulate all parts of our being – physically as well as mentally – by applying pressure to the top of the head. Therefore in Yoga this Asana is considered the perfect warm-up before a session. Only when the lower Cakra's are in harmony is it possible to open this Cakra, and, consequently, to keep it open.

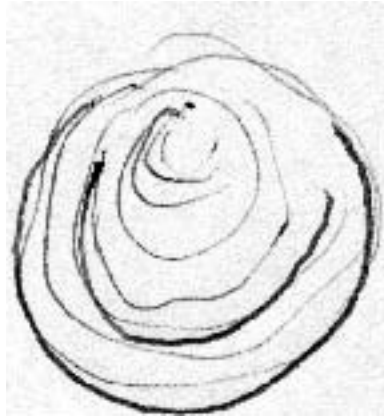
In this case, the endocrine gland responsible for the absorption of the impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of the melatonin hormones is the pineal gland.

Traditionally a fan of roughly a thousand rainbow-coloured flower petals depicts this Cakra. Here the god is represented by the teacher in you, and the goddess by Maha Shakti.

Candra Bindu (the moon point)

From the vortex of the crown centre the subtle body is formed. In the subtle body the forehead centre then appears. Where the Shiva energy enters the forehead centre is where our consciousness starts. This point of entry is called Candra Bindu (the moon point) or Bindu Visarga (the point through which the energy trickles down).

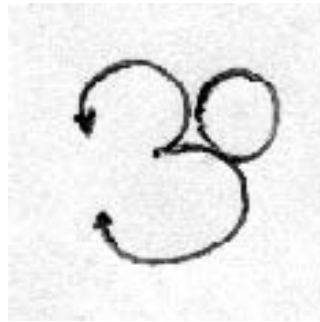
During meditation I had the privilege to “see” this moon point:



It looked like a tunnel. From this tunnel a certain kind of liquid came spiralling down.

After a while I noticed a variation in the flow of the spiralling liquid. First it rotated anticlockwise. Then it expanded and rotated clockwise. Finally it formed a circle. All from the same starting point.

This process repeated itself with such speed that the following living symbol appeared:



Straight away I recognised the well-known AUM or OM sign (Sanskrit) – the primal sound from which all life as well as the forehead centre is created.

These three successive patterns are nothing else but the Tamas, Rajas and Sattva patterns. Combinations of these three modulate the information transfer of the Ida channel carrying the Shiva energy.

In this way we are provided with Shiva energy, also known as nectar or ambrosia. In Sanskrit it is called Soma or Amrita. Some people call it the Soma Cakra, but in my opinion it is no separate Cakra.

Something similar probably happens to the sun point located in our root centre, but then with Shakti energy. Up till now I've hardly been able to see it, so I'll have to get back to you on that.

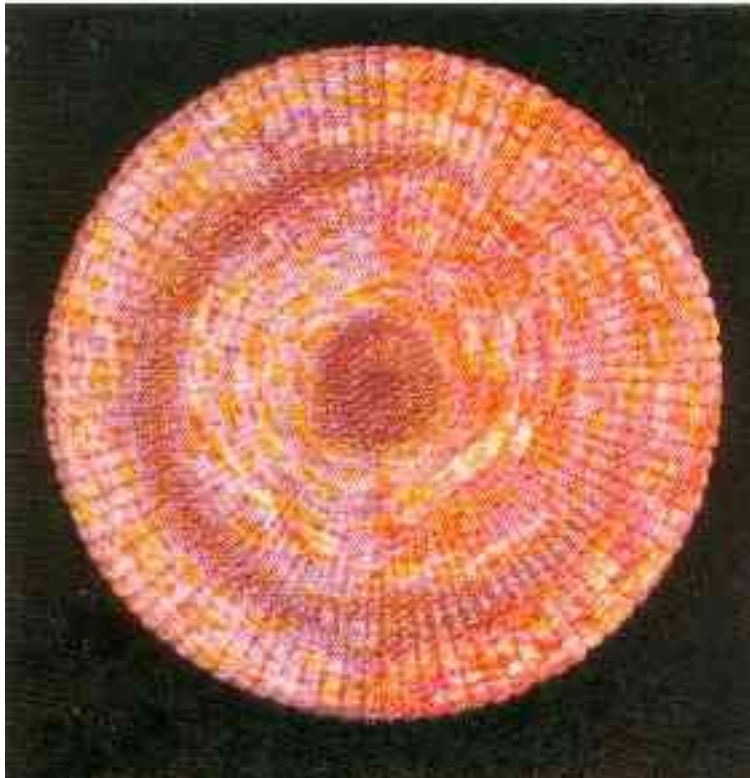
Traditionally the moon point is depicted as follows:

A silver crescent and an inverted triangle in a circle with twelve flower petals. The triangle represents the three divine forces called Brahma (Rajas), Shiva (Tamas) and Vishnu (Sattva). Inside the triangle we see the beautiful deities Kameshvara and Kameshvari, or rather Shiva and his consort Shakti, in a tender embrace. This symbolises the union of detachment (Yoga) and pleasure (Bhoga), which in turn facilitates nourishment by the nectar, resulting in immortality.

Ajna Cakra (the forehead centre)

Inside Manomaya Kosha – the mental sheath - a vortex of energy is formed called Ajna Cakra (the forehead or command centre).

The ninety-six petals or functions of this Cakra are divided into two groups of forty-eight. These refer to the forty-eight functions of the lower Cakra's controlled here by way of yes/no responses, just like the binary system of a computer.



This Cakra is located in and around the head. It stretches out to a maximum of 20 cm from the head, in all directions. The centre of the Cakra lies at the pituitary gland, and the Cakra itself has a maximum diameter of about 60 cm.

In 1989 thanks to a dream, I learned more about Ajna Cakra. In my dream I was looking at a simple landscape with slopes. It was predominantly green. The curve of the horizon was noticeably flatter than at present, and the sun was orange in colour. It all felt very

real to me. A giant approached me. He was about 3 meters tall. I could clearly distinguish his simple, humanoid build. He was naked, and his pale, transparent skin was completely hairless. Neither could I see any fingernails. Most remarkable of all was his head. He had no visible sense organs. Only a yellow white, slowly rotating disk for a face. He was strong, friendly and intelligent. That I could feel. However, when he came closer, I got scared and immediately stopped dreaming.

Later I realised that I probably had the privilege of seeing a Cyclops as described by the ancient Greeks. Further research indicated that the vision had to have taken place in the distant past, when our sun was still a young orange star. The noticeably flatter curve of the horizon is another indication that the earth used to be much bigger than now. This means that it had to have taken place millions of years ago.

While studying the Upanishads I also noticed that the description of our ancestors, or rather of ourselves before we became human, corresponds to the dream. In the Upanishads he's called Vira – a demigod or hero. He had no need for food and drink. As a result of subtle desire, duality developed, and consequently the need for food and drink. At this point a human being was created.

A fantastic dream with a profound meaning, isn't it? But let's continue:

About 20 cm directly above the crown, on the edge of Ajna Cakra, is located Candra Bindu (the moon point). Candra Bindu is our connection to the worlds beyond our normal consciousness, and the point of entry for the Shiva energy – our divine nourishment.

The forehead centre consists of six different balls. They range in size from small to large and are called the earth, water, fire, air, ether and mental balls.



The halo around the head of Jesus or any other true saint is the finest illustration of complete control over this Cakra.

This is representative of somebody who has conquered the phenomenon of duality (good and bad for instance). In Buddhism such a person is called a Bodhisattva.

A couple of people have succeeded in fully opening this Cakra. They are all characterised by an extremely high intellectual ability, and they have complete control over mental, emotional and physical matters. They possess some, and perhaps even all, of the eight great Siddhi's (supernatural powers). These are: the ability to become either extremely small, big, heavy, light or long, to meditate under water, to raise the dead, and to tame wild animals.

Their Sukshma or Linga Sharira (subtle body or astral aura) is predominantly white in colour. Consequently they appear to have wings. Our traditional angels. In the east they are often called Deva's (gods) or Siddha's (perfect ones).

The will and the mind (Manas) are located in this Cakra. Here the thought form, either rational or emotional, is formed out of Bija (the emotional value or the seed of the thought) coming from the causal body.

In order to awaken this Cakra, Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) are of primary importance. Savitarka and Nirvitarka Samadhi are beneficial to gaining complete control.

One can also use the colour indigo. "AUM", the holy Mantra, should be mentally repeated. The musical note "la" also belongs here. Sambhavi Mudra, the seal that refers to Sambhu (another name for the god Shiva), is also particularly suitable in order to reach Unmani (a state of thoughtlessness).

The operation of this Cakra is directly related to its pulsations. These pulsations are the result of the three different qualities of energy vibration: Sattva (harmony), Rajas (expansion) and Tamas (contraction).

When dominated by Sattva, we get the phenomenon known as a sixth sense, intuition or a sense of foreboding. When in complete harmony, telepathy occurs as well.

When dominated by Rajas, we get mental or astral projection, also known as telekinesis.

When dominated by Tamas, we get the phenomenon known as thought formation.

When dominated by Sattva, the Cakra manifests itself physically into the cerebellum. When dominated by Rajas, it manifests itself physically into the mucous or pituitary gland. And when dominated by Tamas, it manifests itself physically into the skull itself.

Noteworthy are the secondary Cakra's – the two major brain halves – that offer assistance should the cerebellum become dysfunctional. Because of Tamas domination, this results in the attraction of lots of thoughts from the external world. When dominated by Rajas, they are also instrumental in reversing the process and returning thoughts to the external world. When dominated by Sattva, the activity in the cerebrum stops, as demonstrated by Unmani (thoughtlessness) and Sabija Samadhi (contemplation with seed).

An excessive input of thoughts from the external world could lead to mental indigestion, stress, even madness. Insufficient thoughts could lead to imbecility. In both cases therapy involves an adjustment to the thought stream. A suitable treatment for imbecility would

then be to have somebody thinking of you. And a retreat in a monastery or convent would be a good solution for stress.

The opening of this Cakra leads to more insight in the relationship between cause and effect. Generally one starts to see things in a different light. The silent witness in us increasingly comes to the fore. Here it is finally possible to rise above duality and truly determine our own fate.

The presence of the encapsulating balls of the five elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether – in the energy ball of the thought vibration in this Cakra could – provided it's in Sattva and sufficiently intense – lead to a supernatural or clear sense of smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing.

The dominant energy is called Sukshma Prana (subtle energy). For instance, this is the kind of energy used in long distance healing as it travels faster than the speed of light.

One of the three typical clusters of Samskaras called a Granthi (knot) is located in this Cakra. In this case we are dealing with Rudra or Shiva Granthi. Piercing this knot causes the Cakra to open.

The endocrine gland responsible for the absorption of impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of hormones, and the consequent direction of the hormonal secretion of other glands, is the pituitary or mucous gland.

Traditionally this Cakra is depicted as follows:

A white circle with two luminous flower petals. In the centre there is a shining white Lingam (subtle body), containing the god Ardhanarishvara. He is half male, half female. His masculine right-hand side is blue in colour due to drinking the nectar of immortality. In his right hand he's holding the trident of knowledge, studying and kindness. In his left hand on his feminine side he carries a lotus flower, symbol of purity.

Duality has been conquered. Male and female have become one.

The goddess is Hakini Shakti. She has four arms and six heads. She imparts knowledge of the unconditional truth and the awareness of non-duality.

In three of her hands she is holding the following:

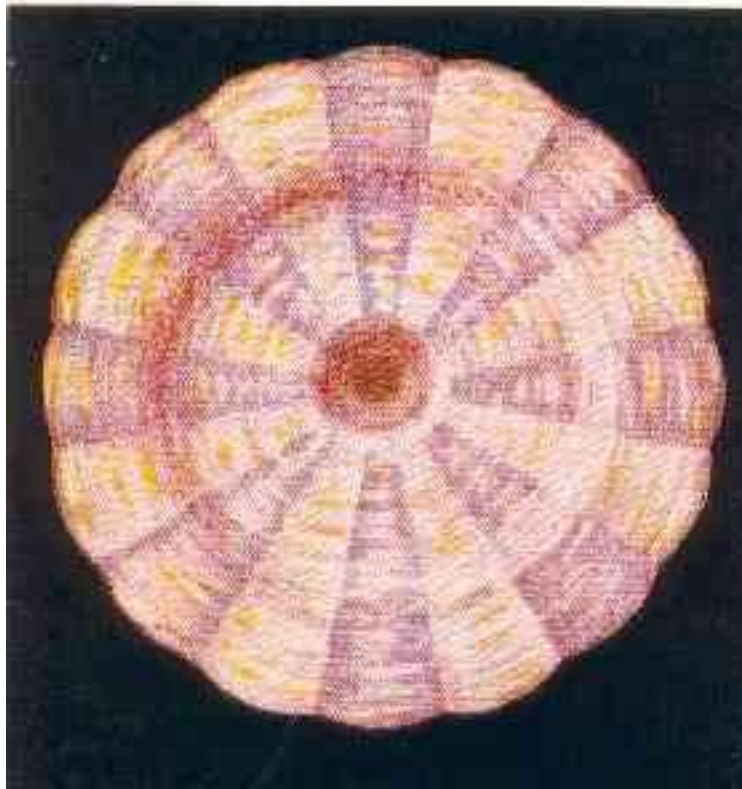
1. a drum for the preservation of a steady rhythm on the path of development.
2. a skull as symbol of detachment
3. a Mala (rosary) in order to stay centred.

Her fourth hand is raised in the Mudra: "Fear not..."

Vishuddhi Cakra (the throat centre)

Inside Annamaya Kosha - the food sheath – and more specifically inside the ether body, a vortex of energy is formed called Vishuddhi Cakra (the purifying centre).

This Cakra has sixteen flower petals. The sounds thereof are exclusively vowels. In other Cakras only consonants are heard. Vowels – in any language – are the carriers of sound. They are also the clearest sounds. That's why it's called the purifying centre. The consonants have an effect on the vowels and they impair their energy path. That's why they are called impure. Thanks to the purifying effect of Yoga, the impurities are burned away first, which means that the throat centre becomes extremely important in the last phase.



In 1986, while sitting in meditation in Amsterdam, I had the privilege of seeing the throat centre of one of my students. She came from Moscow and was called Maria. She was active in the music world. It was clearly visible. It was slowly rotating clockwise, and did indeed look a lot like the above image as seen by Leadbeater.

The centre of Vishuddhi Cakra is located behind the thyroid gland. This Cakra has a maximum diameter of about 50 cm. It can clearly be felt up to the shoulders. It consists of five balls of the following elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. For the purpose of Khecari Mudra this Cakra is also called the fountain of everlasting youth. Metaphorically speaking this Cakra is indeed theoretically responsible for physical immortality.

Wise men from ancient times, like Mathusalem in the Bible, became hundreds of years old. Apparently people living in the Carpathian, Ural or other high mountains really do become much older, thanks to the huge amount of ether (more powerful than any other gross energy).

This Cakra's function is expression. The most important means of expression is speech, but all other forms of physical expression come from here.

Living a harmonious life, preferably close to nature, and listening to the harmonious sounds of heavenly hymns, are powerful ways of activating this Cakra. Apart from the Mantra "ham" and the musical note "sol", the colour blue – sky-blue – can also be used.

When dominated by Sattva, we get a sense of hearing as Jnanendriya (subtle sense organ). The shape of the ear resembles a shell and is meant for the reception of spiral vibrations.

When dominated by Rajas, we get speech as Karmendriya (subtle action organ). The location of the vocal cords in the throat is a confirmation of this.

When dominated by Tamas, we get sound as Tanmatra (subtle element).

Normally people regularly alternate between the qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Therefore one should regularly talk to somebody, to a wall if necessary. One should also regularly focus on just listening. Turn the radio on, or listen to the birds singing. It also helps to ease a feeling of loneliness. If somebody is unable to do that – if he's unable to talk, or if he can't hear anything – he gets distressed. An extremely painful experience! A good torturer is aware of this and likes to use the isolation cell as torture chamber.

When dominated by Sattva, the Cakra manifests itself physically into the windpipe or trachea.

When dominated by Rajas, it manifests itself physically into the thyroid gland.

When dominated by Tamas, it manifests itself physically into the neck vertebrae.

When dominated by Sattva, the secondary Cakra's are the ears, including (a sense of) hearing in general, and a sense of balance.

When the primary Cakra (the throat centre itself) is in harmony, the ears are rendered obsolete. Hearing then becomes the responsibility of the primary Cakra. As mentioned earlier, the Cakra manifests itself physically into the windpipe or trachea. Sound is then picked up and it consequently resonates in the windpipe. This is what's called a clear sense of hearing.

By the way, in order for a deaf person to regain his sense of hearing, he should not wear his hearing aid during Yoga practice. This impairs recovery. The primary Cakra is connected by way of the Eustachian tube.

In the case of Rajas the secondary Cakra's are the parathyroid glands. In the case of Tamas, the secondary Cakra's are the collarbones.

Diseases that are prevalent here are of course disorders of the ear and the throat. We are all too familiar with the common cold or the flu. Problems with one's metabolism, which

for example leads to obesity, are related to an inefficient functioning of the thyroid gland. Apart from Sarvangasana, Setubhandasana is also very effective. Asmita Samadi is ideal.

The opening of this Cakra is accompanied by an increasing feeling of serenity, more stamina and better insight.

As far as the Siddhi's (supernatural powers) are concerned, we have here a clear sense of hearing and levitation.

This Cakra is especially active between age 28 and 35. This is the time when one would like to prove oneself, and make a career for oneself.

The energy active here is called Vhyana Prana. This Prana permits the creation of space for the functioning of the physical body, internally as well as externally. A sense of balance and direction is developed here. Especially after a lot of speaking or singing this energy feels a bit like being drunk. This energy is able to penetrate the whole physical body. This could result in a feeling of exceptional well-being. It is visible up to a maximum of about 10 cm from our physical bodies, and is a bit white, grey or blue in colour. It is also called a ghost or an apparition, particularly in the case of the deceased. Screaming loudly will make it disappear. In karate is it also customary to scream loudly at your competitor in order to disorientate him for a few seconds. Enough time to strike the final blow.

The endocrine gland responsible for the absorption of the impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of the thyroxin hormones is the thyroid gland.

Traditionally this Cakra is depicted as follows:

A silver crescent inside a huge white ball – shining like a full moon – surrounded by sixteen flower petals. The crescent represents Nada, the pure cosmic sound. The moon represents nonverbal communication.

The elephant Gaja represents trust, knowledge of nature and of the environment. His big ears are a reminder of the importance of the perception of sound. As one of the most primitive surviving mammals on earth, he carries all ancient knowledge in him. He teaches patience, remembrance and self-confidence. His trunk represents sound.

As a god we have Panchavaktra Shiva. He has five heads, representing the five senses of smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing. And (as we know already) also representative of the five elements in their purest form. He has four arms:

- 1 One of his right hands is raised in the Mudra (energy seal): "Fear not ..."
- 2 In his other right hand he's holding a Mala (rosary), intended for the practice of Mantra Yoga.
- 3 In one of his left hands he's holding a drum, constantly producing the AUM sound.
- 4 In his other left hand he's holding a trident, representing Sattva, Tamas and Rajas.

He is the great teacher, helping mankind to become aware of his limitations within each one of the elements, and to discover (the state of) union.

As a goddess we have Shakini Shakti, the embodiment of purity. Thanks to her we gain higher knowledge and supernatural powers. She's holding the following objects in her hands:

- 1 A skull, representing detachment from the illusory world of sensory perception.
 - 2 A stick to discipline the elephant and to prevent him from becoming too obstinate.
 - 3 Scriptures containing knowledge about appropriate behaviour, without having any complexes.
 - 4 A Mala (rosary), for the preservation of unity through the repetition of Mantra's.
- Her knowledge is usually passed on in dreams.

Anahata Cakra (the heart centre)

In the air body a vortex of energy is formed called Anahata Cakra (non-stop beating centre). As the name suggests, this Cakra never stops beating.

Our heartbeat is a result of the pulsation of Karana Sharira (the causal body), reflected here. The pulsation is influenced by Karma.

The sum total of the bumps on the vibration represents the peak or Rajas of the pulse, and the sum total of the dents in the vibration represents the trough or Tamas of the pulse. Somebody's heartbeat reveals his whole identity, and is therefore seen by the old Indian Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine as a very precise method of diagnosis, the so-called pulse diagnosis.

In 1977 I realised the importance of this Cakra:

One evening after dinner I fell ill. We were visiting my brother in Assebroek, close to Brugge. He lived in a beautiful detached house, a real Belgian villa. It had been a beautiful sunny day. However, without any apparent reason, I felt sick. I left my ex-wife, my brother and his wife at the table and went upstairs to lie down. I lay down on the double bed in one of the big bedrooms. My nausea slowly subsided.

All of a sudden I felt an intense heat in the vicinity of my heart, as if it was about to explode. I remember thinking: "I'm going to die!"

I felt no real pain, just an intense burning sensation. It was so intense that I looked under my shirt to see whether I had any burn marks. Where my heart is I noticed a shining white yellow disk of light, extending across my shoulders. The heat seemed to consume everything. Slowly it became more pleasant. The incident lasted at least 20 minutes. My nausea disappeared and I went downstairs again. I felt a little dazed. I hardly said anything to my wife, my brother and his wife. They had no appreciation for such things. But I am convinced that my heart centre opened that day, because from that day onwards I was able to feel real love.

In the Mundaka Upanishad (II, 2 – 8) it's written that all doubt is erased and that Karma is burned away when one witnesses the knot of the heart being destroyed – in higher as well as in lower sense.



This Cakra has twelve flower petals and is located on the same level as the heart. It has a maximum diameter of about 40 cm, and can clearly be felt to be this size once opened.

Only when somebody's heart centre has been opened can such a person be considered a Yogi or Yogini. In all other cases one is considered a Sadhaka (practitioner). The burning heart of Christ can be cited as an example.

People who have accomplished this are easily recognised by their kindness and the love that they radiate. This can be experienced as a light tingling feeling in the vicinity of your heart when you speak to them. Regrettably such people are still hard to find. It's difficult for laymen to have an understanding of their power. They have for instance the ability to make all their wishes come true. This is made possible by the activation of a special Cakra called Kalpa Taru Cakra ("tree of wishes") in the vicinity of the heart centre. This Cakra is in fact the reflection of the crown centre. To achieve the coupling of these two Cakras the obstacles between them need to be removed. This purification usually leads to the activation of Kalpa Taru Cakra, whereupon Anahata Cakra is ignited as well.

The functions of this Cakra relate to all higher desires, like love, hate, calling, idealism, etc. Most well known is the feeling of being in love.

Bhakti (dedication or devotion) is particularly important to activate this Cakra. It also helps to have high principles, and not forgetting enthusiasm (literally meaning “to be filled with God”).

Of physical interest are – amongst others – Bhujangasana, Ustrasana and Adho Vrksasana.

Morally speaking, Ishvara Pranidhana (surrender) is particularly effective, certainly when one focuses on the desire to serve. This way the Tamas aspect of Karana Sharira (the causal body), in other words the phenomenon called Ahamkara (ego principle), is brought under control and harmonised.

When dominated by Sattva, we get a sense of touch as Jnanendriya (subtle sense organ). In this case the skin serves as the organ.

When dominated by Rajas, we get the ability to grab something as Karmendriya (subtle action organ). Serving as organs we have the hands.

When dominated by Tamas, we get air as Tanmatra (subtle element). Here gasses – symbolically called air – are transformed from their subtle state into Bhuta (physical manifestation). In the heart especially gasses are being manifested. When somebody is in harmony – a Yogi for instance – it leads to a decrease in the need for an external supply of air, breathing. Ultimately it’s theoretically possible to live a normal life on an internal air supply alone, that’s to say without breathing at all. Great Yogis who allow themselves to be buried alive demonstrate this. A couple of weeks or months later they are brought to the surface again, apparently unharmed. During this time their hair stops growing as well.

When dominated by Sattva, the Cakra manifests itself physically into the heart, when dominated by Rajas, into the thymus gland, and when dominated by Tamas, into the vertebrae in the higher back.

It is clear that the lungs are the physical manifestations of the secondary Cakras connected to Anahata Cakra, dominated by Sattva. These Cakras operate individually. One is Rajas, the other is Tamas, and after a while they swap around. This explains the cyclical working of several organs. In the case of Rajas the emphasis is on breathing out, and in the case of Tamas, the emphasis is on breathing in. The bigger the lungs the less harmonious the heart centre is.

It’s clear that cardiovascular and lung diseases belong here.

The colour green is useful here, as is the Mantra “yang”. The musical note “fa” also belongs here. With Maha Mudra it’s possible to make up for a lot (of damage), as well as with Surya Bhedana Pranayama, and obviously with Ananda Samadhi.

In this case a clear sense of touch is typically the resultant supernatural power.

This Cakra is particularly active between age 22 and 27. This is the time for the discovery of the love of your life, and of your calling in life.

The Prana we are dealing with in this case is called Udana Prana, the energy that enables one to stand upright. Imagine a hot air balloon, with the hot air as the Prana, the balloon as the trunk and the basket as the lower part of the body. When in love, it seems like one is floating through the air.

Here we find a knot, or a cluster of Samskara's (impressions) called Vishnu Granthi (the knot of Vishnu). It represents emotional attachment, often the basis of decision-making instead of rational clarity. This knot is pierced when the emotions are harmonised. At that moment the spiritual experience clearly intensifies.

The endocrine gland responsible for the absorption of the impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of the thymosin hormones is the thymus gland.

Traditionally this Cakra is depicted as follows:

The hexagram is the symbol of this air centre. It consists of two intersecting triangles representing the harmony between the upward (Shakti) and the downward (Shiva) force. Movement in all directions is then possible – typical of the air element.

The antelope clearly represents the characteristics of this Cakra: a lot of sensitivity, alertness and inspiration. The antelope's beautiful eyes represent innocence and purity, as well as the power of attraction.

At the top the god Rudra Shiva appears in a Lingam (subtle body) as Sadashiva, the eternal benefactor. He is Shabda Brahma or the eternal Logos, symbol of Omkara, the combination of the three qualities Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which we encounter in the holy word AUM. His trident represents these three qualities. The drum in the other hand is responsible for the heartbeat.

This subtle body – usually gold in colour – is the consciousness, that's so powerful at this stage that it can act as you own master.

As a god we have here Ishana Rudra Shiva, who is completely detached from the world. He's in a state of constant bliss. He's wearing a tiger skin, a symbol of the dangerous thoughts in the forest of desires. He's full of peace and goodwill. In his right hand he's holding a trident (representing creation, destruction and preservation), and in his left hand a drum (representing the power of rhythm). His locks of hair represent the cool, purifying stream of Self-realisation, symbolised by the holy Ganges. The snakes coiled around his body are the tamed passions. He is eternally young, contrary to the old, angry-looking god of the third Cakra.

The four-headed goddess Kakini represents the increase of energy in this Cakra. Her four heads are equal to one another, and represent the four aspects of the Self – the physical, rational, sensual and the emotional Self. She is the inspiration for high-quality music, poetry and art in general. Her energy is inexhaustible and radiant.

In her hands she's holding the instruments necessary to find balance:

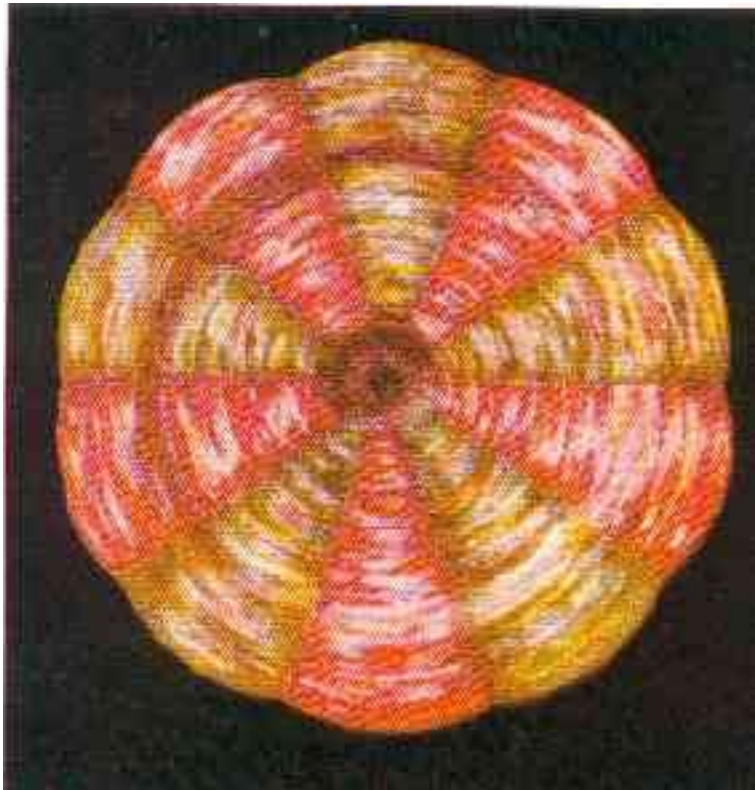
- 1 a sword to remove obstacles.
- 2 a shield to protect one from the external world.

- 3 a skull, representing detachment from a false identification with the body.
- 4 a trident, representing balance between the forces of preservation, creation and destruction.

A little bit higher, between the two gods, we see Kundalini Shakti in the form of a beautiful goddess. She is sitting in deep meditation inside a triangle, representing the upward tendency of the energy experienced here. She is the virgin mother and is synonymous with selfless spiritual devotion. Contrary to the depiction of her in the root centre, she's not a coiled-up serpent with destructive tendencies, but an extremely important sounding board for your further development.

Manipura Cakra (the navel centre)

In the fire body a vortex of energy is formed called Manipura Cakra (city of jewels). This is probably the most beautiful Cakra of them all.



This Cakra is the only naturally radiant point in our being. Hence the reference to “jewels” in the name. This radiance, light or fire is the result of the explosion of energy being contracted here – around the navel – the body’s centre of gravity. This explosion empowers your whole being. Thanks to this the Shakti energy can suddenly come to the fore. In Japan this Cakra is called the Hare centre, and in China the Ki centre. In Yoga one would call it a Prana centre.

This Cakra can best be compared to the central heating system in a house. The harder it works, the hotter it gets, and when it's not working all that hard, less heat's produced. But the importance of this Cakra does not become clear until one realises that an ambient temperature of about 15 to 20 degrees C makes for ideal working conditions. A lower temperature soon causes stiffness, and a higher temperature drowsiness.

This Cakra has 10 flower petals – streams of energy with the following sounds: “dang”, “dhang”, “rlang”, “tang”, “thang”, “dang”, “dhang”, “nang”, “pang” and “phang”. It's located directly underneath the diaphragm. It has a maximum diameter of about 30 cm. When dominated by Sattva, the Cakra manifests itself physically into the stomach. Note the shape of the stomach – it resembles a flame. Heartburn is also called “Sattva fire”. When dominated by Rajas, it manifests itself physically into the pancreas, and when dominated by Tamas into the vertebrae behind the stomach.

Somebody who has control over this Cakra is able to keep his cool and would not flinch, in spite of serious problems. Such a person would have exceptionally good eyesight.

The functions of this Cakra are ambition and the will to win. In general one can ascribe readiness to fight to this Cakra. It's directly related to Ajna Cakra via Kurma Nadi – the energy channel responsible for connecting physical will and mental will, which, according to Patanjali, leads to steadiness.

As this Cakra is formed out of the fire element, it is suggested that one activates it slowly and carefully, in order to enable the decisiveness to appear of its own accord. “Festina lente” the ancient Romans used to say. “Haast je langzaam” we say in Dutch (meaning “Make haste slowly”.) “Hardlopers zijn doodlopers.” (“Haste trips over its own heels.”)

When dominated by Sattva, we get a sense of sight as Jnanendriya (subtle sense organ). When dominated by Rajas, we get movement of the legs, or the ability to move forward, as Karmendriya (subtle action organ). When dominated by Tamas, we get fire or heat as Tanmatra (subtle element).

As secondary Cakra's we have here Candra Cakra (the spleen) and Surya Cakra (the liver). When the primary Cakra needs assistance – in other words when the navel centre is not functioning properly – these Cakra's must offer relief. In the case of too little Shakti energy, Prana is extracted from the environment via the spleen. For instance, when you go running after a meal, you would feel a stab of pain in your spleen. When you stop running, it disappears. There is too little fire present in Manipura Cakra to support both the digestion in the stomach and leg movement (at the same time). Extra input via the spleen is activated, but so much fire is required that the spleen loses control and starts to ache. In the case of too much Shakti energy, the liver passes on Prana to the environment. This is demonstrated by the swelling of the liver as a result of the accumulation of calories – as in the case of alcoholics. Early in the morning there would typically occur an outpouring of energy from the liver, visible as transpiration.

Diseases that are prevalent here are for instance stomach ulcers (caused by too much Shakti), stomach prolapse (too much Shiva), diabetes (either too much Shakti or too much Shiva), liver and spleen disorders, cold feet and/or hands, etc.

In the case of nearsightedness (myopia) the eight small muscles of the eyes cramp up due to prolonged Shakti domination – for instance from wanting to keep on studying until you succeed. Usually around the age of 40 these eight poor tiny muscles react against this situation. They let go and are barely able to function anymore. Farsightedness (presbyopia) is the result. Ambition tempered by common sense is considered good therapy for this.

The colour yellow, the musical note “mi” and the sound “rang” as Mantra are also useful in harmonising this Cakra. Also worth mentioning is the specific and extremely careful use of heat and cold, as well as taking regular walks.

Traditionally Mayurasana is seen as the perfect solution to all problems on this level, and then some! Viparita Karani Mudra is also used to gain complete control over fire. However, they are temporary solutions. Samyama (concentration-meditation-contemplation, all at the same time) on the eyes is the remedy for all fire problems. This exercise offers a permanent solution.

The opening of this Cakra leads to clairvoyance.

In martial arts of the East the complete opening of this Cakra is seen as the ideal of the top fighter.

This Cakra plays a dominant role between age 15 and 21. This is the time for “sturm and drang”, sport, and the best time for military service. It’s also the time for conflict, as interests are defended “rücksichtslos”. Whoever has control over his energy is considered “cool”. Emotions, in other words thoughts laden with Ahamta Vritti (the vortex of I-ness), break up in this Cakra and lead to the phenomenon of “astral body”.

The generic Prana active here is responsible for empowering the whole physical body. If you plan on driving all the way to the south of France in one day, it’s probably a good idea to do a fire exercise – for instance Mayurasana (the peacock) – every so often, even if only mentally. Your eyesight will improve immediately and you will be better able to cope with it.

The endocrine gland responsible for the absorption of the impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of the insulin hormones is the pancreas.

Traditionally this Cakra is depicted as follows:

An inverted triangle inside a circle, surrounded by ten flower petals. The triangle represents the fire element and the fact that the energy is directed downward. The hooks on both sides indicate that this Cakra can rotate in both directions.

The ram symbolises this Cakra because of his power and impulsive, almost aggressive, behaviour.

Here the old god Brahma Braddha Rudra represents the power of destruction. Everything that exists returns to him. He's sitting on a tiger skin – symbol of Manas (the mind) – and is looking really angry. Third Cakra people control others through anger. Self-control is developed thanks to life experience and detachment. Identification, recognition, immortality and strength are motivating factors.

The goddess Lakini resides here. This Shakti power has three heads as she's able to observe three worlds: the physical, the subtle and the causal world. She is armed with fire and independence.

- 1 In one of her four hands she's holding a Vajra (a thunderbolt). This represents both the electrical energy of fire and the heat generated by the body.
- 2 In her second hand she's holding the arrow shot by the god Kama (desire) in the second Cakra. The arrow hits its goal and is responsible for the impetus to act.
- 3 In her third hand she's holding fire.
- 4 Her fourth hand is raised in the Mudra: "Fear not..."

Svadhistana Cakra (the sacral centre)

In the water body a vortex of energy is formed called Svadhistana Cakra (the place of the Self).

It's called like that because at a certain moment in your development this is the place where the perception of the Sva – the Self, or Atman – can best be experienced. All you really need to do is to create a balance between Shiva and Shakti energy. This affects your whole being, and especially this Cakra. It's just as if more room is created for your intestines, and everything in your abdomen feels more comfortable. A "total" Self-consciousness is the result. A very pleasant feeling.



In ancient times this was seen as the former seat of the Kundalini (the serpent fire). However, due to further contraction, or the Fall (of man) as it's usually called, the Kundalini had lodged in Muladhara Cakra.

This Cakra has six flower petals with the sounds "bang", "bhang", "mang", "yang", "rang" and "lang". When dominated by Sattva, it manifests itself physically into the bladder, when dominated by Rajas, into the prostate or the uterus, and when dominated by Tamas, into the sacrum. It has a maximum diameter of about 20 cm. By doing physical exercises that activate the hip joints, for instance Trikonasana, Parsvakonasana and Virabhadrasana, this Cakra can be clearly felt.

This Cakra's function is lower desires. This not only refers to desire, jealousy and greed, but also to the desire to save, to take care of the pennies, to be sociable and to play. The erotic part of sexuality also finds its origin here.

Hatha Yoga is very effective in activating this Cakra. The Mantra "vang", the musical note "re" and the colour orange are also helpful. A vegetarian diet is recommended to activate this Cakra due to the fact that plants have a high (harmoniously structured) fluid content. For the quick and effective harmonisation of this Cakra I recommend Uttanasana (the standing forward bend). When you, after building it up step by step, manage to remain in the pose for about ten minutes, the result is magnificent.

When dominated by Sattva, we get a sense of taste as Jnanendriya (subtle sense organ).
When dominated by Rajas, we get procreation as Karmendriya (subtle action organ).
When dominated by Tamas, we get water as Tanmatra (subtle element).

When dominated by Sattva, this Cakra manifests itself physically into the bladder. When dominated by Rajas, it manifests itself physically into the uterus or the prostate. When dominated by Tamas, it manifests itself physically into the lumbar vertebra.

The endocrine glands responsible for the absorption of the impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of the oestrogen, progesterone or testosterone hormones are the ovaries or the testicles.

Traditionally this Cakra is depicted as follows:

It's circular. Inside the circle we see the shape of a crescent, reminiscent of a moon. The white circle represents the water element. There are six flower petals.

The strange animal that we see here resembles a crocodile, or rather a kind of aquatic creature, like we used to be. The stimulation of this Cakra results in the emergence of all the characteristics of our being.

Here the subconscious blends in with normal consciousness.

Here we have the god Vishnu, responsible for the preservation of creation. He represents the right way of living. The ability to play is fundamental.

In his hands he's holding a couple of necessities for the enjoyment of life:

- 1 a shell, representing Nada (the pure sound)), enabling somebody to liberate himself.
- 2 a Cakra, wound around his forefinger like a ring of light. It represents Dharma (calling). It clears the way, removing all obstacles and destroying disharmony and imbalance.
- 3 a metal club, necessary for control over the earth. For instance, money is needed before someone can afford himself the satisfaction of his sensory and sexual desires.
- 4 a lotus flower. The lotus normally grows through the mud while remaining pure – representing a human being remaining unaffected by his environment.

The goddess Rakini Shakti has two heads. One of the heads represents the subconscious and the other one normal consciousness. This Shakti force serves as the inspiration of the arts and music. By trying to achieve balance the personality starts to develop.

In her four hands she's holding:

- 1 an arrow (meant) for emotions and feelings, resulting in pleasure as well as pain.
- 2 a skull, representing the nature of the romantic who allows his emotions to overrule his rational ability.
- 3 a drum, representing the rhythmical power of this Cakra.
- 4 a small axe, meant for the removal of all obstacles relating to duality.

Muladhara Cakra (the root centre)

In the earth body a vortex of energy is formed called Muladhara Cakra (root centre). The word "Muladhara" consists of two words: "mula" or "root", and "adhara" or "base". This on the one hand refers to the foundation of Mula Prakriti (physical nature) and on the other hand to the root-like shape of this vortex of energy, of which our coccyx is a physical manifestation.



The huge importance of this Cakra for our spiritual growth cannot be overstated. Due to the fact that Surya Bindu (the sun point, and our connection to the micro cosmos or the underworld) is located in this Cakra, and also the fact that this is the point of entry into your body for Kundalini Shakti (serpent fire), this clears the way for the fantastic atomic

power enabling us to persevere with the strenuous exercises in order to reach the spiritual world. In the macro cosmos we are familiar with a similar point, the so-called black hole.

This Cakra has four flower petals with the sounds “vang”, “shang”, “kshang” and “sang”.

This Cakra’s functions are the physical body and sexuality. It refers to the physical side of sexuality and the functioning of all solid substances in your physical body. (A feeling of) security as well as its counterpart, (a feeling of) insecurity, or fear, is also located here.

Under ideal circumstances the Cakra has a diameter of about 10 cm. A life filled with certainties - peaceful and calm - is the most effective way of harmonising it, as well as the Mantra “lang”, the musical note “do” and the colour red.

When the Cakra is dominated by Sattva, we get a sense of smell as Jnanendriya (subtle sense organ). When dominated by Rajas, we get defecation as Karmendriya (subtle action organ). When dominated by Tamas, we get the production of solid matter, or earth, as Tanmatra (subtle element).

When dominated by Sattva, the Cakra manifests itself physically into the anus. When dominated by Rajas, it manifests itself physically into the sexual organ. When dominated by Tamas, it manifests itself physically into the coccyx.

Diseases that are prevalent here are for instance constipation, obstruction and impotence.

Traditionally one would refer to this Cakra for everything concerning the seven Dhatu’s (kinds of tissue): plasma, blood, muscular tissue, adipose (fat), brain marrow nerves, ova or sperm. The seven kinds of tissue evolve from one into the other, and plasma was formed out of air on the level of Anahata Cakra (the heart centre).

All Asana’s are suitable for the development of this Cakra, as well as the Yama’s and Niyama’s.

As supernatural power we have here a clear sense of smell.

This Cakra is especially important from birth until age 7.

The energy active here is called Apana Prana, responsible for the force of repulsion, for example defecation, perspiration and childbirth. It’s grey black in colour.

Here we find a cluster of Samskaras (impressions) called Brahma Granthi (the knot of Brahma). Piercing this knot has direct bearing on restoring your relationship with Brahma (God).

The endocrine glands responsible for the absorption of the impressions of the Cakra and the secretion of the cortisol (cortisone), adrenalin and noradrenaline hormones are the kidneys, specifically the adrenal glands.

Traditionally this Cakra is depicted as a square. This represents earthly awareness, including its four dimensions (height, width, depth and time). In the middle there's a red triangle, representing Shakti power. The triangle is inverted, which means that the movement of the energy is predominantly downward. Inside the triangle there's a serpent, representing the dormant Kundalini, coiled three and a half times around a kind of grey rugby ball. This symbolises the subtle body of an ordinary human being. From the mouth of the serpent a straight line goes up. This represents Sushumna.

The elephant is the most important symbol of the earth. When you have control over this Cakra you're steadfast in spite of a heavy load on your back. You would be able to fulfil your task(s) in all modesty. In this way one would become equal to the supreme god Indra.

The seven trunks represent the seven kinds of tissue (plasma, blood, muscular tissue, adipose (fat), brain marrow nerves, ova or sperm).

On the first elephant another one is drawn - the god Ganesha, son of Shiva and Shakti. People prefer to call upon him for protection during their various undertakings. In three of his hands he's holding the following:

- 1 a piece of candy, representing pure consciousness, health and prosperity.
- 2 a lotus flower, representing steadfastness and selfless action.
- 3 a small axe, representing the cutting loose of the addiction to desire.
- 4 His fourth hand is raised in the Mudra: "Fear not..."

I would like to elaborate on the importance of Ganesha.

Early November 2004 I had a strange dream. The landscape was quite barren, a bit like the Spanish interior. On the side of a dirt road there was a kind of circus. Lots of people were on their way to see it, but I didn't feel like going. Instead I was looking across the road. I noticed a hairy man playing with a young elephant. I approached (them) and due to my upbringing I felt obliged to speak to the man first while I was in fact more interested in the elephant. The man's whole body was covered in dark hair, as was his head (unlike me!). He talked to me and at the same time the elephant disappeared.

Almost at once seven or eight similar hairy men appeared and started talking to me. The next morning I tried to figure out the meaning of the dream.

Two days later I realised that the circus is everyday life, in which people are involved. I was the hairy man. Paying attention to myself clearly resulted in further differentiation and increasing density. What I didn't understand was the elephant.

That evening before I fell asleep I was still thinking about it. I decided to tune in to the young elephant anyway. This did indeed feel good. He was almost like a playmate. "But who are you?" I asked. He didn't answer me. I tried to guess. "Are you Krishna?" I knew better, but Krishna does sometimes appear in the shape of an elephant. But I was quite sure that it wasn't him. "Are you Ganesha?" Yes, he was Ganesha. He started playing with me. I liked that, so I joined him. He hugged me with his trunk and at the same time he nudged me, only to walk away again. It felt wonderful to play like that. According to

the degree of sympathy, I absorbed more of his gentle yet powerful energy. Soon the bedroom filled up with stars. Next to me my wife Lida responded to what was happening by straight away falling asleep. I didn't sleep a wink. All night I played with the young elephant Ganesha.

The next morning I didn't feel tired at all. On the contrary. Since then I regularly visit my new friend, the son of Shiva and his wife Parvati. He represents success, knowledge and the solution to problems. Oddly enough I feel that happening every time I'm filled with his energy, resulting in (a feeling of) harmony. It comes in handy, for example when writing a book like this one.

I also realized the importance of playing with him. Not only does Shiva energy then start to stream, but Shakti energy does as well, and that is vital to the necessary balance on earth level. The action in the game leads to the banishment of fear, and the sympathy of the little elephant to nourishment. What else do you need, really?

Thank you Ganesha.

Here the young god Brahma is the chairman, considering that he is the lord of creation. He has four heads (able to look in all directions at the same time). They represent the following:

- 1 the physical self. Here food, action, sleep and sex are important.
- 2 the rational self. Here the intellect, logic and reason are important.
- 3 the emotional self. Here moods and feelings play a role.
- 4 the intuitive self. Here the conscience is located.

He also has four arms:

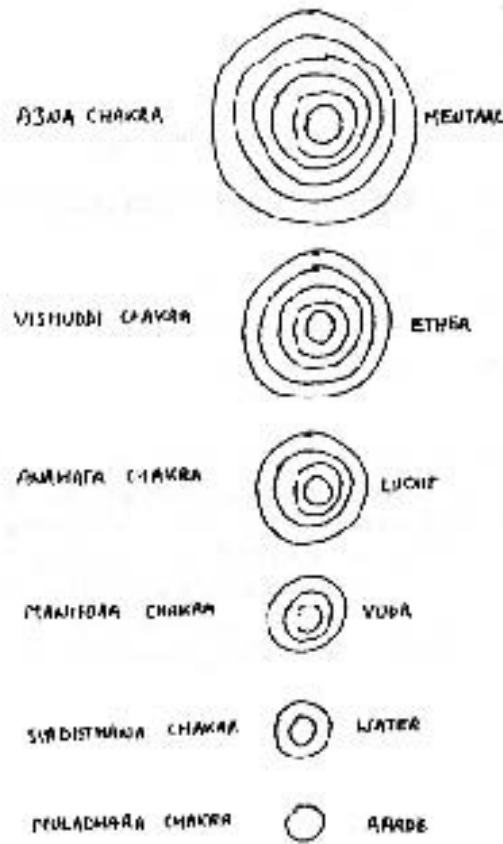
- 1 In the top left hand he's holding a lotus flower, representing purity.
- 2 In the bottom left hand he's holding the holy scriptures containing the knowledge of all of creation.
- 3 In one of his right hands he's holding a pot of nectar or Amrita, the drink of immortality.
- 4 His other right hand is raised in the Mudra "Fear not..."

The goddess next to Brahma is called Dakini Shakti. She combines the forces of the creator, and she is both preserver and destroyer,

- 1 represented by the trident in one of her left hands.
- 2 In her other left hand she's holding a skull, representing detachment from fear of death – the fundamental blockage of this Cakra.
- 3 In her top right hand she's holding a sword, meant for the banishment of fear, the destruction of ignorance, and to help the Yoga practitioner remove all obstacles.
- 4 In her other right hand she's holding a shield, protecting you from danger.

The seven most important or primary Cakra's

To summarise, we have seven energy centres. They are located on top of one another, and they differ in size. All of them contain an earth ball. From the sacral centre upwards a water ball is added. From the navel centre a fire ball, from the heart centre an air ball, from the throat centre an ether ball, and from the forehead centre a mental ball. The only energy centre with a seventh ball is the crown centre.



Mental
Ether
Air
Fire
Water
Earth

The communication between them occurs via resonance between the similar balls. This means that for instance an impact on the root centre – like a physical punch – affects all other Cakra's via their earth ball, provoking an automatic response. This could explain a reflex action. This also means that sound is only able to penetrate the three higher Cakra's (those containing an ether ball).

It's a pity that in practice the seven energy centres of only a few people are visible in their entirety.

Usually the Cakra's have a diameter of about 20 cm, calculated from the sacral centre. The majority of people are still on that level. Greed and desire rule their lives.

Sharira's or energy bodies

As a result of my realization of the energy centers I came automatically to their origin, the energy bodies. It was obvious for me that the centers could not have appeared out of the blue. The Yin Yang model, which was revealed to me, helped me to understand.

In western anatomy we know the physical body with its skeleton, muscles, blood circulation, digestive system, nervous system, breathing system, lymphatic system, endocrine glands. This knowledge was based upon the observation of a dead body. More and more information is now gathered about our body in movement. But whatever, there remains a lack of total vision.

In Yoga we consider from start seven energy bodies, where from our being is made: the earth-, water-, fire-, air-, ether- , subtle- and causal body. The focus of power of each of these energy bodies is one of the energy centers described earlier.

What have we to represent ourselves when speak of these seven bodies?

The earth body consists of all the hard matter of our being, the water body of all the liquid matter, the fire body of all the warmth and colors, the air body of all the gasses, the ether body of all the sounds, the subtle body of all the thoughts and the causal body of all the moods.

Traditionally in Yoga the five first bodies are put together and called "Gross Body" or Shtula Sharira, because the parts of it can be observed by our gross senses. The smell can observe the hard matter, the taste the liquids, the sight the warmth and colors, the touch the gasses and the sense of hearing the sounds.

The "Subtle Body" or Sukshma Sharira is called subtle because it is not possible to observe it with the gross senses. Here we find the thoughts, the will and the emotions.

The "Causal Body" or Karana Sharira is called causal because it is the cause of the thoughts and emotions. Here we find the feelings of love, joy, peace and intuition.

Most of the time we speak of the three bodies in Yoga: the gross, subtle and causal body. These three bodies enclose the functions of our being within three different worlds: doing, thinking and feeling.

What is the purpose of this knowledge about these three bodies?

The conscious awareness of these three bodies and the realization of their specific characteristics by recognition in practice makes more and more control possible of their functions. When then ultimately this knowledge is integrated, then one can know what is above these three, your Self or Atman.

Kosha's or sheaths

The three energy bodies can be active (Rajas) or passive (Tamas). Then we speak of sheaths or Kosha's. That are then conditions in which these bodies appear. And they are so different from each other that they receive a special name.

In the gross body (Sthula Sharira) there are two sheaths:
the vital sheath (Pranayama Kosha), in which Rajas dominates,
the food containing sheath (Annamaya Kosha), in which Tamas dominates.

In the subtle body (Sukshma Sharira) there are two sheaths:
the intellect sheath (Vijnanamaya Kosha), in which Rajas dominates,
the mental sheath (Manomaya Kosha), in which Tamas dominates.

In the causal body (Karana Sharira) there are two sheaths:
the golden sheath (Hiranyamaya Kosha), in which Rajas dominates,
the bliss sheath (Anandamaya Kosha), in which Tamas dominates.

Annamaya Kosha (food containing sheath)

Our western anatomy deals with this subject. Naturally and first of all I would like to refer to the classic textbooks. But at the same time I have some important remarks.

1. Our western knowledge of anatomy is still essentially based upon what we do since Vesalius, and that is the study of corpses. It is indeed difficult to cut open a living human being because of research. Therefore we have got only a partial knowledge of our physical body.
2. The general assumption that our physical body grows by means of our food is only very partially true. In fact we grow and live as a result of the energy supply of Shjiva and Shakti. The role of food, in general sense, is limited to compensation of local deficiencies.
3. In Yoga we use the concept of Dhatu's (types of tissues) to explain how our physical body comes to manifestation. Because the dominant energy supply is the Shiva energy, the Dhatus's are described from subtle to gross. We say that the energy is first manifesting in the form of plasma, then out of this plasma comes blood, out of blood muscle tissues, out of muscle tissues fat tissues, out of fat tissues bone tissues, out of bone tissues brain-marrow-nerves tissues, and finally out of brain-marrow-nerves tissues sperm and egg cells. The best you can compare this as a continuous winding in process of energy. If you study the complexity of the subsequent tissues you can only conclude that these are rather simple in the beginning and the more you go further the more complicated they are, with the top in the sperm and egg cells.

4. This point of view is determinant for the maintenance of our physical body. It means that an obstacle in the energy stream of a certain tissue is the cause of problems in that place or problems in the next tissue.
5. The problem of corpulence is treated in a totally different way as in the west. The cause of corpulence is an obstacle at the level of fat tissue and/or bone tissue, resulting in an abnormal accumulation of Shiva energy upstream, meaning at the level of fat tissue. Neither diet, nor liposuction can resolve definitely this problem. Only acceleration of the energy stream by movement can help temporarily. The exercise called Ujjayi Pranayama ensures in the most effective way a better circulation, but has also temporarily effect. The best is to burn the Samskara's causing the obstacle. And Samadhi is suited for that. Then occur a greater acceleration and a greater intensity of the energy stream.
6. Many people use hormones as medication or as contraceptive. Everybody knows that they have some effect, but that they can also harm in many cases, too few people know. The discoverer of the contraceptive pill, Organon, has learned this the hard way. Hormones are organisms which are produced in the endocrine glands by the activity of the Cakra's. Absorption of hormones has therefore an immediate effect upon the activity of the Cakra's. Most of the time the Cakra's are so disturbed in their activity that the remedy is worse as the problem.
7. In sport the purpose is to develop the physical body and to obtain a better condition. The inadequate western oriented training and the pressure to perform, which are most of the time auxiliaries, however cause many injuries, early deterioration and aging of the physical body. That has to do with the dominance of Shakti energy, read sweat, which occurs then. The cells of the physical body are dried out in an early stage. Have you seen a sportsman/woman when he/she is forty?

Pranayama Kosha (vital sheath)

Our vital sheath is in fact simply determined by our working loco motor system: excretion (earth), reproduction (water), movement (fire), grasping (air), and speech (ether). When we are busy, in whatever way, then we can speak of Pranamaya Kosha. It occurs during each action.

There is indeed a distinct difference in the appearance of our being in Pranamaya Kosha if one compares it with Annamaya Kosha, where rest is prevalent and sleep is the most typical state. A good example of this is a small child. When he plays and laughs, runs around in the house, then he literally takes a lot of space. When you look at him in his little bed, sunk in deep sleep, then you also say: "What small is he!"

General description of Prana or subtle energy

There are many ways to describe the meaning of Prana. The first one is "breath". Out of convenience and ignorance regarding Yoga many translators have chosen this explanation. It is for this reason that until now Prana is most of the times interpreted as

breath. This has led to a lot of bad consequences. Ever since this misinterpretation Yoga has lost its logic and has not been able to live up to its claims. Too bad, really. When we take a look at the fourth explanation in the classical Sanskrit dictionary of Apte everything becomes clear: “Subtle energy”.

Having said that, what actually is subtle energy? What kind of “thing” is energy anyways? To get an idea about Prana I took a direct look at it myself, as is usual in Yoga. To do so, I have used my vision on the subtle level.

The first thing I saw was not a stream as I expected, but an infinite number of white little dots on a black background. “Will this be it?” I thought. “But how can something inert like those

Stationary, white little dots be the cause of action?” So I zoomed in on those white little dots. They appeared to look like little suns or stars. I also zoomed in on the black background. That didn’t seem to be so black after all. That too existed of white little dots but then farther apart.

Suddenly I understood:

The white dots were the Manipura Chakras of numerous beings and the energy of which they existed just connected with the energy of the neighboring beings and out of that comes an apparent flow into being. The spiral shape of the flow is being caused by the respective beings that are part of it.

Still not satisfied I zoomed in on the flow and to my surprise that too existed out of white dots!

Then I became dizzy. At that moment I understood that it continues like that infinitely, not only into the micro cosmos but also into the macro cosmos. Prana is just there, and always has been. The origin of Prana lies in infinity.

What Prana exactly is I cannot rationally explain. At least not yet at this moment. I can ensure you that it is very frustrating to keep myself busy with the science of Yoga, based on Prana and not being able to exactly explain what that is. What I do know is that everything that exists, exists out of Prana.

To make up for this I’d like to emphasize the old scriptures that say that Prana is the same as Brahman, the Almighty. What appeals very much to me too is the believe in those scriptures that if you can control this Prana you can control everything, all beings, objects and phenomena.

Where is Prana in our physical body?

Well, you can just find it in the structure of all our tissues, molecules and atoms. And when you look at the gross body, Prana is also found in the warmth of our body, the gasses in and around our body and the sounds that our bodies produce.

On October 24, 2001, during autumn break, I received an important lesson about this subject. I was walking with my wife and children on the beach of Castricum by the Sea. The weather was quite nice for a change. The sun shone upon the water and made the waves glitter. Suddenly the waves whispered: “I’m here ... I’m here ... I’m here ...” The

soft autumn breeze that caressed my face joined in: “I’m here ... I’m here ... I’m here ...” And as if that was not enough yet, the sand at my feet whispered the same: “I’m here ...” And even my stomach quietly whispered along: “I’m here ...” It sounded so delicate and fragile, but at the same time so natural, easy and spontaneous. I realized that He has always been there and that it was only now that I managed to “see” or actually “hear” Him.

Thanks to this experience I received confirmation that Prana is omni present and that it not only expresses itself as a silent force, but also as sheer intelligence and love, like I had previously witnessed looking at the white string of energy.

The sense that fills me while observing Prana is the sense that you have when you are with a friend. A funny detail in all this is that the voice I heard whispering was clearly a boys’ voice! Too bad ladies, God seems to be a man after all!

The different kinds of Prana present in Pranamaya Kosha

There are 5 main Prana’s that together play the main role in the functioning of Pranamaya Kosha:

Apana Prana.

Apana Prana is the Prana of the earth. It is the energy that in a special way expels impurities and generates power. It is a rejecting force from the solid matter. We experience this energy when we receive an electric shock from a metal object. It is called static electricity.

The movement of the bowels is to me the clearest example of this Prana. Do you know the pulsating movement of the bowels? This movement is responsible for the movement – by excretion – of the waste from the bowels.

You can also observe this when you look at the anus of your dog. Watch out for the moment when the anus slowly expands, your dog will lay an egg. Quickly take him to the gutter and don’t stay in front of your neighbor’s house, unless you don’t like him, of course!

Contractions during the delivery of a baby are also the result of Apana Prana. The midwife often tells the pushing woman to think about “shitting”. That will make the pushing easier. Terrible if you are not aware of that of course! Especially if you are also full of fear at that moment, Apana Prana cannot be produced in the body. In that case the doctor will be happy because he can perform surgery on the woman and that makes him earn money, so it is always better to listen to the advice of the midwife.

When you walk around in the supermarket with a shopping cart, you sometimes bump into another shopper. The natural reflex of defense that this causes is also the result of Apana Prana.

The energy of Apana Prana is also used In Karate, at the end of a punch. Just before the moment of impact you recall a thought of rejection. This will cause the punch to have a much greater impact.

Perspiration and urination are also a result of Apana Prana. Problems in this field can be traced back to a disharmony in the earth center. To treat this disharmony we need to improve our sense of safety and security, and improve the experience of physical sexuality.

Samana Prana.

The Prana of the water is fluid in an active condition. Because of this mixing and distribution (of food) in our body is possible. Because of Samana Prana the metabolism functions properly.

The food mix in the stomach is being mixed for digestion. After that the food particles are slowly assimilated through the bowels into the blood flow and distributed to all parts of the body.

Do you know the kind of guys that are long and thin and who can devour stacks of sandwiches, eat three hamburgers and have a big sack of fries as a desert? And still they don't get fat? Well, they either have a tapeworm or a lack of Samana Prana. In that case the functions of the sacrum center (water) have to be harmonized and the best way to do that is by practicing Asana.

It is also possible to use holy water at the entrance of a church. Holy water is originally Samana Prana but unfortunately it is not so anymore. There are also some popular healers who sell the water in which they bathe claiming that it has healing qualities because it activates the metabolism.

Samyama on Samana Prana provides total control of the fire, as Patanjali writes in his book "Yoga Sutra's" (Chapter III, Sutra 41). I will explain that later in my comments on that book.

Generic Prana.

The Prana of the fire is the most typical Prana, so we call it generic Prana. This Prana is responsible for the distribution of warmth and light.

The power of the gross body is the direct product of this Prana.

To get an idea of the nature of this Prana we only need to look at the sun and it's rays. The sun, as the navel center of the being we call solar system, empowers life on earth with its sunrays.

Don't we often feel a lack of energy or cold? If the answer is affirmative then the fire inside us doesn't function properly. A walk in the sun or an exercise that stimulates the fire center will help to solve the problem. Cold feet are also an indication of a lack of generic Prana. If you focus on Manipura Cakra you will get warm again.

Udana Prana.

The Prana of the air can be best compared with hot air. It is responsible for the gross body to stay upright. The principle of a hot air balloon can help us to understand this principle: as long as there is sufficient hot air in the balloon it continues to go higher. If there is a lack of hot air it will descend. If our physical posture collapses we have the same problem, we need to add Udana Prana.

How does this work? By using the locomotory function of the grasp with our hands. A handstand would be ideal, but also knitting can help. As long as you are not afraid to use your hands, my father would say.

Samyama on Udana Prana causes such lightness that you will be able to pass over mud pugs and stinging bushes without any problems, says Patanjali (Chapter III, Sutra 40).

Vhyana Prana.

The Prana of the ether is responsible for creating more room for movement of our tissues, organs and limbs, but also that our voice can reach farther. To realize the power of Vhyana Prana you can do a simple test: Compare getting up in the morning simply because you have to with getting up because you tell yourself: “And now I get up!!!” In the last instance you have activated Vhyana Prana and getting up will be relatively easy. In the first instance getting up is not easy, at least not in my case.

When you are gloomy and everything seems difficult and heavy, you have a lack of Vhyana Prana. A walk in the forest will help because you absorb the energy of the trees when you do that. A conversation with someone or, better, sing a song can also help to produce Vhyana Prana. Balance exercises are also a good remedy.

Apart from the five main Prana's there are also five sub-Prana's. Although their role in Pranamaya Kosha is limited it is worthwhile mentioning them.

Devadatta Prana.

Devadatta Prana is the sub Prana of the earth and is responsible for sneezing. As such this Prana is important to protect us as an independent entity against dust particles and the likes, and expel them.

Krikala Prana.

Krikala Prana is the sub Prana of the water and is responsible for yawning. This Prana can be perceived as an energy generator that switches on when there is a lack of energy. It collects energy from the environment and is also responsible for the arising of the sense of hunger and thirst when they occur.

Kurma Prana.

Kurma Prana is the sub Prana of the fire and is responsible for the blinking of the eyelids and the opening and closing of the eyes. Its function is the independent protection of the eyes. Shows reaction with thoughts and is therefore an indicator of real meditation, when there is no movement of the eyes anymore.

Naga Prana.

Naga Prana is the sub Prana of the air and is responsible for burping and hiccups. Reacts directly in case of a shortage or surplus of air.

Dhananjaya Prana.

Dhananjaya Prana is the sub Prana of the ether and is responsible for the swelling of the skin. This is something that happens very swiftly when at those locations (on the skin) there is too little energy of the sound, i.e. protection, present and a dangerous weakness occurs. An example of this phenomenon is acne.

The functions of Pranamaya Kosha, the vital sheath

Have you ever seen your self in action on a video or film? When you do that you will get a completely different picture of your self, incomparable with what you see when you study a photograph of your self. It doesn't matter which action; give, speak, do, enjoy, and hunger ...

In this way you can familiarize your self with your own Pranamaya Kosha. You notice that this sheath causes pain and suffering, restlessness, satisfaction, sexual enjoyment and so on.

There is a substantial possibility that you lose your Self in this action through identification with the action. You can gain control over this sheath through the practice of Dharana (concentration) and Pratyahara (detachment).

The size of Pranamaya Kosha

In the Taittiriya Upanishad it is written that this sheath is the size of the gross body, but then still different because it is full of Prana. When you look carefully with "dream eyes", you will see a white cloud surrounding your physical body, a phantom, with a bright color and a little bit bigger than the physical body, up to about 5 to 10 centimeters away from the physical body. This phenomenon is what we generally know as a ghost!

It is like a balloon filled with a shiny vapor, a physical appearance with limbs and body parts, but invisible for the physical eye. When a person is asleep you cannot see this because Anamaya Kosha manifests itself, the food containing sheath, that on its turn is clearly smaller than Pranamaya Kosha, but still a little bit bigger than the physical body.

When Pranamaya Kosha is in a Sattva condition its color is shiny transparent, while in Rajas it has a golden glow and in Tamas it is of a smoke color.

After passing away, the ethereal body of the being splits and transcends from the gross body together with the thinner (rare) bodies. The other parts of the gross body stay behind lifeless and they will decay.

The viewing of the functions of Prana

The previous description serves to enable you to view the functions of the Pranas with your dream eyes, as the Tibetans call it. The dream eyes refer to the vision as you use it during dreams. This ability and the control over it can be obtained through the practice of Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation).

The activity of Apana Prana is most obvious between the navel and the foot soles, for example in the excretion in the bowels and the anus, the filtering of the urine from the blood in the kidneys and at take off for a jump or stamping with the feet.

The activity of Samana Prana is most obvious between the heart and the navel.

Particular for this activity is the mixing and grinding of the food particles that create a food mash.

The activity of generic Prana is most obvious in the area between the mouth and the heart. Particular for the activity of generic Prana is the cleaning of the blood in the lungs. When you do that you automatically get warm! The tearing apart (dissection) of the food in the stomach is another good example of this activity.

The activity of Udana Prana is most obvious and can be seen especially in the area of the throat, when you are going to do something that you really like to do. This will make you walk upright automatically.

The activity of Vhyana Prana is spread out all over the gross body. When we don't feel so comfortable within our own body, when we feel suppressed, it is interesting to see the reactions of the gross body when we suddenly start to sing.

All this must be experienced through internal viewing. That is the only way to realize irrefutably your functioning at gross level. When you do so you will be filled with great amazement. You will say "what a miraculous mechanism".

The mutual relation between mind, subtle energy and gross body

As already mentioned the subtle body, of which the mind is a part, is connected within our being with the gross body. This is already proved in the Yin Yang model. Through the double spiral the energy can flow from one energy body to the other and back.. Practically this means that with the mind (thought) you can directly influence the gross body and that what happens with the gross body can determine your thought. If for example you have a negative thought and you cherish this thought long enough, it will reveal its self to the outside through body language. But of course you knew this already.

But what you may not know yet is that you can manipulate the processes in case the mind or the body don't function the way you expect them to function.

For example when you are in a lazy or languid mood. Think about a nice activity, like a beautiful walk. At the moment that you do that you generate generic Prana in the gross body. Languor and laziness disappear in an instant.

Another example is when you lose interest in life and / or are full of negative and dark thoughts. You can manipulate this condition by trying to go the toilet. The activity of Apana Prana will give you a good feeling and the thoughts turn back to normal again.

It is also important to know that when you are intensely active on mental level, there is not much energy left for the gross body. Growth or recovery in case of disease for example is then quite difficult. On the other hand, especially when you are active in a very physical way chances are that you will never be a bright light on mental level, simply because of the lack of energy there. The solution is of course to pay attention and care to both the mind and the body in order to create a balanced situation. The Romans said “Mens sana in corpore sano”, a healthy mind in a healthy body.

The way in which you influence the respective parts of your being amongst each other is not only through action, but also by means of passivity, like when you go to sleep for example. Eventually the ideal way to influence your being is to install harmony. Simple observation for example, causes the spreading of light and knowledge.

All this knowledge and the realization of the phenomena are important in your attempts to practice concentration because the energy that remains in the gross body can disturb you and distract you from your object of concentration. By detachment of the gross body you can eliminate that body and with it the cause of the disturbance.

Slowly but certainly you now start to realize that not only attention for the thinner (rare) areas, but also for the gross body is essential to make progress.

Manomaya Kosha (the mind sheath) and its science

What is mind? Where is the mind located? How does the mind work? How can you control the mind? Why do you have to control the mind?

In the West it is said that the thinking comes from the brain, that it is a product of the brains. But so far nobody has been able to explain the operation of the brain. Particularly because the brains are actually hollow. Flashes of light have been detected and changes in the chemical field. It is also assumed that control over the brains is impossible and that when the brains stop functioning a human being is clinically dead.

In Yoga the mind is placed within the subtle body, Sukshma Sharira, and more particularly in the Tamas aspect of it, Manomaya Kosha. In this, a thought is described as a whirl of subtle energy, a Vritti. The sequence of such Vritti's makes up the process of thinking. The brains are only the recipients of the mind, like storages where “thought-goods” are being delivered in our physical body.

By practicing detachment, concentration and meditation (Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana) you can already gain control over the mind. The reason for doing so is to be able to function on the level of intuition.

Where in God's name did they get this knowledge? Who has made up all this and is it right?

The answer to that is that the so called seers (Rishi's) have long time ago "seen" these things and put them in writing. The observations that they have made, they have made from a position that is higher than that of normal observations. Somewhere above the mind. You could say observation from the crown center (Sahasrara Chakra). The problem with this method is: How do we check the veracity of these observations? Well, there is only one way to do this: you have to learn to observe in the same way as those seers. That is called the method of the old seers. That will be the next subject of our "Science of the Soul".

Antahkarana Chatushtaya (the fourfold internal organ)

To enable observation from the crown center the gross, subtle and causal bodies have to be completely harmonious and cooperate seamlessly with each other. That seamless cooperation is what we call the inner organ and it is a characteristic of the successful practitioner of Yoga. A normal human being does not possess such inner organ.

Characteristic for Antahkarana are its four main players: the mental ability to imagine and understand, shortly called the mind (Manas); the intellectual ability of reason that gives guidance to the thought (mind) or shortly called the intellect (Buddhi); the realization of individuality or egoism or shortly called the ego (Ahamkara) and the substance of thinking that forms memory and emotion or shortly called the memory (Citta).

How can you look at this in a practical way?

It's simple. A human being that is made out of one piece, who has an integrated personality, such person has an inner organ. Indeed there are only few of those people. We tend to call this a strong personality. One who knows what he wants and also realizes that. Who wouldn't want to be like that?

An even clearer example of a person with an inner organ is that of someone who behaves and acts like a child. That is a person who is open and spontaneous and behaves naturally and simple and plays with everything. Jesus referred to this condition when he said: "You must become a child again, for only the children will reach the kingdom of God".

How can you develop that?

For starters you choose the behavior that resembles that of a strong personality. And even if you make mistakes, it doesn't matter. Little corrections here and there, nurse the wounds and then just continue.

You feel like doing something, then just do it. Assume that you are always right and take that as your starting position. Trust yourself without doubt. Until proven otherwise of course. You don't have to worry about that, your environment will take care of that. Observe what really lives inside you and obey that immediately. Don't think before you do something. From now on you live free and unrestrained, natural. Let the voice of your heart guide you in this and nobody else, certainly not your mind. You can use that if necessary after you have done what your heart indicated to you. Rationalizing afterwards can be interesting if it was only to comfort yourself. That's how I did it and it works. So, live with heart and soul, play, without effort. Dare to do what you feel like doing.

“Eat when you are hungry, sleep when you are sleepy”, is also of good help to develop your inner organ.

First you will notice that you eat because it is time to eat, because the clock says so, or because it is part of the social events in life. Pay better attention to yourself, see if you are really hungry and eat only then, if not, then don't. Difficult in practice? Try it yourself and notice the surprising result: you feel better!

The same goes for sleeping. Most of the times we go to sleep because the clock indicates that is time to do so. So the clock is the boss! We forget to pay attention to the signals of our body that indicate whether we need some sleep or not. From now on decide for yourself to rest only when you notice that you are tired. That too will make you feel better.

The seers then have discovered that in order to develop your inner organ you have to observe closely the characteristics of Manas (the mind), Buddhi (the intellect), Ahamkara (the ego) and Citta (the memory). This will give greater control of these parts of your being and eventually of the whole.

It is evident that those parts then are our next object for studying.

The meaning of Antahkarana

Antahkarana means “hidden” or “inner” because it is not visible for the physical eye. The collaboration between all the parts of the gross, subtle and causal body under the guidance of Jivatman, the individual Self. Typical characteristic for Antahkarana is that the energy from the causal body can directly flow to the gross body and vice versa. This is how living with heart and soul is described in Yoga.

Antahkarana is the seat of all experiences and realizations

Only because of ongoing realizations it is possible to have success in Yoga. To make those realizations possible an intense perception in observation as well as in action is necessary. That is why Antahkarana is so important. Better still, without Antahkarana you cannot reach the goal of Yoga. Thanks to Antahkarana you can receive detailed knowledge of the shape, size, the color and the functions of all the parts of this inner organ.

The views of Scripture

The Nyaya and Vaishesika philosophic trends describe Antahkarana as Manas (mind), that apart from intellectual characteristics also contains Buddhi (intellect), Ahamkara (ego) and Citta (memory). The Samkhya and Yoga philosophical trends consider the inner organ as existing out of three parts: Manas, Ahamkara and Citta. The function of Buddhi is considered to be Citta's in that philosophy.

In the Upanishad's however, it is told that Antahkarana exists out of four parts: Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkara and Citta. This is the opinion that we like to support, because it makes clearly understandable the functioning of Antahkarana.

Because of condensation through Sattva energy Citta came into being from Mahatman (the Self with cosmic consciousness), Buddhi because of Rajas energy and Ahamkara because of Tamas energy. Ahamkara then produced Manas, which produced the Jnanendriya's (subtle organs of perception) in Sattva, the Karmendriya's (subtle organs of the motorial system) in Rajas and the Tanmatra's (subtle form of the elements) in Tamas. Those then are responsible for the manifestation of the five Bhuta's (gross elements), ether, air, fire, water and earth.

In short:

1. Mahatman (the cosmic Self) and Jivatman (the individual Self) are respectively the appearance of Atman (the Self) in Rajas and Tamas;
2. Citta, Buddhi and Ahamkara are part of Karana Sharira (the causal body);
3. Manas, the Karmendriya's, the Jnanendriya's and the Tanmatra's together form Sukshma Sharira (the subtle body);
4. The five Bhuta's belong to Shtula Sharira (the gross body).

Manas, the first part of Antahkarana

In general we call Manas the mind, but actually it would be more correct to describe it as: “the process of thought, the sequence of thought, but without reasoning, because that would then be Buddhi, the intellect”.

The thinkers of the Nyaya and Vaishesika philosophical trends describe Manas as being atomic and eternal (Nyaya III 2-63: “Yathokta Tva Ca Anu”). In this theory the term atomic means that it is a sphere of energy that has a constant appearance and is able to function independently. Moreover, Manas is indeed eternal. We retain our mind in the same condition as it is now, despite the fact that we die.

The characteristic features of mind

The mind cannot obtain knowledge of two objects that are present at the same time. The thought performs the functions of giving and taking of Vrittis in sequence. It manages the Karmendriyas, Jnanendriyas and the Tanmatras. One could say that its role is a pivotal one, like that of an executive secretary in a company. Sometimes it may seem that Manas performs all tasks at the same time because its speed is so high. Manas activates the respective Pranas.

The origin of mind

Manas originates from the Sattva and Rajas qualities of Ahamkara and is therefore also capable of activating the Jnanendriyas and the Karmendriyas through Sattva and Rajas.

It is quite easy to understand how this works. Especially when we are touched by something, i.e. when our ego is touched, our mind will think about that something. I was born in Africa, so everything related to that continent has my attention.

When Tamas dominates, something that happens regularly, Manas is still present but a sensible functioning of it in that condition is out of the question. For example: Your Ahamkara or ego gets hurt and you “fall on your face”. In that situation it is only normal that your mind gets dragged into it and has trouble functioning properly. Everybody has experience being turned down or be dismissed. Well, were you able to think straight right away?

The nature of mind

Swami Yogeshvarananda Saraswati describes the mind as “a small luminous mass, unemanated, that has neither the burning sensation nor touch”. It can expand and contract and takes place within a form of our physical body that is clearly bigger than our physical

body, until up to 20 centimeters outside our physical body. That is of course the subtle body. Manas manifests itself in particular in Ajna Cakra, the forehead center. It radiates steadily and is shining brightly. When you think, observe or prod your physical body to action, different colors appear in it.

The relationships of mind

Manas has a direct relationship with the Indriya's (the senses), Buddhi (the intellect) and Sukshma sharira (the gross body).

When the senses perceive something, the perception is directly reflected in the mind. Likewise when the motorial system performs a task. This is called Adana (take) of the mind. When these reflections of the mind are offered to Buddhi (the intellect), it is called Pradana (give) of the mind.

Swami says: "It then seems as if a fish swims around in a well", until Buddhi takes its decision, of course.

When Buddhi conveys its decision to Manas and the Indriyas, it too happens through reflection.

Without the incitement of Buddhi Manas can't do anything. The mind is the obliging aid of the intellect.

The nature of mind as influenced by the three Guna's

Everything in life exists out of combinations of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. When one of these conditions dominates a clearly different phenomenon manifests, likewise in the case of Manas.

1. Sattvic thinking: A clear, brightly shining moonlight manifests. The mind is calm and quiet. Still there is change. Typical in the state of Pratyahara.
2. Rajasic thinking: A capricious blue color, blinding, especially when processing a thought. The mind is very fast and restless.
3. Tamasic thinking: A smoky color and dull like mist. The mind is slow and dull causing the senses and the physical body to become slow as well. The cause of laziness and love of ease.

The qualities and duties of mind

The mind is especially fast, which comes in handy performing the tasks of an executive secretary. Unfortunately it is capricious too. This for example causes problems during concentration, mistakes while talking or wrong steps while walking.

Like a messenger the mind takes a message (an observation), conveys the message and possibly gets one in return. The mind itself is constantly colored by the observation.

Because of its natural, constant activity Manas keeps the Indriyas, the Pranas, Sthula Sharira and even Buddhi active. As a consequence the mind involves all while instilling knowledge, performing actions, ascertaining facts, taking decisions and enjoying life.

The speed of mind

The speed of Manas is actually very high, even higher than the speed of light. It is a speed that we call the speed of time. Can you imagine that? See for your self how fast you are with your thoughts.

The principle of perpetual motion

Maybe you know that everything always moves, even though sometimes it seems to be still. Even a stone moves. With the help of an electronic microscope you can see that all parts of the stone are in motion.

Because the gross body and the senses are also in motion it is easy for Manas to drag them along in its action.

The second principle – seeing things a far

When Manas is brought into a Sattva condition through meditation, the fire element within Ajna Cakra will become Sattvic as well. Consequently the opening of the third eye will manifest itself. This is a phenomenon we call clairvoyance or dream eyes. This means that you can see, but on the level of the mind. This then means that you cannot only be very fast in your ability to observe, but also that you can see very far and that you can zoom in on the phenomena of the macro cosmos or the micro cosmos.

Buddhi, the second part of Antahkarana

It is the intellect or the reason in a human being that is responsible for knowing. In the process it analyses, differentiates and draws conclusions.

The origin of Buddhi

The condition that we call the cosmic consciousness of the Self or Mahatman, in short Mahat, is responsible for the creation of Buddhi. However, this happens only when Mahat has a Rajas condition.

The nature of Buddhi

That what we call intellect is in fact a local Rajas phenomenon in Karana Sharira (the causal body) and Sahasrara Cakra (the crown center). It is a short-lived flash of light

accompanied by an expansion of energy that is faster than time. Buddhi probably causes the flashes of light that can be observed in the brain.

Such a flash of light occurs when you have recognition or when you feel a click (link) with something or somebody. For example when you meet someone whom you haven't seen for a long time. Another example is when you finally find a solution to a problem.

Buddhi can be described as a mass of transparent, clear, unemanated light, luminous as the sun, but not warm or otherwise perceptible.

The Buddhi phenomenon is in fact a very fast process of scanning of the Samskaras (impressions), which are already present or eventually newly offered in Citta (the memory). When certain impressions correspond with each other, read that the energy patterns match with each other, a short-lived and local flash occurs, caused by the intensification of energy.

A normal human being does not notice much of the processes previously described because he is full of impurities. Even when this kind of phenomenon occurs he is surprised and cannot comprehend the experience. This is very unfortunate because this phenomenon is the start of spirituality.

At a certain point in time a successful practitioner of Yoga can obtain a pure functioning Buddhi. This then is called Ritambhara (filled with truth and justice). At that point Sahasrara Cakra is completely opened. Swami describes this state as "very clear, effulgent and oleaginous, with the ability to discriminate between Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (God or soul)".

The relationship of Intellect

Buddhi has a direct relationship with Manas. Actually you should look at Buddhi as the managing director who can rely on his secretary Manas whenever needed. Buddhi relays each decision to Manas, and in return he receives Vrittis (energy whirls of thoughts, experiences and emotions) of which he compares the essence, the Samskara (impression) with other Samskaras within Citta (the memory). This shows that there is also a direct relation with Citta. This is a temporary Sattva phenomenon in the causal body, in which you can consult with all your Samskaras, albeit in the beginning of your development very shortly.

The way, in which Buddhi relies on his secretary Manas or relays his decisions to Manas, is only possible through Ahamkara (the ego). Ahamkara is also a temporary phenomenon in the causal body, but then of a Tamas nature, that replaces Buddhi and Citta. These three are indeed the aspects of the same energy. Either Buddhi is active, or Citta or Ahamkara. However, they act so quickly following up on each other that it often seems as if they exist separate from each other.

Buddhi also has an indirect relationship, namely with Anahata Cakra (the heart center). Through the reflection of the working of Sahasrara Cakra (crown center) in Kalpa Taru

Cakra (center of the tree of the wish) a decision made by Buddhi can be felt in the heart. We then say: “That feels good, I will do that”.

In return, when Kalpa Taru Cakra reflects in Sahasrara Cakra because you have expressed an intense wish, Buddhi will pick up the pattern of your wish and compare it with the available impressions of Citta in yourself or eventually in Samasti Citta (cosmic memory). In this way your wish will eventually always come true.

When Buddhi is brought under control by the practice of Samadhi (contemplation) it is quiet and doesn't block your energy anymore, enabling your consciousness to free itself from the duality and stay in Atman (the Self), until liberation occurs. If that happens you have become a Buddha, an awakened.

The transformations of the intellect under influence of the three Guna's

1. Buddhi in a Sattvic condition: Is accompanied by a pleasing and effulgent light, like the rising sun, with golden luminosity, peaceful and without waves. In particular joy, cheerfulness and bliss stand out in this condition, but also discriminative power, sense of righteousness and your Dharma (vocation), inspiration, enormous power, endurance, self-control, surrender to God and many other characteristics.
2. Buddhi in a Rajasic condition: Light appears as of orange color, a mixture of red and yellow, sometimes rosy red, very fickle and blinding. Defects arise through disharmonious functioning, in particular vice and restlessness, but also untrue knowledge, conceit, sensuality, cruelty, anger, urge for power and control, fame and honor and last but not least strong negative emotional impulses. Exaggeration is the order of the day, sometimes with demonic characteristics.
3. Buddhi in a Tamasic condition: Light appears as of smoky yellow and untransparent. Other defects arise like inertia, ignorance, cruelty, but now out of love of ease. Also recognizable are laziness, urge to deceit and fraud, dullness, false pride and sentimentality, fits of crying and so on.

The functions of Buddhi

The Vritti's that Manas received from the Karmendriya's and the Jnanendriya's are then carried on to the intellect. It reduces these energy patterns to their essence, an impression and then matches those with other impressions. When a match is found a click occurs and a decision is made that is immediately passed on to Manas. Manas then takes care of the disclosure of the decision and at the same time of the execution with the Indriyas involved.

Buddhi constantly discriminates between good and evil, truth and lie, righteousness and unrighteousness, virtue and vice. It makes decisions related to what you are supposed to do in this life, your Dharma (vocation or calling). It gives advice like a wise friend and is the guide of our being. The goal of Buddhi as a powerful light is to reveal knowledge.

All the actions of the waking state are performed through the help of Buddhi.

When Buddhi gets overwhelmed with impurities and restlessness it is responsible for attracting the five Kleshas (afflictions) as ignorance, ego, attachment, repulsion (hate) and fear of death. As a result you remain stuck in Samsara (the wheel of rebirth) and will have to return back to earth after death. On the other hand, if you succeed to bring Buddhi in a Sattvic condition, you will be able to solve all problems that are present.

Ahamkara, the third part of Antahkarana

Characteristics of Ahamkara

The Ego-principle or simply the ego is that what keeps your being together. In this sense it is responsible for your sense of individuality. It is in fact because of Ahamkara that you achieve Self-realization.

The origin of Ego-principle

Ahamkara also arises out of Mahatman, but then from its Tamas aspect.

The nature of Ahamkara

The ego is an energy phenomenon without rays, with the color of a light blue gem. It surrounds Citta exactly like a nutshell surrounds an almond, or like a pillowcase surrounds a pillow. It is truly beautiful and enchanting when observed through the Godly eye, like the neck of a peacock, enclosing Citta with a sheath of Godly pure color, Swami says.

Do you want to see Ahamkara? Then look at somebody who looks green from jealousy. Or at your daughter who looks like a thundercloud because she can't get things her way.

The abode of Ahamkara

Ahamkara is a temporary Tamas phenomenon in the causal body. Remarkably the working of Ahamkara is clearly perceptible in the heart. That is because of the reflection that occurs from the crown center.

The relationships of Ahamkara

Ahamkara is responsible for the messages from Buddhi to arrive at Citta. It draws the impressions of each decision from the intellect, gives it the hallmark of Mamatva (“this is mine”) and deposits them in Citta, that on its turn presents them to Atman. Ahamkara also activates the Samskaras (impressions) that lie embedded in Citta and sends them to the intellect.

In the same way also Ahamkara conveys the decisions of Buddhi to Manas.

Apart from a relationship with Buddhi, Ahamkara also has a direct relationship with Citta and Manas. The relationship with Atman however, is indirect and goes through Citta.

The behavior of Ahamkara under the influence of the three Guna's

1. Ahamkara in a Sattvic condition: Colors like a pure blue Sapphire, transparent and beautiful. In this condition it is responsible for the realization of “I am” eventually for your Self-realization. Swami says: “When Ahamkara becomes tranquil it brings about cessation of the function of Citta and Suksha Prana and thereby becomes a means to establishment of the Self in its essential nature”. For example, expressions like: “I am happy” or “This feels good” are caused by domination of Sattva.
2. Ahamkara in Rajasic condition: Because Rajas is of a passionate nature it brings special luminosity to the Sattvic glow, appearing like the shining neck of a peacock. It activates the Samskaras in Citta, stimulates Buddhi and puts Manas to work, causing the activation of the gross body. In the process it strengthens the sense of “that is mine” by putting its “Mine-ness” hallmark on each kind of knowledge, each object and each act. This causes the sense of lust, anger, greed, infatuation, attachment and hatred. It is responsible for friction and conflicts in your life. Statements as :If you're not with me, you are against me” or “This house is mine!” or “I'll get upset if I don't succeed”, characterize the domination of Rajas.
3. Ahamkara in Tamasic condition: Its color is like sky-blue and a little dusty or smoky. Ahamkara in this condition renders Citta dull and conceited, engaged in self-praise, causes unrighteousness and sin, leading to evil actions and habits, intensifies painful impressions, exciting despicable and wicked feelings, spreading darkness and ignorance over Citta. It thwarts the intellect and nullifies the detached witness-attitude of the Self. Therefore it intensifies the attachment to the gross body and the senses. Characteristic for a Tamas condition in Ahamkara are expressions like “I can do nothing right” or “Why do they always pick on me?”

General functions of Ahamkara

Notice that Ahamkara is also an action-predominating principle, like Manas. The ego doesn't like it at all to be quiet and silent, but stirs the Samskara's in Citta, stimulating them through the power of the memory and overshadowing the intellect with it.

Ahamkara is especially skilful in creating and magnifying attachment. Especially caused by the Vritti's of Ahamtva (I-ness) and Mamatva (mine-ness) it is responsible for rebirth, but also because of the activation of the other Klesha's (afflictions) like ignorance, repulsion and fear of death.

Interestingly it is this prison guard Ahamkara who, through control, can bring you to Self-realization. To do that you must "destroy the ego" as it is said. That means that you must harmonize the disharmonious functioning of your ego. Being one of the big goals in Yoga, this touches the heart of Yoga.

Citta, the fourth part of Antahkarana

Characteristics of Citta

Citta is thinking matter, memory, or as the old say "the means of attaining wisdom". It is a phenomenon in which the impressions, present at that particular location in the energy flow, maintain their form. It is called memory because when you perceive impressions, you can recognize them as being the same as before, when that location was in Sattva too.

Because of its contact with Atman Citta has special luminosity and is utterly active. It appears to be ever conscious. It is ever generating life force in the form of Sukshma Prana, subtle Prana.

The origin of Citta

Citta comes forth out of the Sattvic aspect of Mahatman. Mahatman itself originated from Maha Akasha (time and orientation), which on its turn is the result of Prakriti (primeval matter), which was called into life by Brahman (the most high).

The nature of Citta

Citta is as pure, silent and peaceful as a crystal, as beautiful as a brilliant, as white as butter or the feathers of a duck, but transparent, delightfully like mercury or polished silver leaf.

The abode of Citta

Citta is a local and temporary Sattva-phenomenon that manifests in the causal body, but can also be experienced in the heart by a reflection of Sahasrara Cakra in Kalpa Taru Cakra, in the same way as with Buddhi and Ahamkara.

The relationship of Citta

Citta has a direct relation with Atman, more particularly with Jivatman, the individual Self, because it is pure Sattva.

It has a direct relation with Ahamkara, Buddhi, Manas and Sukshma Prana.

At any given moment Citta receives the impressions of Ahamkara.

The characteristics of the three Guna's in Citta

1. Citta in a Sattvic condition: Transparent and crystal clear, beautiful like a brilliant, dazzling like the rays of the sun shining upon snow or upon a polished silver leaf, it is as bright as a mercury light, as white and soft as butter, transparent and luminous, calm and peaceful, without wave or ripple, it bestows supreme bliss and the vision of Atman. It awakens pure feelings such as faith and trust, virtue, wisdom, detachment and causes prosperity.
2. Citta in a Rajasic condition: A sense of vast, dashing like an ocean with boisterous waves, full of fickle ripples, very sensitive. It can be recognized by awakened desire, craving for worldly matter, tendency to action that causes attachment, jealousy, hatred and misfortune, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, misrepresentation of facts, conceit, wrong knowledge, haughtiness, presumption, creates dreams, full of virtue mixed with vice.
3. Citta in a Tamasic condition: Dull light. Associated with ignorance, lack of discrimination, delusion, distraction, vice, loss of spiritual powers, cruelty, fear and sorrow, indolence and laziness, latent hatred and restlessness. It hampers the working of Buddhi.

The mixed functions of Citta

Citta continuously offers the enjoyments to Atman, more particularly to Jivatman, which on its turn passes it on to Purusha (the soul).

In this way Citta continuously generates Sukshma Prana (subtle Prana), through which your entire being is activated through Ahamkara.

Citta retains all the Samskara's. Apart from the memory the Vasanas (subtle desires) originate here and Bhoga (enjoyment).

Citta sends the awakened and fructifying impressions, which we call Smriti's, through Ahamkara to Buddhi causing enjoyment. Through the power of the enjoyment however, Citta becomes overpowered. This explains why Citta is constantly so active. In this way Citta keeps Purusha prisoner and prevents its deliverance.

By the practice of Asamprajnata Samadhi (dynamic contemplation), in which Para Vairagya (total detachment) occurs, you will eventually calm down your Citta and come to Self-realization.

Physical Antahkarana

Because Manas is located in Sukshma Sharira (subtle body), Manas can be used to bring about the two aspects of Sukshma Sharira: Vijnanamaya Kosha (the astral sheath) and Manomaya Kosha (the mind sheath).

By generating a Rajas condition you bring about Vijnanamaya Kosha. This happens for example with the practice of Dharana, but it can also happen spontaneously, triggered by emotions.

Consequently by generating Tamas Manomaya Kosha is brought about. You speak to yourself in a sense of "Everything's okay" or you lay yourself to rest. A hypnotist uses this principle too.

Apart from the mind you control all the physical activities of your being in this way. It is therefore that you can consider your subtle body to be the office or study (-room) of your Purusha (soul).

Buddhi, Ahamkara and Citta are all located in Karana Sharira (causal body). You can use them to bring about the two aspects of Karana Sharira: Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath) and Hiranyamaya Kosha (golden sheath).

We consider the causal body the bedroom of your Purusha.

The cooperation of Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkara and Citta creates a powerful weapon and as being the study and bedroom of Purusha serves only one goal: protection.

If you succeed to bring about this cooperation you achieve Svarupa Sthiti (establishment in one's essential nature), which actually means Self-realization. Although this is a very highly advanced condition it can be considered gross when compared with the ultimate condition of Kaivalya (liberation).

The center of energy

The achievement of Antahkarana gives you one big advantage: From now on you will have energy in abundance!

How can this be so?

Well, if you have paid attention, you are expected to know the answer.

The constant activity of Citta generates Sukshma Prana (subtle Prana) that makes Antahkarana the center of energy of your being.

This Sukshma Prana shines like a luminous vapor surrounding Ahamkara and mixes with the astral body.

The process of pervasions of Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action)

Through the soft, luminous influence of Sukshma Prana on Antahkarana, Jnana (knowledge) can be achieved. That is if you dose it properly. The result will be that you remove the Tamas domination and install a Sattva domination, which is, as you know, responsible for Jnana.

Through the fickle, somewhat violent influence of Sukshma Prana, Kriya (action) can be achieved. Just try it out for yourself. It is like Popeye the sailorman's can of spinach that you pour into yourself.

Jnana and Kriya together are responsible for the vital power of the subtle and the gross bodies.

What it is that puts the machine of the body into motion

Just like the dynamo can put a machine into motion, Purusha is responsible for the functioning of our whole being. The simple contact of Purusha with Atman and the causal body is sufficient when Antahkarana has been achieved.

In this way a powerful and inspired human being comes into being.

The veils of Purusha and their bad Vasana's (subtle desires) in Karmashaya (storage of Karmas) or the unleashing of Antahkarana

What are the hindrances that we must overcome to be able to fully enjoy Sukshma Prana? It's the Samskaras that all together form our Karma. Then how do we deal with this?

It is written in the Prasna Upanishad that he who meditates on Purusha with the help of A-U-M liberates himself of all sins, like a snake sheds her skin. Sins are the Samskaras. They are found in Antahkarana. They keep Jivatman shackled.

The end of Antahkarana

Because the Vritti's and the Samskara's are the natural characteristics of Antahkarana, it will never be abolished. Even in the highest states of Asamprajnata Samadhi there are impressions, namely Nirodha Samskara's (the impressions of control).

Its natural modifications will only disappear when Antahkarana completely merges into his natural cause. That is the end of Antahkarana.

The parts of Antahkarana and their analysis

The qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are present in Mahatman.

With Sattva domination cosmic and then individual Citta come into existence.

With Rajas domination cosmic and then individual Buddhi come into existence.

With Tamas domination cosmic and then individual Ahamkara come into existence.

In Citta, as well as in Buddhi and Ahamkara the three Gunas are present.

Out of Ahamkara Manas comes into existence.

Ahamkara performs the functions of give and take of each sort of Samskara with Citta and Buddhi and all other similar functions within Karana Sharira.

Buddhi assesses the value of the objects that are being supplied by Manas, and Ahamkara brings the Samskara of such assessment into Citta.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are also present in Manas.

With Sattva domination the Jnanendriya's come into existence.

With Rajas domination the Karmendriya's come into existence.

With Tamas domination the Tanmatra's come into existence.

Out of the Tanmatras the five Bhuta's come into existence.

Manas performs the functions of give and take of each sort of Vritti with the Jnanendriya's, Karmendriya's, and the Tanmatra's and all other similar functions within Sukshma Sharira.

The vision of the contact with the Atman and the Citta

When Jivatman (the individual Self) returns from its liberated state it is luminous with knowledge, conscious, in the form of mere potency, without bodies, Citta and Anu (atom, energy ball or individual being) at the same time says Swami.

Because of the contact of the conscious soul and the inert elements, there arises an energy that is called Kriya or activity.

Kriya

This can be described as inspired or animated activity. When something touches you very deeply it can make you warm and put you into action. It happens suddenly and as quick as lightning. An enormous power arises in you. It seems as if you are completely filled.

In such an action you live intensely and Bhoga (enjoyment) arises. Live is worth living again.

Jnana

When you observe Kriya Jnana (knowledge) arises. It is unlike a common observation, it is an impressive realization in which insight arises, combined with Atmashakti (light of the soul).

There are two kinds of flow within this Citta:

1. Antarmukhi Vritti (inward flow): When the energy has a Sattvic pattern pain stops. It is called inward flow because internalization occurs. The road to Purusha is made possible. This is the path of Dharma, recommended by Buddha. We also call this the right path, because you usually have to use the Shakti energy (dominating the right side of the body) to reach a state of Sattva. A normal human being usually is in a Tamas condition. When you do something and it feels good you are in this flow
2. Vahirmukhi Vritti (outward flow): Here the energy has a Rajas and/or a Tamas pattern and causes pain and misery. This is the glorious left path, because you usually use the Shiva energy (dominating the left side of the body) to find the pleasant (Preya). In the Kathopanishad for example the teacher Yama warns us for this path. Through the interaction of Rajas and Tamas restlessness arises and you produce more Samskara's. You are for example deluded by the illusion of riches and again and again you will have to be incarnated.

Other Vritti's of Citta

Samskaras are actually created in Citta and then become Vrittis. A Samskara can be felt. It carries a charge in it that we notice as feeling or mood. A Vritti is a thought, an emotion or a memory that we clearly see as an image.

Samskara's

There are many sorts of Samskara's. You can perceive them as the counterparts of our genes, but then on a subtle level. As a matter of fact it is the Samskara's that materialize as genes. When they are activated it is said that Bhoga (enjoyment) arises, because through Ahamkara the perception is pleasurable. From the vibration arises a whirl of energy that we call Vritti. That Vritti ends up in Buddhi that uses it. Buddhi has numerous functions that have been brought together under one denominator: Vritti.

The functions of Citta

Citta is considered the storage of Samskara's because particularly in Citta you can perceive them. But the Samskara's are actually present in each of the energy bodies, in each Cakra and even in every cell of our physical body. There they mould our chromosomes and genes.

Apart from that Citta exhibits the Vrittis of Nidra (sleep) and Smrti (memory). Citta presents all this information and perceptions to Purusha. In the extreme, when the information becomes "poorer", Purusha will decide to ascend from the physical body, to continue its voyage with the ethereal body (only in the beginning), the subtle body and Atman. That then is death.

Jnana and Kriya can be freely seen as functions of Citta.

The distinction between Citta and Purusha

It is Purusha who perceives the changes in Citta. Citta cannot do that by its self. As a matter of fact, Buddhi and Ahamkara can't do that either. Purusha can perceive every movement because it is stationary and harmonious itself.

The utility of Citta

Citta can be deliberately transformed into a Sattvic condition by the practice of Yoga. To do that we need all the steps as described by Patanjali. However, eventually it is especially through the practice of Asmita Samadhi (contemplation on awareness of sheer being) that you can gain control over Citta. This condition is called Sarvarthata (the essence of all).

As a matter of fact Patanjali himself defines Yoga as "Yoga Citta Vritti Nirodha", meaning that Yoga is about gaining control of the Vrittis on to the level of Citta. When you succeed Citta can perform its most important function: lead you to liberation or deliverance.

Citta Vashittva (control)

To gain control over Citta it is best to start with the practice of Kriya Yoga, according to Patanjali, the father of Yoga. Kriya Yoga consists out of three elements: Tapas (austerity), Svadhyaya (Self study) and Ishvara Pranidana (surrender).

When, in a later stage, you add the other steps of Yoga to this, you have the best possible training to be successful in your endeavors to control Citta.

The eight steps of Patanjali are, as you probably already know: Yama (moral principles), Niyama (moral precepts), Asana (physical postures), Pranayama (energy control), Pratyahara (detachment), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (contemplation).

It is only through the practice of the 30 different kinds of Samyama (concentration-meditation-contemplation at the same time), described in the third chapter of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (The Science of Yoga), that you will gain complete control over Citta. Please refer to my version of this book for a clear understanding of this matter.

How Citta is mistaken for the Self

When people become aware of a luminous white light they often think they are enlightened, have arrived in Atman or finally experience Self-realization. However, what they experience is the light of Jivatman in Citta.

As long as you become aware of things there is a duality of the observer and the object that is being observed. Since there is no duality left in Atman, this cannot be the result of staying in Atman.

Can all these impressions enter into Citta?

All the Samskara's of your present and past lives are imprinted in Citta. Since Citta is a causal phenomenon that is faster than time there is more than enough room to store all this information. However, the connection of your individual Citta with Samasti (cosmic) Citta enables you also to gain access to cosmic or universal information. That is all the information that exists, or a broadband connection with the cosmic Internet as a matter of speech.

The relation of the Vritti's

When one really thinks about it, one discovers that the whole world is full of Vrittis. The activity in the form of Vrittis cannot be expressed in words or numbers, simply because it is infinite. But since we keep ourselves occupied with our own development we particularly consider our own Vrittis. These disturbances on our way to Self-realization arise in our Citta, Buddhi, Ahamkara and Manas. We must familiarize with them before we will be able to control them, and eventually completely abolish them.

We first have to consider the five kinds of Vrittis mentioned by Patanjali in the first verses of his Yoga Sutras. We find two of them in Citta, namely Nidra (sleep) and Smrti (memory). Three are in Buddhi, namely Pramana (true knowledge), Viparyaya (wrong knowledge) and Vikalpa (imagination).

They provoke Raga (attachment) and Dvesha (hatred), which reinforce Avidya (ignorance). They are called Klishta (painful). But when these Vrittis can lead you to Viveka Khyati (discriminative power) and abolish the darkness of ignorance, they are called Aklishta (not-painful).

Consider that a minor vice turns into virtue under the influence of good company, while a minor virtue turns into vice under the influence of bad company. For that reason each Yoga student must carefully avoid bad company and resort to good company, says Swami Yogeshvarananda Sarasvati.

Nidra (sleep)

Except for sleep, all sorts of faints and unconsciousness belong here, even those caused by alcohol or drugs. Although sleep closely resembles Samadhi it is substantially different from it because with sleep you lose control over your consciousness.

Characteristics of Nidra

This Vritti of Citta is dominated by Tamas and consequently paralyzes the Rajas and Sattva activities of Citta. This incites the sensation of “I don’t experience anything now” that we call sleep. The normal working of Citta in wake- or dream state is abolished. However, a relationship with Ahankara remains because of the Tamas nature of this Vritti, so you can say: “In my sleep I was so unconscious that I was not aware of my body and my Manas.

The nature of Nidra

Nidra is the Vritti of Citta that causes the silence of the sleep. Through a minor presence of Sattva in Citta it is possible that you have a memory of your experiences during your sleep. If there is more Sattva in Citta during your sleep you experience happiness, cheerfulness, energy, health. If there is some Rajas you experience pain, capriciousness and restlessness. When Tamas dominates however, you will experience inertia, a sense of heaviness and gloom.

We can distinguish several kinds of sleep:

1. A partial consciousness during sleep, as described above.
2. A general state of sleep.
3. An intense state of sleep, in which inertia dominates.

The first type of development of sleep

External causes, like exhaustion caused by too much work cause sleep. Fatigue relaxes the muscles, reduces your eyesight and makes your body heavy. It is impossible to give right or complete answers anymore to questions. Your body feels like a log of wood and slowly you drift away into the unconscious. A partial consciousness remains. This kind of sleep is called Tandra.

The second type of development of sleep

Internal causes, like tensions or mental labor cause sleep.

This process is similar to what happens in meditation: first the body relaxes, then with a powerful effort of the mind the Vritti's of Manas are brought to a standstill, then Citta becomes focused, and then all the Rajas and Tamas Vritti's are brought to a standstill, and eventually even Sattva Vritti's.

The method of realizing sleep

If we wish to sleep at the very moment the Vritti's have come to a standstill, Tamas will immediately get the upper hand and overpower the subtle body. In this way the gross body is made inert by Tamas in Manas. Buddhi and the Indriya's on their turn are then limited in their functions. Consequently there is less Prana and neither Kriya nor Jnana can appear. The gross body is lying there as if it were a lump of soil. The Vritti's of Citta automatically stand still and one experiences the sleep.

About Svapna (dream) and controlling it

We relax our body and go into meditation. After restraining the mind we reduce the activity of the Prana's. A certain silence then occurs inside the body. Only when the Indriya's cease to function as a consequence of the preceding control, neither knowledge nor action can come in from the outside. Then the inner functions reveal themselves. The vague memory of the Samskara's of Citta arises. In Rajas Buddhi has no total control over Manas and the Vritti's of Manas become incoherent and incomprehensible. In Sattva consistent action occurs. For example, we can experience bliss during a beautiful dream or perspiration during a violent one.

Control of sleep

The practice of Yoga introduces more and more Sattva in your being, causing you to become less tired and need less sleep. With that, through the above explanation, you will gradually be better able to understand the process of sleep and use it consciously to dream, sleep or go into meditation at will. Meditation becomes an ideal substitute for sleep.

The main virtue of sleep

It is important to know that sleep is of vital importance for a normal human being and that we should therefore carefully deal with it. First of all by respecting your need for sleep you can start studying it. You try to feel what sleep means for your body and then try to distinguish the signals of need for sleep. You do likewise with the characteristics of awaking. You can also use your biological clock instead of your alarm clock to wake up at a certain time.

Smrti (memory)

All the memories are based on experiences. It is important to know that Smrti has the capacity to put the other four Vritti's into action, responsible for the determining factors for a next birth. That is why one has to learn to control Smrti.

The nature of Smrti

When a Samskara (impression) is activated by an acceleration of the energy flow, usually caused by Samadhi, or by a Vritti with a similar pattern, fructification takes place and a new Vritti, that we call Smrti, arises, which is in fact the memory of what has been experienced.

A Vasana (subtle desire) is a mild form of a Smrti.

There are two kinds of Smrti

1. Bhavita Smartavya Smrti (memory pertaining to past objects): The memory from the past, mixed with ignorance, not to be mistaken for dreams with distorted memory, because that resorts under Vikalpa (imagination).
2. Abhavit Smartavya Smrti (real memory): The memory of all your lives, inclusive of pain and sadness, caused by Samadhi. This memory is based on Pramana (right knowledge).

An example of one of my memories:

'My soldiers and I were walking through the barren landscape. We carried Greek swords and shields. Here and there trees grew between the rocks. On one of the hills there was a city surrounded by walls. Weary I went ahead, in the direction of the small city gate. There was just about enough room for one cart to pass through. Two sentries blocked the entrance. "Can I pass?" I asked.

"Who are you and what do you want?" they answered.

"Don't you recognize me?" I said irritated. Apparently everyone in the country was supposed to know who I was.

"No, should I?" it sounded annoyed.

Angrily I shouted at them. "What an idiots you are that you don't know me!"

They drew their shields closer to them and crossed their lances to block any entry.

The sentries were shocked when they saw my storming troops, coming to my rescue, and they shouted for help.

There was pushing and shoving, shouting and cursing. Somebody used his weapon and the incident swiftly developed into a full-blown battle. The sentries were quickly eliminated, but then we had to deal with the whole garrison of the city.

The killing went on for the rest of the day, until deep into the night. They didn't had the slightest chance. My soldiers and I were experienced warriors. Soon the entire city was burning. Everything was destroyed. Nobody survived, not even the old, women and children.

I find this a terribly shocking experience. So I have resolved to control my pride in this life.

The fruits of memory

1. Smrti Matra Phala (fruits in the form of mere memory): Only joy or sorrow comes up, the memory fades away.
2. Vipaka (cause of the fructification): New Samskaras can arise through Smrti, causing your future development to be determined.

The absence of Smrti

Only when you proclaim “I have no idea what happened all this time” here is a chance that thanks to Asamprajnata (dynamic) Samadhi or Nirbija (without seed) Samadhi you have reached a condition in which there are no Vrittis left.

A new form of memory

It is of essential importance that memory of things you once knew remains possible. Only then activity in this world is possible. But because you don't deal with the memory in your individual Citta, it practically means that you constantly are in contact with Samasti Citta and use that as storage of your memories.

Explanation of the Buddhi Vritti's

Except for the Vritti's that exist in Citta, we also have to deal with the Vritti's in Buddhi. There are three of them: Pramana (true knowledge), Viparyaya (wrong knowledge) and Vikalpa (imagination).

1. Pramana's (true knowledge): To make things easier there are three kinds.
 - 1) Pratyaksa (direct knowledge) is instantly knowing, free from doubt and delusion, by means of the Indriya's (senses). We call this recognition or clicking.
 - 2) Anumana (inference) is the indirect learning through reasoning, before direct knowledge appears.
 - 3) Agama (testimony) is the use of authoritative Sruti's (words) or Shastra's (scriptures) to realize knowledge.In practice this means that you try to focus your life more and more on direct knowledge and less and less on inference and testimony. In other words, that establishing a large library for example, is something you'd better forget. You even forget about your wonderful and careful reasoning, in order to make room for recognitions. However, at a certain point that will also become unimportant, particularly when you get a taste of the state of Self-realization.
2. Viparyaya (wrong knowledge): A distorted or incorrect form of knowledge. For example when you mistake a rock in the darkness for a bear. This problem will eventually be solved by an increasing Turya (alertness). If not, it will be the cause of distraction, afflictions, restlessness and destruction of the world.
3. Vikalpa (Imagination): When certain words, images and thoughts that are experienced, in reality do not exist, they are called imagination. In practice it is very difficult, not only to recognize this Vritti as such, but also to eradicate it,

because it usually lives a life of its own. Let's take the word "cow" for example. What do you see before you? Exactly, a spotted cow! But when I pronounce that word I see a brown cow, like those we had in Africa! In the same vein your Self-image is a typical example of imagination until you have reached Enlightenment. Vikalpa appears because in observation we don't distinguish between Shabda (sound), Artha (essence) and Jnana (knowledge).

The Vritti's of Manas

The Vritti's of Manas are Adana (give) and Pradana (take). When you think about somebody, you give a thought to this person and he or she can feel that. When you take over a thought of somebody, it is Pradana. Just watch in the direction of the kitchen and think about coffee, while your partner watches you. Chances are nine out of ten that she will ask you: "Would you like some more coffee, dear? She takes over your thought while you give this thought to her. Very interesting experiment, but still a waste of time, considering our goal: Enlightenment.

The Vritti's of Ahamkara

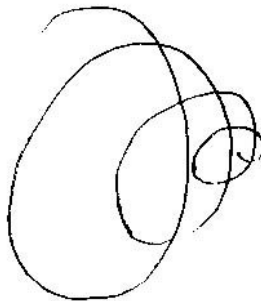
The Vritti's of Ahamkara are, apart from Adana (give) and Pradana (take), also Ahamta (I-ness) and Mamatva (mine-ness). Notice that, in contrast with the previous Vritti's, these appear in Karana Sharira (causal body).

Adana takes care of the correct activation of the senses through Manas and to deposit the impressions in Manas and Citta after the decision of Buddhi.

Pradana takes care of obtaining the decisions of the intellect and to collect the impressions from Citta.

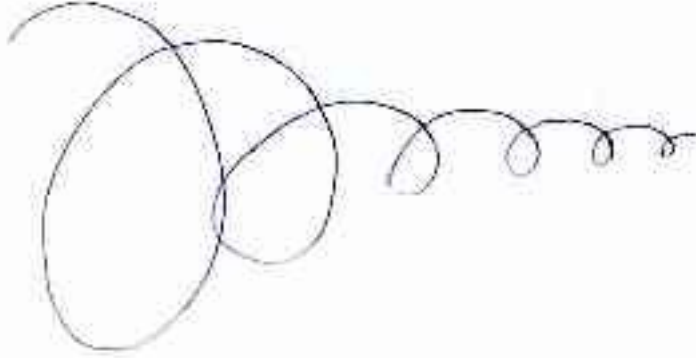
When you dedicate yourself completely to your work, for example, it is called Adana. And when you demand attention for your self it is a Vritti of Pradana.

Easily recognizable is the Vritti of I-ness.



This is a fast contracting Vritti. It can easily be felt in the heart. For example when you receive compliments, but also when you are turned down or when you are heart broken. It is also the Vritti of egoism and greed.

The Vritti of Mamatva (mine-ness) is clearly different:



This is a slow, long stretched contraction of energy that appears with desire. Just look at the desirous people standing in front of a shop window, looking at attractive offers. Then you will see these kinds of energy-tentacles going in through the window to embrace the products... Just try to imagine what it feels like to be a lust object.

This Vritti is also typical for lust for power, when somebody tries to gain control over somebody else.

Conclusion about Manomaya Kosha (the mental sheath)

Manas very swiftly receives information from Ahamkara, that on its turn received it from Buddhi. Manas sends this information through to the Indriya's and the Tanmatra's. It is in this way that the five Karmendriya's are responsible for the action in our body, the five Jnanendriya's are responsible for the sensory observation and the five Tanmatra's are responsible for the condensation of the subtle energy into the five gross elements.

On the other hand Manas is responsible for the reception of the signals coming from the gross body, which are received by the Indriya's and transferred to Ahamkara, which then offers them to Buddhi.

You will be surprised to see how Manas, the king of the senses, executes the orders of the intellect with great skill, attention and speed; how Manas through its divine powers enables its servants, the senses, to execute its orders and how it changes shape and color while it receives the reflections of knowledge and the actions of the Indriya's. It doesn't even take him half a second to do all this. This marvelous spectacle is astonishing for the human intellect.

The chains of the objects

A normal human being doesn't live but he is being lived. It's the Indriya's that lead him, because he doesn't realize the power of Manas and doesn't use them. Therefore he will remain tethered to the objects of this world. That is why it is important to gain understanding and control over Manas.

The means of Moksha (liberation)

The straight way to liberation is Viveka Jnana (knowledge through discriminative knowledge). This is unanimously recognized.

Understanding of Sthula Sharira (gross body) and its two aspects, Anamaya Kosha (food containing sheath) and Pranamaya Kosha (vital or Prana containing sheath) is not sufficient to reach Moksha (liberation). We also need understanding of Sukshma Sharira (subtle or astral body) and its two aspects, Manomaya Kosha (mental sheath) and Vijnanamaya Kosha (intellect sheath) is needed. But how can you obtain understanding or knowledge through discrimination?

Description of Brahmarandhra (the cavity of Brahman)

Thanks to the previous it is certain that you will develop your own Antahkarana, but if you want to reach enlightenment and liberation you still have a lot of work to do. For that purpose you have to let a Brahmarandhra occur in yourself. That is an open and direct connection with the divine.

Doesn't a human being already have such connection?

No, unfortunately not. A normal human being, however connected to the cosmic network, has so much interference on the line that hardly anything can come through. Considering this it is understandable that a human being breaths one's last breath in pure exhaustion after about eighty years of life.

But what exactly is Brahmarandhra?

With Antahkarana you have achieved integration of your gross, subtle and causal bodies. It is just like as if you have put together a computer from separate parts and adjust the hardware, software and the personal settings. With Brahmarandhra you now add the connection of all the Sattvic Cakra's and Sharira's, achieving superconductivity of pure energy. Just like as if you connect that computer to the Internet through a broadband connection or ADSL, enabling you to be constantly on-line.

Brahmarandhra is a means as well as a goal, just as we saw with Antahkarana.

The relationship of Brahmarandhra with the physical body

Because Sattva dominates in all the Cakra's, we obtain a chalice of Cakra's that are connected. You can see this in the image that goes with the summary on the Cakra's.

The reason that those Cakra's seamlessly cooperate with each other is due to the identical energy balls within the Cakra's.

In each Cakra there is an earth ball. Consequently the contact of the earth Cakra with the divine goes through all the Cakra's all the way down to Muladhara Cakra.

In Svadisthana Cakra and each of the Cakra's above there is a water ball. Consequently the contact of the water Cakra with the divine goes through all the water balls present in each Cakra down to Svadisthana.

In Manipura Cakra and each of the Cakra's above there is a fireball. Consequently the contact of the fire Cakra with the divine goes through all those fireballs present in each Cakra down to Manipura.

In Vishuddhi Cakra and each of the Cakra's above there is an ether ball. Consequently the contact of the ether Cakra with the divine goes through all the ether balls down to Vishuddhi Cakra.

In Ajna Cakra and each of the Cakra's above there is a mental ball. Consequently the contact of the mental Cakra with the divine goes through all those mental balls.

In Sahasrara Cakra and each of the Cakra's above there is a causal ball. Consequently the contact of the causal Cakra with the divine goes through all those causal balls.

The holy scriptures constantly reiterate the fact that all parts of our being lie enclosed within Brahmarandhra. Only it is then added that it is all in the service of our dear Lord!

I remember the fact that the bible also mentions something like "the chalice of the everlasting covenant". I believe that must be the same.

Can you follow all this? Logical, Isn't it!

Forms of these under the influence of the three Guna's

As long as a person with a Brahmarandhra is not liberated yet, it is possible that the three Guna's could still influence him.

When, with a Brahmarandhra you enter into a condition of Sattva domination for example, it is time for you to share your spiritual knowledge. Buddhi then is brilliant, often as luminous as Mercury light and often as splendid as the golden orb of the sun and transparent, says Swami Yogeshvarananda Sarasvati. This is the way in which all the holy books came into existence, by direct inspiration. This also goes for the New Testament, the Koran, the Filokalia, and name a few more. How else do you think I would be able to write this book?

When Brahmarandhra lands in a state of Rajas domination Buddhi has a special luminosity, which is accompanied by restless activity. Manas shines like the planet Venus and remains ever active. The senses become more active and their luminosity also increases. Intellect, mind and senses are ever luminous and active.

When Jesus got angry and overturned the stalls of the publicans in the temple he gave a demonstration of divine anger. That is an example of Rajas in Brahmarandhra. The anger, which then arises, is not human anymore. It is much, much more powerful.

Domination of Tamas in Brahmarandhra looks completely different. Buddhi appears clouded, white and opaque. Manas is like the moon veiled by clouds, the senses become slow in activity and dull in luminosity.

When you give love to people from a state of Brahmarandhra you overwhelm everybody. Many “successful” Bhakti Yoga teachers spread such energy. It gives a sense of oppression that makes any action difficult. I have sincere doubt about whether this will bring people to self-realization enlightenment and liberation. If you adopt these kinds of methods for yourself, you must pay attention that you apply this only to those people who happily appreciate it! If not, chances are quite big that you commit violence. When Jesus said that you should confront your enemies with love he did not necessarily mean the soft kind that we were taught! When your enemy is full of hatred en you treat him to such overwhelming love you magnify the hatred in his heart to such an extent that he is very likely not to survive.

In 1984, when Tchernenko was still at the rudder of the Sovjet Union, another war was looming. Nobody seemed to notice, but the Russians were getting ready. Ice-cold Tchernenko was full of hatred. The Russian forces had already grown three to four times bigger than those of NATO.

Once again I was seriously worried. Diplomacy failed. I followed the news nervously. Talking sense with this man seemed impossible. What now?

The only solution seemed that I had to snatch the head of the dragon. Because that’s were the problem was. At night I sent love to Tchernenko. Lot’s of love, whole lot’s of love, and again and again love. Because I knew the impact of love on the heart of a rancorous person. The heart muscle got encapsulated and couldn’t move anymore. He died a little bit later. Did I do it? After all, the whole event was shrouded in a cloud of mystery. Typical for the Kremlin.

His successor was possibly even worse: the head of the KGB! His name was Andropov.

I gave him a full charge as well. There was so much love inside me.

He too died after a couple of months. Coincidence?

Then Gorbatsjov came to power. We were saved.

The activity of Manas

Astounding with Brahmarandhra is the activity of Manas. Because the objects that are grasped by the senses color it, Manas often looks like a fish in the water. Manas moves itself around in the light-body of the intellect and often seems, as if through a spray, to reflect color in the intellect body. Manas colors the intellect with its rays, whom themselves are colored by the objects. In this condition Manas looks like the planet Venus, luminous and utterly active.

When Sattva dominates in Brahmarandhra, for example during Pratyahara, Manas shines like a burning coal, but bright and calm.

When Manas has assumed the form of an object in a state when the objects reflect themselves because of the predominance of Rajas, the movement of Manas becomes so fast and its activity so accelerated that it is impossible to observe it in full detail. At this stage it is only possible to see a few waves through divine vision. The light-body of the five Tanmatra's appears like a rainbow putting a veil over them all. The five Tanmatra's envelop the whole of Manomaya Kosha and Vijnanamaya Kosha in the same way the skin envelops the physical body. It is only through the understanding of these things that you can believe and match the super-natural powers of great warriors, if you like.

With Tamas domination in Brahmarandhra, Manas will see to it that the gross body will be administered with a tremendous portion of nectar. Very practical in case that you need to recover quickly from a disease or injury!

The vision of Brahmarandhra through introspection

To realize Brahmarandhra it helps if you have some idea of what it is. Swami Yogesvarananda Sarasvati's description can be very helpful in that respect.

“The entire brain, filled with the network of all sorts of nerve tissues, is illumined by the Astral Body which appears like an oval mass of light and from which groups of rays emanate. Therefore, those who enter into Brahmarandhra through meditative vision see these different lights in the preliminary state like the flame of a lamp, a candle, or many lamps, like luminous buds, the Venus star, many shining stars, often like the half or full moon, or like liquid mercury shining in circular forms, like luminous orbs of the sun, or like flickering glow-worms. Often the entire mind appears like a tree, leafless, having luminous branches with shining clouds hovering over it and the whole scene lit up by the moonlight.”

In my experience, Brahmarandhra can also be realized in another way.

When you are full of something and express that, everything goes very easily. You are self-assured; you got power, power of endurance and inspiration. You don't have to worry about your body, as it will follow naturally. Thoughts and words come automatically, everything automatically arranges in accordance with your wishes. Actually you don't have to do anything at all. Everything just happens. There is only “unity”.

Relationship between subject and instrument

The gross sense organs and the motorial activity are put to action through the luminous Indriyas. Their leader, Manas, receives all kinds of decisions from Buddhi. In turn Buddhi reacts through Citta under the influence of Atman (the Self). So in the state of

Brahmarandhra it is Atman who enjoys and acts. By experiencing this process more and more intensely you will come to Self-realization.

Support of the rarified (heavenly) forms

How can this experience lead you to a sense of unity?

As shown in the Yin-Yang model, the build up of our being is one in which one energy sphere lies within the other and in which everything is inter-connected. In this whole Atman is about the biggest energy sphere and as such is responsible for keeping the whole “thing” together.

Visualization of the functions of Brahmarandhra

To understand Brahmarandhra it can help to observe a person doing something that he is full of. He shines, not in a normal way but the same way electric light flows through a filament. That Divine light moves very swift. He is able to directly see the changes that take place in the objects of his perception and he is able to react to those changes immediately.

Those rays are different of nature and one sees them performing different functions. It is magnificent to see how Manas and Buddhi are occupied with these vivid acts, veiled in shining colors, reflected by the objects of the senses. It is beyond people’s intellectual faculties to give an adequate description of this inner vision and the unique beauty and the movements of these spheres. Only Yogis who master Samyama (concentration-meditation-contemplation at the same time) to perfection can see all this.

Some points to remember

All parts of your being form a brilliant mass with luminous waves, short and light as fire, shining like lightning, transparent as the sky, thin and soft, expansive as the sky, elastic as rubber, ever in movement by the wind, very attractive and beautiful, full of living consciousness and miracle of the majesty of life, pleasing, delightful and ever endowed with novelty. They are ever in movement; they never assume a static or immovable state like mountains.

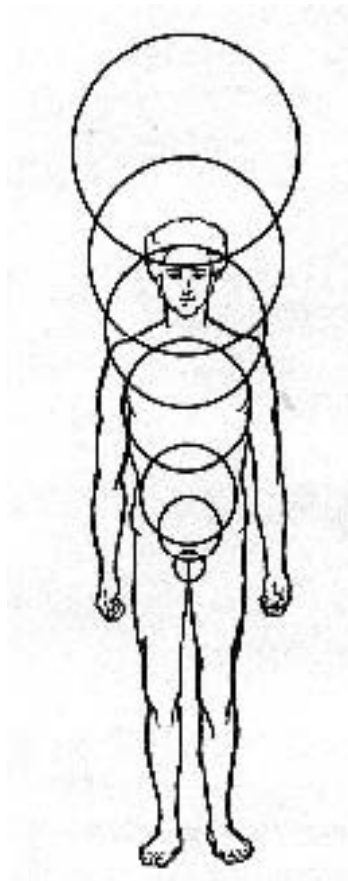
The secret of acquiring knowledge

Only through a progressively improving functioning of Buddhi you can acquire above knowledge. Deep and sharp insight while experimenting, combined with systematic registration and testing, are indispensable in this process for many years. You practice preferably with an experienced teacher with the utmost confidence and dedication. The hidden facts will then reveal themselves and you become rock steady in your wisdom. In the end, what is important is that you will understand with your heart.

The relative importance of the statements of the sages

In every testimony, however interesting they may be, the danger of delusion is hidden because the consciousness of a human being, even a highly developed one, is usually colored by his conditioning, culture and convictions. For that very reason it is a prerequisite that you experience everything anew to really understand what it is all about.

Ascertainment of the position of Brahmarandhra



Brahmarandhra is located within our being. It functions through and with each of the seven Cakra's, all the way from the tailbone up to the crown. The culminating point of Brahmarandhra lies within the crown center. It is probably because of this that some call this location the cavity of Brahman. Others even proclaim Brahmarandhra to be the seat of the soul. Maybe it is better to put it into words as: "the seat on which the soul can be seated".

After having received the knowledge of the phenomenon of Brahmarandhra the best course to follow is the practice of the eight steps of Yoga, described by Patanjali: Yama (moral ideals or refusals), Niyama (moral principles), Asana (physical postures),

Pranayama (energy control), Pratyahara (detachment), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (contemplation).

Before trying to control your mind it is best to practice Kriya Yoga, says Patanjali. Kriya Yoga exists out of austerity, Self-study and surrender.

In your endeavors Pratyahara deserves special attention. Not only the weakening of the Indriya's, but also the weakening of Manas will achieve total detachment.

Withdrawal of the energy from the Indriya's is done by concentration on one single object, until you identify yourself with it. It is in this condition that the senses will turn inward and follow Manas. When you have control of the mind, the senses stop to function and they remain quiet and peaceful. The senses then will remain unmoved, even in the presence of distractions like lust, anger and greed; they will not grasp the objects and the distractions.

If you wish to withdraw the energy from Manas, you must see to it that Manas will not accept the reflections of the impressions relayed by the senses, meaning that you don't allow Manas to cooperate with the senses. Then there is no presence of knowing or acknowledging of the objects.

The practice of Dharana (concentration) is, as it were, tethering Manas to a pole. The mind will then run around the pole in ever-smaller circles. Then when it sits down in exhaustion, although not yet completely inactive, it is called Dhyana (meditation). Like a top, spinning at full force, seems to be standing still, the mind seems to be standing still.

In Dhyana (meditation) you keep the mind detached from all objects, except for that one chosen object. Full of love you merge into that one object, like a river plunging into the ocean. The best object to use for this is the heart, says Swami Yogeshvarananda Sarasvati, because that is where it is ultimately possible to connect with the soul.

If you have trouble going into meditation, because of subtle desires or worrying, you must deduce them back to their essence, the three Guna's. By asking yourself questions, you must try to find the cause of those desires or worries. Manas will then follow one line of thinking and surrender its self-willed-ness. Like an obstinate horse can be led back to the right path by detour, the mind, when it has surrendered its obstinacy, can quietly and sedately go into meditation. This is quite an easy method.

By getting rid of the impurities and afflictions by means of Samadhi, wisdom increases and realization will shine through ever more.

The thirty different Samyama exercises described by Patanjali in his "Yoga Sutra's" are meant to help you with perfecting and setting-up of your Brahmarandhra.

When we come back to the basis of the chalice, established by Brahmarandhra, we see that the Tattva's (elements, literally streams) must be playing an important role as well. For they give shape to the five lowest areas, earth, water, fire, air and ether. Therefore it is not sufficient to purify the higher area only, the lower areas need to be purified as well. It is often at this stage that dregs remain in the chalice!

To purify the Tattva's it is best to approach them in their form of appearance as subtle elements, Karmendriya's and Jnanendriya's.

Subtle element	Karmendriya	Jnanendriya
Earth	Excretion	Smell
Water	Procreation	Taste
Fire	Propulsion	Eyesight
Air	Grasp	Touch
Ether	Speech	Hearing

The sequence of inner vision of the functions of each Karmendriya

The organ of excretion

We start with the earth-element because it is the easiest one to understand.

Again we use the trick of Sattva. Because Sattva can be generated pre-eminently through observation, and because Sattva is purifying, we try to "see" the Karmendriya of the earth in its functioning and in that way, consequently, clean or purify it.

First of all you try to remember the condition in which you were the last time when you had to relieve yourself. Wasn't there a pressure in the lower part of the body? To be more exact: on the anus? Do you still remember the reaction of your anus on this pressure? No, probably not, because you are not supposed to have such thoughts. Well, forget about that for once. What we do here is scientific research. Just watch, and learn.

Pay attention to the movement in the bowels. We call this bowel-peristaltic. But is that the only thing happening in your body? Probably not!

You might also notice a subtle activity in your head that, via the nerves in the spine activates the bowels. And if you pay close attention you will also notice that at the start of this process, because of the pressure of the contents of the filled bowels onto the anus, a signal is being send through the nerves to the brain that passes it on to Manas and directly to Buddhi, where the conclusion is made: "I have an urgent message!"

The purpose of this is that from now on you regularly follow this process and become more and more familiar with it.

The organ of generation

The most powerful among our Karmendriyas is our sex-organ. If we don't pay attention it takes over the control of our entire being. Through observing the functioning of it however, we can stay in control of it. It is often said that sex is something in the head, and indeed that is true. It is through seeing a "nice piece of meat" (person that sexually attracts you) that you convey through Manas a signal to Buddhi, where a flash occurs

directly in the sense of “That is my kind!” and you feel a reaction in your body. There is a shiver, tingling in the belly, tension in the sex-organ. Do you recognize this?

Why is this so powerful? Because it is an action of the water-element, while our body-mass consists for about 70% out of fluid.

The “Kama Sutra” is a holy scripture of Yoga that exclusively deals with this matter. The very detailed explanations in this scripture help you in practical way to get a grip on your Kama (desire) in relation to sex. What a pity that the original book doesn’t have illustrations! The idea in all this is that you should not reject anything beforehand, but study it, choose that what is fit for you and your partner. In this way you give Buddhi control instead of your Karmendriya.

The purpose of all this is that from now on you deal with your reproductive organ consciously so that you learn to handle the powers of it in order to achieve the higher goals.

The organ of locomotion

When you go from one place to another all day, you don’t really ask yourself how this actually happens. You just do it. But if you start to think and imagine yourself standing upright, before you are actually standing, you will notice that your body wants to erect automatically. It then becomes very easy. And rightly so, because you have already let Buddhi decide while Manas has formed the thought. The rest is a matter of letting it happen. From the brain and the spinal marrow the nerves in your body take care of the activation of the legs. You can try an experiment by turning the process around: Just stand up without advance thinking. Do you notice that this costs more effort?

The point here is that from now on you stop moving automatically, realize the merit of the conscious use of the legs and consequently walk straight into heaven.

The hands

We alternate grabbing or taking with giving. Our hands are constantly busy. But do you realize what is actually happening? Or do your hands lead their own lives, like the hands of those people working at a conveyor belt production line? I hope not!

Just look for once at what your hands are doing, why and how. The immediate result is that you will make fewer mistakes, stop dropping things and your productivity increases. You then notice involuntarily that something is happening inside your head. Like a fish in a bowl of water, your thought swims up and down. Suddenly there is recognition, and as quick as lightening there is a thought, an image and a conclusion: “That’s how I have to do it!” At that very moment you know that you will fix the task and that you will do it right.

From now on you can use manuals in this way to help you purify spiritually.

The organ of speech

Chattering like a chicken without a head, do you know such thing? People who have become the slave of their organ of speech do like that. They just chatter, and eventually

nobody listens to them anymore. But how would it be if you'd have control over your organ of speech? A known Greek orator practiced this by holding speeches on the beach with his mouth full of pebbles. What he did was very clever. He forced his consciousness to observe the functioning of his mouth. The pebbles helped him with this. Try for yourself! It demands a lot of effort and precision. Automatically you will then pay attention to the line of thoughts that lead to speech. That goes very swiftly, because the Karmendriya of ether (sound) is very close to Manas. The thought has hardly been worded before the corresponding word arises. It goes even faster when you speak from your heart. That is only logical since in that case Buddhi is involved in it.

Beware that each of your words will one day become holy because of this conscious use of the speech. Like each of your words become a Mantra, each of your physical postures will become an Asana and each of your drawings will become a Mandala.

The Jnanedriya's

More difficult than the Karmendriyas is the realization of the Jnanedriyas because of their Sattvic nature. That's the reason why we started first with the Karmendriyas. Once you have those under control it becomes a lot quieter inside you, giving you a fair chance to understand the Jnanedriyas.

The organ of smell

Is your smell all right? Or do you hardly use your nose, like so many people, causing the perfume manufacturers to have to produce an even stronger scent each year? Already it seems like certain women and men smell like an air freshener.

By using the smell consciously you can develop a very refined nose.

What happens when you smell something delicious? You get sick into the deepest corners of your body, or not? That is because smell is the function of observation of the earth. The effect of what you smell then logically goes from your brain down to your tailbone center, all the way down to the pelvic bottom. The best location to experience this is outside in nature, especially in spring. Smell the flowers, become one with your nose, said Ovidius, the famous Latin poet. The flowers then will cause you to go to heaven, not just because they smell so delicious, but more so because they cause you to make a connection with Manas and Buddhi. Use your nose the way it was meant to be: to gather knowledge over solid matter. Take a handful of soil and smell it, the way a real farmer does. Appreciate that soil. Then determine, what do you think of the quality of that soil? You can also smell at your (future) partner. Beware that she is not wearing perfume, because that is deceiving. Does she smell delicious? Then she is fit for you. Doesn't she smell delicious? Get rid of her.

The organ of taste

The French call the culture of the organ of taste a part of your culture on the whole. And rightly so! Food in the world doesn't only exist out of coke and hamburgers. There are also very refined drinks and overly delicious foods. Have you ever enjoyed a Thai meal? That's one of the best cuisines of all. A simple mashed kale dish can be delicious too, but only if you pay attention, of course. And that is exactly the problem: we devour our meals without paying attention.

The key to this problem lies in choice. We have to relearn how to choose. Isn't that Buddhi? What kinds of food do you like most? What would you like to have now? Difficult, isn't it? Try something different instead of hunting for the bargains in the supermarket. If you do so you will have a lot more enjoyment from cooking the things that you bought consciously. Then when you serve the dish on the table it will happen with a lot more respect than the pizza that you ordered to be delivered to your house.

Then when you eat your meal, you take all your time for it. You try to recognize the ingredients of the recipe (where have we heard this word before?) and tell the cook about your findings. Your whole being is eating! Do you understand now why the tasting of wine is such an extensive ritual in France?

The organ of sight

Have you ever been carried away by something beautiful?

What happened inside you at that very moment? Your eyes simply caught the image of that beauty, sent the Vritti to Manas that in turn directly put it before Buddhi. Buddhi then, as quick as lightning, compared it with the existing impressions and came to the conclusion: "That is beautiful!"

To let your whole being participate in the beauty of life is easy. You only have to watch with attention. There is always something beautiful. And when you find it, you enjoy it intensely, deep into the navel center!

Are you wearing glasses? Doesn't matter, but put off your glasses when you watch. See nothing? Then limit yourself for the time being to what is within your reach. Your eyes will improve anyway because of the larger amounts and better quality of energy that will flow through you.

When you watch T.V. you always have the "zapper" (remote control) within reach to help you find something beautiful. Zap all the remaining programs immediately!

Surround yourself with beautiful objects and people. Let your surroundings caress your eyes. However, beware that you don't put "art" on your walls because others say it is art! The greatest impostors are found in the world of artists, because nobody really knows what art is. From now on you know: art is something that touches the heart, or, did I hear myself say Buddhi?

The organ of touch

What are you wearing? How does that fabric feel? Do you like the feel of it, or did you just wear something because you actually think it is not that important? Well, in that case you really miss out on something. That's Heaven, to be precise.

Our sense of touch, residing in the skin, takes care of our observation of the air or the gasses, if you like. In this respect just think about the wind caressing your cheeks when you stroll along the beach.

So where then is this heaven?

Have you ever traveled in a fast cabriolet in the passenger seat? While the sun was shining and the temperature was quite agreeable? I did, long time ago, in the Ardennes (Belgian mountain range), in the white Triumph Spitfire of my nephew, and it was gorgeous! I took in the warm summer wind with deep draughts.

To please your sense of touch it is maybe cheaper to buy clothes instead of a sports car. Go shopping and feel the quality of the clothes instead of only looking at them. Not only the color and the shape (organ of sight) are important, but also the feel on your skin. Buy flannel or wool, silk or cotton. Not polyester, even though it might seem to be the best choice. The caressing of those noble fabrics on your skin will feel like a constant massage. The conscious experience of it will intensify the feeling in your skin and fulfill you from top to toe. Bliss is the experience of the anointed. And that is heaven. By the way, what do you think is the meaning of the word Christ? Exactly, the anointed, in Greek! Doesn't this ring a bell?

The organ of hearing

Sometimes a car passes by in our street while loud "beat" music comes from it. My stepdaughter calls it Techno or something like that. I don't understand the driver of this car doesn't get deaf! Preferably I'd come out and take him out of his car and friendly but emphatically want to tell him about the possibilities of sound being the means to go to heaven and not to hell. Of course he will then tell me that he enjoys this loud noise! I will then ask him whether his heart is touched by it. He will then have to acknowledge that it is all about the sensation that goes straight into the ear. Can you picture this?

Because sound or the observation of ether is the highest of the five elements on gross level it is of the utmost importance for your harmony and the development of Brahmarandhra.

It all comes down to experiencing sound consciously. You do that preferably with natural, harmonious sounds. I find singing and more specifically choral singing ideal for this purpose.

I would like to share something with you that really touched me back in 1986.

I sat in meditation in the basement of the Prins Hendrikkade 146 in Amsterdam. That is where the school was located in the beginning. It was quite silent and I was all by myself.

Suddenly, out of the air, sounded a beautiful choir of voices, singing the word “Unmani”. This Sanskrit word was repeated three times, each time ending in a very high I-tone, which was by no means to be equaled by man. It was as if angels were singing, accompanied by heavenly music.

I was so shocked by this event that I didn’t want to have any part of it at first. Later on I started to do some research on it. Maybe this word had some meaning after all! I took me about two years to discover that “Unmani” means thoughtlessness. It was all mentioned neatly in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. What kind of a student is this, you might think now! Anyway, the message was clear by then. I had to stop to regard the mind as being so important. But that is difficult! I’m still struggling with the idea. That some words and sounds can touch you and bring you to heaven!

Vijnanamaya Kosha (the intellect sheath)

To realize the intellect sheath needs a little bit more than what was needed for the realization of the mental sheath. This sheath appears when there is Rajas domination in Sukshma Sharira (subtle body). Through the expansion, the reflection that occurs with it, this sheath is also referred to as the astral body. It is precisely the expansion that mostly causes the awakening of the Buddhi phenomenon, which is also Rajas, in Karana Sharira (causal body). However, this description is a purely mental one.

It is best to approach this matter in an experimental way. Go into Dharana (concentration) on the Nada sound, as advised in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Your mental disturbances will then slowly disappear and will cause the energy in the subtle body to flow faster and faster. You maintain this until you arrive steadily in Dhyana (meditation) and get the impression that you have come into a large dome shaped cheese-cover. You will have the feeling that being in this condition is very natural and comfortable. This is the realization of Sukshma Sharira (subtle body), but not yet of Vijnanamaya Kosha (intellect sheath). To achieve that you simply need to be patient. Your energy will continuously flow faster. If needed you can add a little bit of Shakti. This will then cause a sense of enlargement. It seems as if you become lighter in weight and lighter in color. That is Vijnanamaya Kosha.

The great advantage of consciously awakening Vijnanamaya Kosha is that you will reach Buddhi through it and that you can solve all the problems of the world. For thanks to this exercise you will achieve more and more Sattva in Buddhi and Ritambara will arise, the condition of the “carrier of truth and justice”, which is an open crown center or the crown of a real king!

The power of Samyama

In practice however, the above is not so easily to be achieved. Only if you are lucky you may rarely experience this. To awaken Vijnanamaya Kosha randomly you must have progressed much more in Yoga. You must be able to practice Samyama (concentration-

meditation-contemplation at the same time). But to be able to do that it is necessary that you first master Nirbija Samadhi (contemplation without seed) and a minimum of realization of the Divine.

What is Samyama?

While reading “New Psychology” Part I of Alice Bailey in the spring of 2002 I was struck by a piece of text in the beginning of that book. In it I recognized a remarkable description of Samyama, the famous technique of concentration-meditation-contemplation-in-one, of which nobody until now has been able to make a workable exercise.

Freely interpreted it comes down to the following: First you have to try to become aware of the presence of a beloved person. That is the contemplation part. It is actually Sabija Samadhi that slowly transforms into Nirbija Samadhi. Very subtle. From now on you keep that awareness of this presence constantly with you in the back ground as it were.

The next step is to recall one of your own concrete experiences of the Divine in your mind and hold on to it without interruptions. That is the meditation part.

Lastly you point your attention to the object. Doing so, various thoughts can occur. That is the concentration part.

In the beginning your attention will constantly go from one to the other. Because of this the three parts will then slowly connect more and more. You continue until the connection is complete and everything therefore becomes one. That will be achieved when everything becomes light. You will also notice that the process that was so restless in the beginning has now become calm and quiet.

How do you perform Samyama correctly?

The problem with Samyama is that particularly you first have to control the respective parts of the exercise. With Nirbija Samadhi you must already deeply understand what the energy field of a being actually is. And with meditation you already need to have had a mystical experience of God. Otherwise it doesn't work.

As an example the following may inspire you:

Since quite some time I was working with Samyama (concentration-meditation-contemplation) on the light under the crown (forehead chakra). My world of thought became quieter and my sight clearly improved. It improved so much that I didn't even need my recently acquired reading-glasses. And then it happened.

On Wednesday, 24 October 2001, during the fall vacation, I was walking with wife and kids on the beach of Castricum by the Sea. The weather was nice for a moment. The sun shone in the water. The waves shimmered. And suddenly those waves whispered: “I'm here ... I'm here ... I'm here ...” And as if that was not enough yet, the sand at my feet whispered the same: “I'm here ...” The soft wind, that caressed my face, joined in: “I'm here ...” And even my belly whispered softly along: “I'm here ...” It sounded so delicate and fragile, but at the same time natural, easy and spontaneous. I then realized that He had always been there and that I only “saw” or actually “heard” Him at that moment.

You can imagine that this experience, that I can now regularly repeat, has changed many things in my life. First of all I must point out the fact that this experience did not occur just like that. It was a clear result of this Samyama on the light under the crown. Then the addition of Patanjali: “Then you will obtain the vision of the adepts” turned for me into “Then you will obtain the vision of the adepts (great Yogi’s)”. Our Lord has spoken to me!

As a consequence my senses are exceptionally strong. From everything I hear, and see much more than before. The world suddenly appears to me in quite some more ranges of colors. My world of thought has become considerably quieter, without all those ups and downs.

You would think: “Well, with this I can proceed for many years to come ...” But the gods have decided differently.

Some weeks ago I have switched to the next Samyama, the one focusing on the heart. Slowly I felt my intestines tossing about, as if deep Karma came to life. Tensions in the neck and shoulders, unknown to me, cropped up. I realized that there was still a lot left behind under the skin. Each time I repeated the exercise it appeared that my body reacted less and got more room. My inner life knows much greater peace now than before.

What is the effect of Samyama?

The contemplation will bring your consciousness to a very high level. It opens as it were your being. The meditation on the Divine, the call to God, will cause a gigantic inflow of energy. The inconceivable power of the most high will try to enter into your open being. The concentration on a given object will provoke a hefty flow through, flushing out the obstacles.

Is such overcoming of obstacles right and rational?

But you could also ask yourself whether the impurities in your being are especially meant to be accepted and to be experienced. Some say therefore that you should not practice all the purifying exercises and that all the misery that comes your way are just a part of life. Patanjali says about this matter: “Pain that hasn’t come yet, must be avoided”. This clarifies the opinion about this matter within Yoga. The purpose of your life is to get to learn to know yourself in the confrontation with the matter, and thus improve yourself to such an extent that one day you can connect again with your source.

Realization is possible through the divine eye

So Vijnanamaya Kosha cannot be realized by your third eye, or the Sattva condition of the fire element in Ajna Cakra (forehead center). You can only realize that sheath with your divine Eye, or the Sattva condition of the fire element in Sahasrara Cakra (crown center). And to receive that, watch the word “receive”, while you expected to “build”, you must practice Samyama.

The essential nature of five gross elements and the way to realize them

We are still far away from our goal. Lots still have to be achieved before your Brahmarandhra comes into being. Based on your preceding realizations you can now go deeper. Because of your increased purity you are now ready for the realization of the five gross elements.

When you look at the world around you with your Godly Eye you will notice that there is a lot more than you think. You will discover many new phenomena that you cannot see with your normal eyes.

You will first have to get rid of the idea that everything is steady, because that only seems to be so. The world around you is in constant motion; nothing remains still, not even a stone. He is the seemingly steady result of an uninterrupted flow of energy coming from the universe. But what is it that makes this stone seem to be steady? Because there are actually two energy flows involved, Shiva and Shakti, that flow in opposite directions and that maintain the shape of the stone under influence of the typical Samskara's (impressions) of the stone. You should also try to perceive a human being in this way. Forget about the idea that you grow because you eat, or that you get fat because you eat too much. That is only partly true. The most important cause of your manifestation as a physical body is related to Shiva and Shakti. Hunger, thirst, and therefore eating, is only a compensation for a shortage in of energy.

From our Yin Yang model you have understood that each element arises from a higher one, and that the whole world is actually one big process of condensation. Ether arises from the mind, air from ether, fire from air, water from fire and earth from water.

We add to this now that out of a Tanmatra (subtle element) arises a Bhuta (gross element). Let's have a closer look at this:

Tanmatra (subtle element)		Bhuta (gross element)
Subtle ether	>	Gross ether
V		V
Subtle air	>	Gross air
V		V
Subtle fire	>	Gross fire
V		V
Subtle water	>	Gross water
V		V
Subtle earth	>	Gross earth

So there are always two possibilities for the Shiva energy to condensate, on the one side from subtle to gross, on the other side from lighter element to heavier element. Which way is chosen now depends on the predominating Guna (condition) in the element itself. When the subtle ether for example is a little bit Tamas, gross ether arises, while with a little bit more Tamas, subtle air arises.

If we now turn the arrows between the elements 180 degrees and let them point up and to the left, then we will see a detailed image of Shakti.

Thus each time there are also two possibilities for the Shakti energy to rarefy, on the one side from gross to rare, on the other side from heavier element to lighter element. When the gross element water for example is a little bit Rajas, subtle water arises, with a little bit more Rajas the gross element fire arises.

When Sattva predominates in an element, its manifestation will be maintained.

Some experiments to proof all this?

Rub in your mother in law with paint, let's say latex paint, gold color is okay too, like with James Bond, and see how long she lasts. Not so long, you will notice, because the energy flows have simply been blocked by this paint. Even though she can breathe freely, she will still die. OK, just kidding!

Play very loud dance music, that's Rajas at the ether level, and you will see that people, involuntarily, become active automatically. Their arms and legs will start to move, and they will even be inclined to sing along. That's more fun, isn't it?

Realization of the gross element earth

If you have felt that the preceding indeed happened as described, you can now envisage the elements one by one yourself, starting with the earth, because that one is easier than the others.

Everybody knows the example of trees that decay, become brown coal and then pit-coal after many years, and much later even turn into diamonds! This directly gives an impression of what the gross element earth is. Something hard, that you should be careful not to bump into, because that hurts.

A wonderful example of realization here is the incident with Swami Yoga Anand from Nepal, who suddenly stood still along side a small river, during a walk in the Ardennes, squatted and started talking to the ground, and then stood on his head! Afterwards he explained to me that you must speak to the earth and ask him to be gentle to you. You can then perform the headstand in a more comfortable way. Of course I put this to the test and it was indeed like this. You can reduce the degree of hardness of solid matter!

The body of a Deva (god), and to a lesser extend that of a Yogi, is an example of the element earth in Sattva. At the death of the last one, if that happens after all, the corpse remains intact for a long time. For example two weeks after his death the body of Swami Yoganand, author of "Autobiography of a Yogi" was still not in decay. The tradition of the pharaohs, who wanted to proof their divinity by their non-decaying corpses, was probably based on this idea.

Also the construction of the pyramids in Egypt may have something to do with this. According to a French expert in 1987 they were mould from a carefully composed mix of local stones, sand and minerals, mixed with charcoal (there were still trees in that area at

that time), causing a Sattva predominance to arise. Some laborers, and not many thousands of them, as one tends to believe, for logically not feasible, would then each time, with the help of moulds, have constructed part of the structure, which can be recognized by the absence of mortar between the “stones”, the seamless connection of the “stones” with each other and the uniform texture of those “stones”, something that is impossible in nature. From my own investigation I can confirm all this. It’s right!

In January 2007 it has finally been proven by an American scientist.

I have also discovered the original purpose of a pyramid. It is not so much a tomb, but an amplifier of energy for the Yogi that sits on top of the pyramid. There is always about enough space for just one person! The pyramid attracts Shiva energy from heaven that ends up at the top. Just think about a lightning conductor. The Shakti energy is gathered from the earth and arises to that same top. So both energies join together at the top where the Yogi, who else, sitting in a pyramid shaped sitting posture, undergoes the enormous amplification of Sattvic energy, that enables him to experience the highest states of consciousness. So let’s quickly start building pyramids again!

To realize the earth element with Rajas predominance, you only have to take a look at precious metals like gold and silver. You will soon notice that they have a certain effect on you. Maybe you have noticed that wearing a golden ring on your ring finger stimulates loyalty, or that a golden medallion worn on the chest is good for people with a heart disease. The predominance of Tamas in earth can easily be neutralized by a precious metal. But beware of wearing golden jewelry when you are restless. You will then become even more restless!

We are most familiar with the earth element predominated by Tamas. It is a brick, sand or just soil from the field. When you have a sense of restlessness or you are sexually aroused at a moment that you do not need it, just sit down on the ground. That’s why we always practice on the ground in Yoga! On the other hand you must see to it that the element earth doesn’t pull you down too much, or even make you depressed. Brick houses, and even worse concrete houses, are so bad for our health! Let us try to find Sattvic materials to build our houses with, or be satisfied with wooden houses, which are the most comfortable houses if it comes to the quality of energy.

The gross element water

I will now try to show you how little you actually know about water. The most important characteristics of liquids, is that they always flow to the lowest point and in the process have a purifying result. On top of that they bind solid materials together easily. Most materials on earth contain water. Oceans dominate Three quarters of our planet. Live on earth is possible because of water. To get to know the element water can be done by the taste. Distinguish between sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and contracting when you taste something! In this way you learn to realize water.

I realized water myself once when I was about twelve to thirteen years of age, during a wonderful vacation on the Mediterranean close to Le Lavendou. It was warm. I was snorkeling and swam between two waters. The light of the sun reflected on the water and formed gracious lines everywhere. Suddenly I was overwhelmed by an intense sense of unity with the water. I was the water and the water was me. It was a moment of bliss that I will never forget. Ever since I have been in love with the water.

You can find water predominated by Sattva in your own body. It is plasma, the liquid in which white and red blood cells are bathing, that we usually call blood. About plasma it is indeed known that it can be stored for a long time in so-called blood banks. Except for real spring water I cannot provide you with an example of this type of water. By the way, did you ever drink real spring water, preferably straight from the source? Once I did so in the inlands of the isle of Corsica. It was during my service in the paratroops. We were exhausted and very thirsty because of the heavy exercises. Until we came across that source. It tasted fantastic! You should really try that once yourself! By the way, couldn't spring water be the plasma of the being earth? The holy-water basin at the entrance of the church is also supposed to contain Sattva water. But that seems to have been long forgotten.

On the other hand we may be provided with Sattva water by the tropical swimming paradises that warm their pool water.

Water predominated by Rajas is a phenomenon that we know as humidity arising from heat, out of which for example fog or steam arise and certain clouds, that grow in size.

Water predominated by Tamas is the most occurring form of water. Like tap water, and the water from the sea and the rivers. Condensation occurs here in the form of silt. It is a very good business indeed, if you are in charge of cleaning that up all the time. For it never stops. The Dutch dredging companies have cleverly jumped into that business. It is a little bit less pleasant if it also happens in your aquarium or in the pond in your garden. Fog caused by fall in temperature, rain clouds, rain, hail and snow are examples of water predominated by Tamas.

Annoying that this type of water pulls you down. But it is good of course when you have been out in the sun for too long on the beach.

The gross element fire

We know awfully little about the element fire in the west. Not one single physics or science book gives a satisfactory explanation for the fire phenomenon. All we know is that it has something to do with warmth.

From my own experience I have discovered that fire occurs when energy is drawn to the point of gravity of an object or body from where it cannot escape anymore, other than to explode.

Simply by increasing the pressure of an element in a limited space it is possible to make fire. This does not only apply to air, but also to earth, water and ether. Everybody knows the principle of self-combustion of the diesel engine.

By consciously generating a feeling of hatred towards a false teacher, which I had just met, I once generated six bolts of thunder on a certain day in Northern Spain, during a vacation. I asked my girlfriend of that time several times: "Shall I do it again?"

Hatred, you must know, causes an accelerated contraction of your heart center and as a result of that the element air contracts in an accelerated way as well. Would it then be really true that Jupiter's anger is the cause of lightning?

Thunder and lightning actually belong to Rajas predominated fire. Just take a good look at lightning. If you are sharp enough you will see that the flash doesn't come down but shoots up as fast as lightning. So fast that it looks as if it falls down! Now, to take this to the test is simple. You cannot evade a stroke of lightning, for it originates at the very spot where it falls down so to say. A flash-like electric light occurs with lightning.

But then what is Sattva predominated fire?

You can find it in the stomach. It is the gastric juice that is responsible for your digestion. And gastric juice doesn't break up, just like any other Sattva phenomenon. It maintains itself. The explosion is followed by a similar implosion that then causes another explosion and so on. Because of this going to and fro the food is being torn apart. There is no sound to be perceived.

Tamas predominated fire is that what we usually see as fire. It is the flame of a lit candle, a boiler or a match. You can see that it is a Tamas phenomenon by looking at the flame. The energy in the flame clearly flows upwards and narrows. Something that you cannot see clearly is that the energy from the halo of light around the tip of the flame slowly flows down again to create a kind of liquid at the base of the flame. You don't hear a thunderclap in this process, but a light crackling sound. Warmth is the result of this fire, as is light and colors.

A unique characteristic of fire is that it is able to propel energy upwards and because of that it can even transform an element into a higher type of element. Earth into water, water into fire, fire into air, air into ether...

In this way it is easier to understand the effect of fire in chemical reactions.

The gross element air

To get to know air is simple. Just go outside and feel the fresh morning air. It caresses your face and is pleasant, unless of course it is very cold. I myself have been able to experience the resistance of air during parachute jumping, and that resistance is very low. Much too low, especially when you are tumbling down, howling in a jump with full gear from a balloon at a height of 300 meter. Brrr. Fortunately I also made a few jumps in which I really enjoyed it. Especially that time in Germany when I jumped into a cloud, noticed surprised that it didn't break my speed at all and that I came out humid all over.

You don't have to jump parachute, however to learn to know the gross element air. Simply sticking out your hand from the window of a driving car to realize the pressure that air can have is sufficient.

Air in which Sattva predominates can be traced back in each cell of your body, if you are in harmony that is. But a study of rare gasses also helps to realize this phenomenon. Neon, Freon and consorts are stable gasses with an even number of electrons and protons. Indeed they have the characteristic that they can't break apart. Ah, yeah, that is indeed a characteristic of Sattva. In this way it is understandable that Sattva-air is jointly responsible for the preservation of our body.

We know air that is predominated by Rajas as wind. No problem to get to know this phenomenon in Holland. Interesting to notice is that the caress of the wind has an unequal pressure on your cheeks. That is an indication for the sphere-shaped appearance of air. An important result of the influence of this type of air is the spinning of the earth around its axis. Indeed, the earth spins under the influence of wind! The predominantly West to East winds cause a pressure on the earth in that direction. We can view this as the flows of Ida channels with Shiva energy. Opposite to that are the strong winds from East to West. These are the flows of Pingala channels with Shakti energy. People who sail boats know all about this. In primordial times people already knew how to use this by consciously sailing from Hawaii to South-America and back, just like the Kontiki experiment of Thor Heyerdahl has proved.

Air in which Tamas predominates can be found in many materials. These are the oxygen combinations in chemistry that are usually found together with hydrogen. Our atmosphere is also a good example of this type of air. Because of the effect of Tamas pressure occurs causing the element fire to appear in the form of warmth.

The gross element ether

Ether is especially known as sound. Something we don't know is that ether is responsible for space. This means that the energy flow of sound creates a space within which a further condensation can take place.

Ether can be best realized by listening.

Because we have just dealt with the phenomenon of wind, we might as well take that as an example. Just go outside. Can you hear the wind singing? Yes, but pay attention, that's what we call it. In fact you must try to understand that the singing is the observation of the ether, which is the cause of the wind, and not the result. Put it to the test? First you hear the wind and only afterwards it caresses your cheek, or not?

Above the atmosphere of the earth there is the Van Allen belt, discovered by Dutchman Van Allen. That is a layer that can cause quite some interruptions in the radio transmissions with space ships. Would that be the ether body of the earth?

Ether in which Sattva predominates occurs in people who are successful in their practice of Yoga. They have no problem whatsoever with expression. Their bodies easily allow any desirable movement. For there is space needed for this. Endurance is also a typical characteristic of ether with Sattva.

Ether with Rajas predominance is responsible for the occurrence of air with Rajas and thus for wind.

Ether with Tamas predominance creates room for each particle of material so that our earth with all her beings can become what she is.

The process of realizing the Tanmatra's (subtle elements)

The Tanmatra's originate from Manas, the mind, which condensates. There are of course five Tanmatra's, of the ether, of the air, of the fire, of the water and of the earth. They in turn are responsible for the existence of the five Bhuta's (gross elements). For normal people they are not easy to be perceived. But as soon as your eyesight clears up a little, it will happen.

It was an early morning in the Kalmthoutse forest above Antwerp. We had just finished a wonderful series of Asana's and prepared ourselves to return to the farm. Then suddenly I saw two big translucent balls of roughly 50 centimeter in diameter, side by side floating by through the air, at about 10 meter height and at the speed of the wind. And they were not air-balloons! The trees behind also showed a beautiful light-blue halo. In the same luminous way I could see the entire surroundings. Until a big black appearance came slowly walking up to me, at about seven, eight meter distance. He was about three meters tall and very gross. I was shocked by this appearance, felt threatened and the whole scene disappeared. I'm so certain it wasn't a dream. It was my first confrontation with the subtle elements, namely the subtle element of the ether, which we tend to call elves in fairy tales. Those were the balls of 50 centimeter in diameter. The halo around the trees was simply the ethereal body of those trees. And maybe that giant was a troll, I don't know. I didn't go back to the Kalmthoutse forest.

Only with our dream-eyes or through the observation from our subtle body can we realize the Tanmatra's.

Do you want to be able to this too?

OK, then you have to practice Yoga, as described in my books, or even better, participate in my courses for a couple of years.

Swami Yogeshvananda Sarasvati gives a number of important tips to be successful in the realization of the subtle elements.

To learn to know the subtle element earth you do by practicing Samyama (concentration-meditation-contemplation at the same time) on the Jnanendriya of the earth, we know as smell. In the beginning it suffices to just concentrate on the nose. That will automatically guide you to the cause of your smell organ.

To realize the subtle element water you do by a similar Samyama exercise, but now on your tongue. The realization of the subtle element fire you do by putting your attention in the tips of your fingers. And the realization of the element ether is done using the external ears as the object of your concentration.

From now on you can also pay special attention to the colors that fit with you. Stand in front of the mirror and look at your body, where the subtle body is, with its own colors, and then look at the color that you have chosen. If a click occurs the color fits with you, with your subtle body that is. If not, you continue your search. You can apply this with new clothes but also when you choose a new car, and also with sounds, for example when you are searching a new ring tone for your mobile phone. Make it a habit to pay attention to these kinds of things.

Once you have acquired the ability of subtle observation, you will start to experience the world in another way. That is called an initiation, because it seems like as if you have to learn everything anew, how to function and so on. By the way, this is actually called the first initiation.

Some realizations pertaining to Vijnanamaya Kosha (the intellect sheath)

Prajna Loka (the light of knowledge)

This white light arises during meditation caused by Sattva in Manas and in the fire element within Ajna Cakra. You then become receptive for higher knowledge. You get a sense of: “I know”.

As a marketing specialist I already had such a feeling. When I was asked whether a certain new product would stand a chance on the market, I was able to respond quickly. Sometimes, when I was not able to respond, I would take a walk and try to imagine how passers-by would react if I would present them that new product. Immediately I would then “see” them react and I knew the answer. In practice I was almost always right.

However, I did learn to be careful with this gift when I went to a Chinese take-away restaurant in the Binnen Bantammerstraat in Amsterdam. An old Chinese man served me. I had to wait for my order and saw a Buddha statue against the wall. To act socially I asked the old man: “Are you a Buddhist?” and immediately added: “Yes, I know everything about it for I’m teaching Yoga”.

I will always remember his answer. He just said: “You think you know”.

First I wanted to strangle him, I was so mad, but quickly I realized the wisdom of his remark. I felt in my pocket, found a fifty-guilder note and gave it to him out of gratitude.

The next time I took out some food from this restaurant I asked for the old man. He seemed to have passed away.

Jnana Netra (the eye of wisdom)

This is the condition that is characterized by for example the observation through the third eye, that is to say the working of the eyesight from the Sattvic subtle fire element within Ajna Cakra. A lot of legends tell us about this. Like the god Rudra, who used this third eye too to burn the god of love to ashes. But the other clear-abilities can manifest themselves as well.

Anandamaya Kosha (the bliss sheath)

When Tamas dominates in Karana Sharira (the causal body) a sense of bliss can come over us. That is the condition that we call Anandamaya Kosha. To be able to do this at will is typical for highly advanced Yogi. Jesus too was able to do this. That is the reason why he is also referred to as the anointed, the Christ.

When Rajas dominates in Karana Sharira we call it Hiranyamaya Kosha (the golden sheath). Characteristic of this is an unusually high intelligence. A good example of this is Gautama, our last Buddha. That is why he is mostly portrayed in gold.

The energy of the causal body is faster than time. Therefore it stands above form. And although we have schematically portrayed this sheath as a kind of sphere in the Yin Yang model, the bliss sheath is actually different. It is very difficult to imagine that at this very moment this energy is already in the future, or that she could move herself directly to the past, no matter how far. But don't we say that love is forever and never perishes? That no distance is too long for love? When you are heavily in love, it is then that you can feel that the whole world is penetrated by your love. It seems like a pink cloud in which you live. Pure bliss!

The parts of Karana Sharira (the causal body)

Except for Anandamaya Kosha and Hiranyamaya Kosha as being the two aspects of Karana Sharira, also Ahamkara, Buddhi and Citta are in the causal body, but then as local phenomena.

The fact that Swami Yogeshvarananda Sarasvati quotes that Brahman, Prakriti, Atman and Brahmarandhra are also part of it practically means that through Karana Sharira you can become familiar with these phenomena.

The origin of human life

A very long time ago, man arose from a Vasana (subtle desire). You can look at this Vasana as a Samskara (impression) that came to live very slowly. It started living in us, but then more like a latent, subcutaneous desire. Maybe we were not even aware of it.

The Tamas nature of the subtle desire has had dramatic consequences for the changes of the condition of our being. Being Sattvic at first we were then gradually dominated by Tamas. At least until now, but not for long if you continue like this.

It is only through the contact with a very slight sense of Ahamkara, the I, that the entire, poisoned and terrifying ocean of Samsara (the world process) washes up in front of the soul, when all sensations of the world process materialize, Swami says.

The duty of man

Only by becoming a sacrifice on the altar of life and to come to the godly, luminous Purusha (spirit), can you obtain the highest satisfaction. The waters of the milk-like ocean of bliss will wash the impurity away of your sense of I-ness, and the fire of the devotion for Brahman will burn away the crust of your egoism. Your luminous soul, which is filled with knowledge, will beam.

So let's play our role in life with a happy smile and with courage. At the same time we must go to work very cautious and careful and constantly try to maintain a spirit of detachment. In this way we will make our lives successful.

Description of Atman (the Self)

Above Karana Sharira we enter into an energy body that we call Atman. At least that's how we can imagine it, pictured in the Yin Yang model. For a long time I have been searching for it using my mind. And in the same way as with the causal body, I found it at the moment that I was not searching. It just came suddenly and I understood.

One day a scribe asked Buddha how to find Atman. Buddha shouted him the famous answer in his Pali language: "Anatta! Anatta! Anatta!" or "There is no Atman! There is no Atman! There is no Atman!" But all the man understood from this exclamation was that Buddha did not accept the conception of Atman, while Buddha in fact pointed him the most relevant way to Atman. Don't create tension, don't keep yourself occupied with it, it will come to you, he maybe should have added. Anyway, the man returned home, frustrated, and a rupture occurred within Yoga and eventually Buddhism was banned from India. By whom do you think? By the scribes, of course, with whom Jesus would also get into trouble. See here, it is always the same: history repeats itself!

For me in anyway it was very difficult to change from the limitations of the mind, from "wanting" to "receiving". And also to trust that it happens!

In 1986 I sat in meditation in the basement of the Prins Hendrikkade 146 in Amsterdam. The school was located there in the beginning. It was pretty quiet and I was alone. Suddenly out of the air sounded a wonderful choir of voices, singing the word "Unmani". Three times this Sanskrit word was repeated, each time ending in a very high i-sound,

impossible to be equaled by man. It seemed like angels singing, accompanied by heavenly music.

I was so shocked by the happening that at first I didn't want anything to do with it. Later I slowly started to investigate. Maybe the word did have a meaning after all! It took me two years to find out that "Unmani" meant thoughtlessness. It was mentioned in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Quite a student you might say!

But then the message was clear. I had to stop considering the mind to be so important. But that is difficult!

Real realization of what Atman is I was fortunate enough to experience in various ways years later, long after I indeed got my mind under control.

I had a dream at night. I was setting up two pillars, standing next to each other. I put stone upon stone and got higher and higher. Then I was to let the stones arch towards each other, just like when you build a bridge. Then, when I put the last stone in place, in between the two half arches, it suddenly appeared as if everything was one! This was such a delightful feeling, that ever since I have forsaken the world of the duality, which is so normal to common people.

All nice and beautiful, but what now is this condition of Atman?

The best way for me to describe it is as a condition of total Sattva of all your energies, centers as well as bodies and sheaths. Because of this omnipresent prevailing harmony there is not only a sense of one-ness within your own being, but also with the rest of the world.

Because of the burning of more and more Samskara's (impressions) the consecutive characteristics manifest themselves: Satya Kalpa (true resolve), Satya Kama (true desires), Apta Kama (satisfaction of all desires), Niskama (desireless-ness) and Akama (devoid of desires).

In consequence all the Klesha's (afflictions) and Vasanas (subtle desires) come to an end. The way to Jivanmukti (liberation in this life) stands open to you. There is nothing left for you that you still have to learn to know. You let go of the idea "I am this body", because you have had a taste of the sense of one-ness with the universe.

Only through contact with the light of the Divine, as it is, you will enter into the ocean of undoubtable, supreme knowledge; and in the unlimited, unfathomable deep ocean of bliss, you will find the calm water that leads to ecstasy, enrapturing, utterly soft and delightful, that offers power, knowledge and light and removes the misery of this world.

Means of enjoyment and liberation

This is, in fact, Antahkarana (the internal organ). Only by restoring the coordination between them and building a strong collaboration of all the parts of your being will you be able to reach enjoyment and release. Because your whole being and consequently your

Antakarana originate from Prakriti (matter), while reaching enlightenment you also settle the battle with Prakriti, that kept you imprisoned in the matter.

Release from bondage

Scribes think that they can reach release by the study of Holy Scriptures. To bad for them, but it doesn't work like that. It is practice that will lead you to achieve deliverance. Only when you have gradually realized all the principles, you will obtain the highest bliss. Only after realizing that everything is misery you will be a wise man. Practice of Para Vairagya (supreme detachment) will be of most help in that last part. When you connect that to the different kinds of Samadhi you will gain control over your causal body and Sattva will occur at that level. That on its turn will be the cause for the manifestation of Ritambhara (carrier of truth and justice) in which Buddhi's functioning is perfect through which you can use Viveka Khyati (discrimination) to come to Self-realization. From experience I know that in the end you have to practice Samyama (concentration-meditation-contemplation at the same time) intensively to solidify the achieved Sattva. Otherwise chances are considerable that you will relapse.

Realization of the colors and forms of Citta

But after all the previous we haven't quite arrived yet where we want to be. Still a number of problems may arise in your Brahmarandhra, especially in Citta (memory).

We know that Citta is a local causal phenomenon in which Sattva occurs, say like a kind of white screen on which impressions come to live that grow into forms and colors, which then cause images to occur. Even though you now have control over Citta and you are capable of terminating the Vrittis, still it can happen that you will see the start of Vrittis, the forms and colors, involuntarily arising in your Citta. Annoying!

What do you do about that?

The colors that you sometimes see during your contemplation give rise to delight. They are so beautiful! Realize that they indicate the presence of either Rajas or Tamas in Citta and you don't want that, do you?

To get rid of them you must first determine whether the colors are warm, like red, orange and yellow, which indicate Rajas. If that's the case you let a little bit more Shiva energy enter your being. In case the colors are cold, like green, blue or gray it means there is Tamas in your Citta. In that case you let a little bit of Shakti energy enter your being. Only when you don't get other colors other than white you are done with this disturbance.

The form-changes in Citta are like flashes, which come through the seemingly white field of Citta. You try to see those first. Then you look at how and when those changes take place. You will soon notice that they arise with each thought. More than that, you will

even see “growth” in them! Successively these are Dharma (pertaining to its nature), Lakshana (characteristics) and Avastha (pertaining to its state).

When the Samskara (impression) in Citta is brought to life you can feel him, perceive its mood. The subtlest change of form then takes place. That is called Dharma (nature). Almost immediately after that Dharma gets offshoots, like the branches of a tree. Then we call the change of form Lakshana (characteristic), because the first outlines of the thought then become visible. Eventually the full-grown thought appears caught in the nets of your consciousness. That then is called Avastha (state / condition) because this new thought brings your consciousness in another state. After you have seen and understood all this, you can successfully trace this to Sattva. As soon as you notice that one of them emerges in your consciousness you interfere. Simply by forgoing the desire to think and to prefer the observation, which is Sattva. Do you understand this? In this way you can improve the quality of your concentration considerably.

The realization of the second modification of Citta

You have advanced considerably in the purification of your being as a preparation for your Brahmandhra. You have become very sharp too. That is good, because you still have something important left to “do”!

Except for the relatively natural changes described before you can pay attention to the subcutaneous streams in Citta. It looks like the current that can be found right under the dead calm surface of a lake, caused by the inflow of water from a brook higher up. It is barely visible, but still it is there. It is the energy that comes from Atman! Quite interesting indeed, because when you follow it upstream, you will automatically arrive at Atman!

The realization of knowledge and action

From Atman you are aware of capriciousness in the milky white Citta. That is an indication of the activity of Citta. That movement leads to Kriya (action). The awareness of that movement is Jnana (knowledge). It is difficult to accurately distinguish between Kriya and Jnana because they so quickly merge with each other. In Jnana soft light emanates quickly, that pervades you completely up to the periphery of your being. Eventually you will be able to determine that knowledge arises through the contact of Citta with the Self.

Realization of various facts

What is the prop and support of your being?

The Sattvic nature of your Atman, to be precise Jivatman, is responsible for the cohesion of your being. This Sattvic basis brings a constant in the many movements of your energy. It works just like a battery and enables you to constantly produce vital power.

Especially Citta helps Atman with this process. This is the force of which there is mention in Star Wars.

To be certain that you are not deluded while seeing all these phenomena, you can check in the following way. Does what you see feel familiar? Does it seem like as if you have always known it? Then you are on the right track. If the result of your check is negative you go back to “start”, check if there are some things to be improved on your purity and start again.

The realization of the Samskara’s (impressions)

To realize your impressions it is best to go into Asmita Samadhi (contemplation on sheer being). That is ideal to view Citta. To do this you choose a matter that seriously disturbs you at that moment, for example sex. Immediately it seems as if you see a discoloration on the white screen of Citta, something dark. In my case, the day that I did this exercise for the first time it was very dark, sticky, like tar. But it doesn’t matter. Keep contemplating, neutrally observing, with your attention on that sense of being. Then you will see that dark spot slowly turn into a lighter color. Then, when everything is white again, you are ready, at least for that day. For it appears that you have to repeat this exercise regularly if you want to get rid of a problem.

Realize that you gather Samskara’s with each observance, each action and each emotion and even with each thought and mood. Do you realize that you are busy all day obtaining impressions? Especially when you watch TV, operate a computer or read the newspaper. All those impressions stack up in your being, beside all the impressions of your previous lives. All together quite a lot! So it is evident that it takes a little while before you have burned all of them.

A Samskara (impression) that has been awakened causes a whirl of energy that we call Smriti (memory). That on its turn produces a Vritti (thought). This subtle process is directly comparable to the material process of a generated DNA that causes a temporary RNA phenomenon, after which a protein arises in our body.

What does a Samskara look like?

For practical reasons I always imagine a Samskara as being a scratch or a hook in a stream of energy. But of course that is a little bit too simple. A Samskara is actually a new energy connection that occurs between Ida (the Shiva channel) and Pingala (the Shakti channel) caused by a collision of a Vritti with the original energy flow. You can compare it with a stroke in a carpet caused by a sharp object. Those are the little bridges between the two helixes of the DNA model.

Such a Samskara can grow through the energy flowing through Ida and/or Pingala. Of course this always happens caused by the dominating energy flow of that very moment. What is of great concern is that energy of the original flow is leaked by these little bridges, which can cause a shortage of energy downstream in the first channel and a surplus of energy upstream in the other channel. When the shape of the little bridge more

and more starts to look like a bow, the leaking of energy becomes more and more bothersome. It then looks like the exit on a highway. It becomes even more bothersome if, caused by the speed of the energy, a roundabout comes into being, because then the energy has the tendency to remain on that roundabout instead of in the two original channels. As a consequence a complete weakening of the original energy flow can then occur. This then is what we call a disease for example, causing death. But such an energy ball is also a new being, with a separate consciousness, a human or a celestial body, it is the same everywhere!

Samskara's and Guna's

When Samskara's disrupt the original energy flow, it can lead to deformation of the course of that double helix.

Let's suggest that a Samskara drains the Shiva flow. Then it is very possible that further downstream of the Ida channel there is less Shiva energy available compared to the amount of Shakti in the neighboring Pingala channel. An expansion of the double helix then occurs that we call Rajas.

In the same vein, when the Shakti flow is drained by a Samskara, it is very possible that downstream of the Pingala channel there is less Shakti available as compared to the amount of Shiva present in the neighboring Ida channel. A contraction of the double helix then occurs that we call Tamas.

When Tamas or Rajas persist for too long, an irregularity occurs in the rhythmic pulsations, the cosmic breathing of our energy bodies.

This can best be compared to a rope that is being twisted too much into one direction: at a certain moment a knot will occur in the rope. Not so bad in itself, except that the energy flow becomes more and more difficult. Just try this with a garden hose and see what happens.

The irregularity causes harm to our condition and vitality. We lose strength and become tired more easily. Disease can occur, especially when there is a rupture.

Cancer is a special case. The reason is a long persisting desire that is also frustrated, comparable with a rupture being caused in the energy flow. With desire, Rajas appears in Ahankara. The powerful Mamatva Vritti (my-ness) dominates. If the energy, which remains in contraction for a long time, still tries to return back to her normal course, she can derail at the point of the rupture caused by the frustration. The energy then gets a new but chaotic course. A Granthi (knot) or tumor then arises, eventually with Arbuda (cancer) as a result.

Indifference towards the Samskara's

It is a general rule that during your life and certainly during your Yoga practice you don't pay attention to your Samskara's, because if you do, you only strengthen them. You understand? So get rid of all the sofas and psychiatrists where you constantly have to unload your misery!

Maintain an attitude of indifference towards your Samskara's.
All right, you've got them, so what? Just get on with your life. With Yoga you burn as many annoying Samskara's as possible. For the rest you just let them slowly gather dust.

The burnt-up state of the Samskara's

How does the burning of Samskara's actually work?

As long as you have a disproportionate amount of Shiva and Shakti energy flow, the little bridges and balls between Ida and Pingala will only become bigger. Only when you are able to flow an equal amount of Shiva and Shakti energy, preferably as fast as possible, there is a chance that the little bridges and balls will be smashed away. This is called burning of Karma, because the acceleration often causes collisions that can create warmth.

It was in the night of 5 May 2003 on a camping in Southern France. I couldn't sleep. Restlessly I tossed and turned. The Rummicup game of that night continued to go on. I must have been around 5 o'clock in the morning, I think.

Suddenly Dr. Sharma was standing in front of me. I immediately asked myself if it wasn't my imagination. But then he said that it was really he and that he wanted to have a word with me... I reacted with: "How nice of you to come and visit me!" I did not however get a chance to say more than that.

He told me that in the past he had tried to make it clear to me that I had to detach, but that I didn't get it. My students of that time did however. That's the reason why they followed him and left me. They had "understood" or felt intuitively that he was right. That was the path of Self-realization. But I reacted egoistically when I saw that they left "my" school and I became mad at him. I found the means more important than the goal. At that moment I thought that the school that could bring the people to heaven was more important than heaven itself. Suddenly everything became clear to me.

"But," I asked him, "why didn't you tell me this immediately so I would not have wandered so far away?"

"I couldn't," he said, "because the detachment wouldn't have been complete. It would have turned into a mere mental game."

How stupid I had been. I immediately reset myself into complete detachment. Not only from my school, but also from him, myself and everything. I felt the liberation arise in me and was sure that success was now possible for my school.

Then he asked me to come with him to the river.

"Why?" I reacted not understanding. "Do I have to literally stand up or do I go with you in thought?" "No, in thought would be sufficient." Although I felt that he'd rather have me literally come with him.

At the river I had to completely go under water.

"May all your sins be washed away by the water of the river!" he said.

It felt like a heavy burden was taken of my shoulders.

He then told me to become one with the water and to say: "I am the water."

This gave me a delightful feeling.

“Now look at this flame” he said, “and feel the warmth.”

I looked and felt.

“Now completely become one with the flame and become the fire.”

I did as told and again I felt delightful.

He also deliberately made me say, “I am the fire!” Just like an initiation rite I thought.

“Now feel the wind blowing.”

That too was gorgeous.

“I am the air” he made me determine.

My body had no weight anymore and floated around freely.

“Do you hear the sound?” he asked me. Yes, indeed, I heard the familiar rush of Nada. The suggestion alone was already enough to hear it.

“Become one with the sound!” he demanded.

I did as told, and now too I was to speak out the explicit confirmation: “I am the sound.”

Wow, what a space that created!

“Do you know that there is only one thought?” he asked.

“No, I didn’t think so” I answered in surprise.

That then must be A-U-M I thought in passing.

“Become one with the thought” he asked me and it became silent in my head.

“I am the thought” I had to say.

Everything became clear. Then I had to follow him into the void.

I don’t remember when we came back. I do remember that he finally told me: “Now you sleep in peace”. I do remember I clambered out of bed and thanked him and asked him for forgiveness, in a rolled-up-like-a-leaf posture. I then fell asleep like a log with an intense sense of satisfaction.

Only much later I understood that the exercise, that resembles the above vision, is in fact the Samyama on the Indriya’s as it is described in the Yoga Sutra’s of Patanjali, Chapter III, Verse 48. In that exercise you take as successive objects of concentration the tip of your nose as the entrance to purify the element earth, your tongue to purify water, your eyes to purify fire, your fingertips to purify air and your ears to purify ether. The application of this exercise has very impressive consequences with me: insecurity, doubt and fear (impurities of the earth) diminish, I don’t feel the sensitivity in the left kidney anymore (water), eyesight improves (fire), condition of the skin and hair improves (air), and the knot in the throat disappears (ether).

What is the nature of Ananda (Bliss)?

There is something curious during the burning of Samskara's. It often feels very delightful. By the way, working on the Samskara's in general does so too. That is because your consciousness then is at causal level and becomes aware of the Samskara's that are generated. As they are yours, Ahamkara will start to function. So you related that feeling to yourself. This is what is called Bhoga (enjoyment). When you experience this intensely you get a sense of bliss. This then is called Ananda. It is like as if you are being massaged with oil or ointment. Every successful Yoga practitioner or mystic knows this sensation. In Greek it is called "Christos", hence the nickname of Jesus. In Yoga there are quite a few Swamis (masters) who carry Ananda in their names.

Many people find Ananda awesome, especially because it is so delightful. Because of that they want to remain in this condition permanently. Of course that is fine, but you must realize that when the sense of bliss decreases, it actually means that the largest part of your Samskara's have burned up. At that very point you should not try to feel Ananda anymore, but instead gradually switch to the sense of Shanti (peace). The sense of Ananda is a Tamas phenomenon at causal level. The sense of Shanti is a Sattva related phenomenon. In that last stage Jnana (knowledge) occurs. And that is clearly better than just enjoyment or bliss.

Be aware of the fact that in this process there are three consecutive conscious realizations:

1. "Aham tat Asmi" or "That is me";
2. "Aham Asmi" or "I am";
3. "Asmi" or "Am"

This is how the transformation from Ananda to Shanti takes place in you.

However, as long as one of the Guna's (Tamas, Rajas or even Sattva) remains active in you, there is movement in your being. This movement activates the Prana's, which raises the chances that you incur Samskara's.

Realization of the subtle and causal bodies apart from the physical body

When you notice the effect of the activated Samskara's on your subtle body, while your gross body at the same time feels like as if it were a block of wood, then you realize that very subtle body. It feels like a mental or emotional boiling on the inside, before your physical body is able to suppress that feeling.

At the same time you can notice that Samskara's somewhere inside are being brought to life. When this causes a new mood to arise in you it is a realization of the causal body.

You can also realize your subtle body as a massive luminous light, with which it seems as if the whole surroundings are being illuminated by this light. In that event you do not experience a physical state anymore.

Individual bondage

During the realization of the gross, subtle and causal bodies you will notice that you remain bonded to the respective observations, for example that your experience of light limits you to just that light. You cannot go beyond that. The contraction and expansion of energy ties you down, however pleasant that may be. How can we solve this?

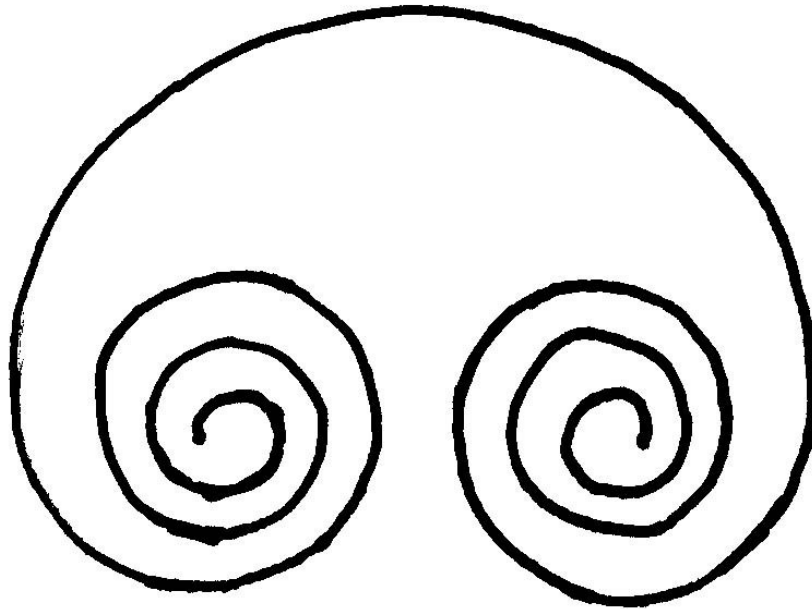
Finding the passage in the sheaths and the bodies

The time has now arrived to finish your Brahmarandhra (the cavity of Brahman), for it is the power of the Most High only that can free you from the prison of matter. You must succeed to get his power through your being to burn all the remaining Samskara's. Maybe you have already understood that you can hardly or not at all do this job all by your self.

The way to do this is to observe the functioning of all your bodies, sheaths, centers and functions. The foregoing realizations will help with this. Because observation is based on Sattva, everything inside you becomes quieter, and slowly but certainly all the movements cease to occur. Except patiently waiting for the Lord you can also invoke him:

“Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name
Thy kingdom come.”

To find passage the following can maybe be of help to you too.
In November 1989 I heard a very intense sound all night long, together with a beautiful vision. It was a dream, but it felt very real.



A beautiful, gracious Mandala appeared before me. It existed out of a small stream that went from left to right and trembled lightly. Whenever the stream reached the end of the spiral it started over again. The stream would again make a left spiral that went to the right. The stream made a sound as it were. Incessantly it sounded loud, clear and deep:

“A-R-T-H-A M-A-T-R-A”

The “R” sounded clearly guttural and rolling. The “A” sounded like as if it came out of the beginning of the left spiral, rolling out with the “R” and reached the top of the stream on the left side with the “T”. At the connection between the two spirals “A” and “M” sounded. That then went over into the top of the right spiral with again a “T”. After which the right spiral rolled up with “R” and ended with “A”. It continued like this all night.

When I woke up in the morning I was exhausted, but of course I will never forget this Mantra ever in my life. Or was it supposed to be like that? And, after all, what does it actually mean? After a lot of searching I came to the following conclusion: “Essence-Matter” or “Connecting of essence with matter”, in which the essence goes together with emotional value and the matter with friendliness.

This Mantra together with its beautiful Mandala, reflect my task in this life and the method I have to use.

As long as I identify myself with my school and my students this task and method apply also to you, attentive reader.

Therefore I present you with all my heart this Mantra and Mandala.

Realization of Viveka Khyati (discriminative understanding)

The instrument that you use in this last stage is Buddhi, but then of course Buddhi in harmony. The ability of Buddhi in that condition is called Viveka Khyati (discriminative understanding).

Patanjali defines this as the ability to discriminate between Purusha (soul) and Prakriti (matter or primordial matter). It is the highest state of discriminative understanding that is also known as Turya (alertness).

In 1996 I understood what alertness means. It is nothing less than the sword of discriminative power.

It was again at night that I was dreaming.

I stood opposing a big dark wall and bumped into it. It was slippery and very hard. I just couldn't go through it.

Suddenly a beautiful medieval sword appeared before and above me. It shone and sparkled and seemed to be made of gold. Its haft was turned upwards while the blade pointed down. As by itself, the haft came down and fell into my hand.

Without hesitation I raised my arm and forcefully thrust the sword into the wall. During which I loudly cried out:

A-R-T-H-A M-A-T-R-A

To my surprise the blade went in like in butter.

Clearly I received here a clarification, because I kept on colliding with the hardness of the duality in my life as a human and my work as a teacher. I had to use discriminative power with the application of my Mantra. I would then easily solve all the problems. And that's how it happened.

The classic exercise that helps you to achieve this discriminative power is Nirvicara Samadhi. This is an ecstatic form of viewing in which you recall an intense "Wow!" experience, just like when you see something beautiful. The difficulty in this exercise is to maintain this ecstasy for a long time. And that depends on the extent to which Citta is Sattvic.

Viparyaya (wrong knowledge) and Vikalpa (imagination)

When you are not completely pure yet you have to pay close attention to wrong knowledge and imagination. They create a lot of problems and only with the persistent precision of a real scientist, each time again observing, testing, checking and check again, can you put a halt to this. Each realization that I had was only short, but often they were followed by years of research. I have always rationalized everything and often doubted myself. A healthy doubt, that forced me to investigate, for many years.

At a certain point you then get a sense as if you have understood "it", that everything is clear, that there is nobody who can tell you how things work. From that moment on your judgment is, almost, always right.

A complimentary phenomenon that shows that you have indeed come that far is the experience of Dharma Megha (the cloud of virtue) during your contemplation.

The first time I experienced Dharma Megha was not so romantic. At that time I studied Sanskrit with professor Roodbergen. Every week he visited our Yogaschool in Amsterdam.

The night before one of the classes I suddenly saw words during a dream in a strange, flourishing hand, that were not the familiar Nagari characters. In this dream I was told that these were verbs. Strange enough they all ended with the letter-i. That I could notice. Then I saw very swift, following up, but still at the same time, clearly 3000 of those words. Indeed! At the same time! And I was able to count them accurately. There were 3000 of them!

The next day of course I asked professor Roodbergen what the meaning of this could be. He listened very attentively and asked me if I had read the grammar of Panini, because it contained 3000 Sanskrit verbs in its appendix that all end with an i. I had never heard of this mister Panini and I also hadn't had a chance to read his grammar, I told him. I could tell he didn't believe a word of what I said.

The observation of images and objects at the same time is typical for Dharma Megha, because you actually look at the Samskara's, and that can be as quick as lightning.

The logical sequence of Svarupa Sthiti (essential nature)

In conclusion we can say that the practice of Nirvicara Samadhi, with its sense of ecstasy, provides a greater purity as a result of the burning of the Samskaras that is caused by it. The condition of Viveka Khyati (discriminative power) is then the logical result. And if you continue to practice this regularly in your daily life, Dharma Megha (cloud of virtues) will one day appear naturally. Just as a present!

It was in a meditation, I think it was in 1993, that I suddenly heard a voice. It seemed like the voice of my real mother, not my biological mother, who called: "Ajiita! Ajiita! Ajiita!" as if she was saying: "Come quick, dinner is ready!"

My whole being was deeply touched by this. Although my first thought was "What a strange name is this!" I could clearly feel that this sound, with a long i-sound, that drove me to the wall, belonged to me, or even better, that I was that sound!

Of course I had to think it over for quite a while before I cut the knot and decided to adopt the name "Ajita" instead of Philippe Barbier. I remember that a click occurred when I learned about the meaning of the word: "Invincible". Yes, that is great! Or will that old haughtiness crop up once again? Anyway, especially when I additionally learned that this word reflects a characteristic of Atman, like many words in Sanskrit that start with an A, and that Bodhisattva's (apprentice-Buddha's) are often adorned with this, it was easy for me. From now on I was "Ajita".

Remarkably ever since I've always had the feeling that carrying the name Ajita enabled me to be myself more than before.

As a consequence of this event it has become a tradition in our school that when a student has a similar experience and thinks that it is serious, he puts a note on the bulletin board with his new name with the date that he received it, and his old name, as a message to the world, and then tests for a full year whether this name really matches with him. Only when the new name continues to give the student a fuller, better feeling, he will adopt that new name.

A big mistake would be to desire to these higher spiritual situations. This creates a tension, which thoroughly disturbs these situations. So you just need to be patient! And if it appears that you cannot experience anything anymore, you'll have to check whether you are, somewhere, doing something wrong. You'll then go through all eight steps of Patanjali again, all the way from the beginning. Surely you will find something.

Bhoga (enjoyment)

Correct practice of Yoga leads thus to Bhoga. According to the Sankhya philosophy the exact meaning of this word is: "The form, which is an experience of the desirable and undesirable objects". This means "the form adopted by the energy, with the awakened Samskara."

In practice you can keep an eye on this from the beginning. Do you have fun doing your Sadhana (practice)? Do you enjoy the fact that you can do that particular exercise again? Okay, then you can continue. But if you do not enjoy it, you have lost Sattva. Then it is better to stop immediately. Anything you do without pleasure is counterproductive in Yoga. Better to try again next time then.

This enjoyment cannot be compared to the enjoyment of the senses. The intensity of the enjoyment with this spiritual enjoyment is many times larger than normal enjoyment. It is much deeper and remains much longer. That is the paradise.

Aparvarga (release or liberation)

Now the worst thing is still to come. You have done a lot of effort to come this far. Finally you enjoy Paradise. Then the guide tells you: "If you are able now to forsake Bhoga you will go towards the liberation."

That is the ultimate test. It is a matter of proving that you no longer have Samskara's that are strong enough to tie you down.

Sacrifice your heart to the Most High; you will then be released from Samsara (the wheel of re-birth). Nothing can tie you down. Not even your own self-image. This is called Yajna (sacrifice). But that is just reasoning, my reasoning.

To get an idea of liberation a letter written by my student Martin Hommes on October 7th 2004 might make things clear:

“Quite a lot has happened since we met in March, when the school existed 20 years. I then told you about how during a healing session I saw a very intense white light with a fantastic energy in which I saw Jesus. After that experience I was able to experience that energy more and more in daily life and also see that light again, within the normal light. In April however, during a short holiday in Spain, I saw it there too, which made me realize that it is everywhere (how naïve can one sometimes be in these kinds of matters!). Only from that moment on I started to ask myself what it actually was that I saw in that light. Well, from that moment on things developed quite swiftly. In that light I saw the duality of things fade away. Everything becomes one. And this whole is coming in as a one total experience. And it comes in very deep inside!

After a while I realized myself that I myself was also a part of it and that’s when I stopped sensing tension between the environment and myself.

Later I also stopped sensing the tension between God and myself. That’s when things were done.

I don’t experience myself as a “me” anymore. The identification with the body has ceased and with it also the identification with all mental constructions. Actually I can’t tell you anymore about it, because with every attempt to try to put it into words I feel like as if I am just missing the point. Still this is actually the only thing left that I want to talk about. I just call it awareness.

It is quite remarkable that I cannot even tell whether all these years of Yoga practice have led to this, or even have something to do with it at all, even though it does enable me to recognize and name it.

Suddenly it was there, just like when for the first time you realize: “Ah, is that meditation! So simple!” And yes, this is even simpler than meditation or anything else. I can’t believe I didn’t see this before. Unbelievable. I have been looking for this for all my life and now that I am there it feels like as if I have always been busy resisting it. It is so simple! There is only peace, peace. And that in a sort of a sense of bliss. So simple. Just stop with the identification with the body and everything fades away.

Listen, of course I’m still in the duality sometimes. Pretty much actually, because the cancer pulls me back into my body. But I can get out of it again pretty easily. Very easy...

Wonderful, huh? I just call it liberation, because that’s how it feels. You become as light as a feather. A pleasant side effect is that because of this, the Sutras from Patanjali end up in totally different perspective. For example that to stop with identifying with the body comes before Anima. As liberation comes entirely at the end, so it also stands at the beginning. This makes the circle round. Because of this the Yama’s come to stand much more in the light of the relationship with the environment. Because when you are out of the duality but still in the body, you will have to relate with your environment and because of that the Yama’s get an entirely new color. Well, like this I could go on and on.”

The vision of Hiranyamaya Kosha (the golden sheath)

Only once, many years ago, I was lucky to have experienced the golden sheath. It was during a contemplation exercise, although I don't exactly remember which one it was. Anyway, the image of my body suddenly appeared before me. It wasn't the pure kind of gold but more like a kind of old gold. And it felt gorgeous, until deep into my toes. Around my body was a halo of yellow light of about 20 to 25 cm thick, and around my head it was almost double that size. The experience lasted for up to 5 minutes. Way too short, of course!

In anyway I now understood why Buddha is usually pictured in gold.

The experience of 'I-am'

This happened when for the second time I was to experience Dharma Megha during a contemplation exercise. The intense feelings of friendliness, softness, loveliness and a couple of other nice characteristics arose in me all at once. The realization that accompanied this was that of a sense of "That am I". I had never thought that I was so friendly and lovely. But now I had to admit it. I am indeed like that. Now I can also better understand my aggression. The toughness of people had frustrated my friendly nature.

The vigorous search of the spiritual world

This isn't all so very difficult, or is it?

The essence of the problem lies in perseverance and continuation. It costs a lot of energy, to keep yourself occupied with Yoga for many years to come. In this process it is the voice in your heart that leads you, not the voice in your head. And it is exactly that voice that will tell you when it is time to stop "doing", when it is time to start "receiving".

Abhaya Dhama (the fearless abode)

How can you be certain that you have made a lot of progress in your spiritual development? By simply looking at the extent of fear that you still have. Are you still afraid? Then you still have a lot of work to do. Are you almost not afraid anymore? Then you have made progress.

Fear arises because of breaches in your energy flows. Your being experiences those breaches as disturbances in your functioning, causing restlessness, doubt and fear. To reach perfection in your practice of Ahimsa (non-violence) in your life is of primary importance. It doesn't suffice to burn Samskara's of violence by means of Samadhi and Samyama, but you also have to stop the new creation of such Samskara's. If then you also have to respect your Dharma, which has to deal with a past full of wars, you have a problem. Being an old warrior, I know all about it. So I changed into what I call "Karma

Management”. This means that every day I try to burn more Samskara’s than I incur. And this is the essence of Karma Yoga.

One day you will be so pure that the connection will occur. You will have a sense of unity with everything, with all people, with all beings, with the universe, with Brahman, with God.

In my case this mystical experience of the highest level was accompanied by a very deep sense of congeniality, even more than that, I was “Son of God”. Nothing could happen to me anymore! I had come home safely, in the house of my Father. The advantage of this is that ever since, I can appeal to Him at will when I get myself into trouble again.

Formless vision

Many mystics see the images of their Gods or heroes during meditation. Hindus see the goddess Lakshmi, Christians see Jesus or Mary and Muslims see Mohammed. All of these are colored visions because of the impressions that are still present.

Then how can you achieve formless vision, or vision that is not influenced by form?

By Para Vairagya (supreme detachment). That is the ultimate sacrifice. The sacrifice of your Self, or better to say, of the image that have about your Self. Then you will be seated in Svarupa (your essential nature), which is divine.

Realizations pertaining to death and rebirth

There are numerous misunderstandings about death, so it is only logical that people are so scared of it. Many believe that you will die suffering severe pain. That is not true. For when Atman doesn’t feel comfortable anymore in your gross body he withdraws himself from your body. Either you experience a sudden electric shock, or you will slowly drift away into unconsciousness. That is death as I remember it from a dream.

‘We were a small band of young men, armed light, on a reconnaissance mission. We passed by a swamp, walking in line.

Suddenly I saw how one of my comrades in front of me was overpowered and dragged away by an aboriginal. It all happened very fast. One after the other we were taken, being completely unable to do anything about it.

I was astonished how skillfully those aboriginals hoisted us up into trees close by. In no time we were all skewered like butterflies to the branches of the trees. Obviously they had prepared the branches in advance.

They forced my left arm to the sharp end of a branch, until it was completely pierced. It was so painful! They did the same to my right arm. Then my legs and my trunk followed. At last they pierced my left cheek with a twig and pushed it until it came out from the right cheek.

There was no pain anymore, except when the wind blew moving the branches. Most annoying was the sense of powerlessness. I couldn’t go anywhere. The branches in my

body held me, dangling between heaven and earth. They did it all so skillful! Not one single vital part of the body was affected. The branches had only pierced the muscles. On either side of me I could see my comrades hanging in the same way.

The worst in all this was actually the thirst. Also I couldn't make the slightest movement because moving the branches on which I hung caused pain. My tongue swallowed and slowly everything faded away.'

Your consciousness remains, even though you may pass out temporarily while dying.

And this consciousness is exactly the same consciousness as the one that you possess right now! Moreover, it is the same consciousness as that of all your previous lives. The same kind of thoughts, images, emotions remain with you. You can put that to the test by looking at your consciousness when you were a child. Can you still remember that? Isn't it just the same as what you are experiencing at present, don't you agree?

Life in the astral world after you die is comparable to the life on earth. Albeit with a couple of differences: there is no sun, no traffic, you don't have to go to work, eat, sleep and your communication with other people is telepathic. On the other hand there are houses, trees and rocks. Striking also is the peace. Ideal as a holiday resort one could say. The time that you spend there depends on the amount of Sattva in your being. The more Sattva you have, the longer you stay there. My previous life took place more than 2300 years ago.

People who die by violence come back to earth rather quickly.

The process of rebirth can be compared with walking through a corridor that becomes narrower towards the end. That corridor is a tunnel of red meat, in which there are several cervical openings. The wind of Karma causes you to continue to walk and be attracted by one womb almost imperceptibly, which, against better judgment you then enter. Quite disturbing is the fact that when you want to go back it is not possible anymore. The red meat closes in on you from behind. The only way out is ahead of you. To go through that opening is enough to be born. A choice as to the person by whom you are born is not an option really. Your Karma takes care of that.

'I walked through a corridor at ease, having the feeling I could go any direction. The walls of the corridor were soft and flesh-colored. Actually it looked more and more like a tunnel. I had a pleasant feeling. I noticed that there was a gentle though increasingly clearer attraction from the direction in which I walked.

Several cavities appeared in the walls. I could choose one. I felt a sense of petulance in me. Why I picked the one I chose was a coincidence. The cavity seemed to absorb me. The space surrounding me became increasingly narrower, like a funnel. Suddenly I popped out on the other side. I looked around and saw a number of those entrances as the one I had just exited. Then I wanted to go back, but the entrance was closed. I had no choice but to go forward.'

Your energy is attracted by a whirl of energy caused by a man and woman who make love together. Particularly the symbiosis of their energies during the orgasm causes the connection to occur between your being and that of the being of your mother. This means

that your birth occurs at the moment of the conception. From that moment on you have come into the matter.

It is in this way that I viewed the conception of my son Theseus.

I can also remember my own birth into this life:

‘I felt a heavy pressure onto my head. My nose was squashed and my ears almost fell off. It didn’t stop. Slowly I slid through the narrow passage and the pressure on my head diminished. Ugh, I was born.’

Later, much later my mother confirmed to me that my head was pretty big indeed when I was born, and that she had had quite some trouble. Still my head has circumference of about 60 centimeters.

The fact that I urinated on her, I thought was a sweet revenge.

When in 1988 I saw that the subtle body of the fetus was just as large as that of its mother, in this case Louise, I was quite shocked. This experience has fundamentally changed my association with children. Ever since that day I stopped considering babies and children as inferior beings, but I treat them as adults that are not full-grown yet. They find it very nice. Logically!

Dying and being reborn are normal as long as you still have a form. The form comes into being by the activity of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Only when you are Nirguna (without substance), you will escape this cycle.

Moksha (liberation) is the final goal of the entire Sadhana (practice)

The activity of the Samskara’s (impressions) captures our being in the matter. The form is the manifestation of this. Through the practice of Yoga, as Patanjali so rightly has explained in his “Yoga Sutras” (“Science of Yoga” by I.K. Taimni), one slowly rids oneself of all those Samskara’s. Fear of death disappears, as does hatred, attachment, ego and ignorance. Light will appear, together with Self-realization. Then it is only a matter of time.

Stay within the light and don’t be seduced by Karma. Continue to raise the amount of Sattva in your being, like a diamond that becomes constantly purer. Except for the fact that you will live longer, your simplicity will also increase, until the form of your being will slowly fade away and disappear from the sight of the normal living souls.

Conclusion

Developing yourself starts with conscious action. Observing your gross, subtle and causal body you learn the possibilities of your personality. It is logic that you then try to reach integration of this personality. Discovering your Self and your relationship with the universe you learn to know further the divine possibilities of your being. It is logic that you then try to achieve the reunion of your being with the Almighty.

To acquire the science of the Soul it is important that, after this study and the necessary experiments to realize this knowledge, you change your life style. Your habit to base your life upon “doing” you have to replace by a new habit. After each activity you have to learn to come back to “not doing”. Herewith you install by the time more Sattva in your being. Only this approach will ensure an effective development of your Soul.

Myself I feel that, thanks to this science of Soul, I am on my way to “Putu”, home, and that feels good. Slowly but steadily I am reaching paradise. And funny enough, that paradise is here on earth. Do you feel the same?

Thank you for your attention. If you have questions I will hear it.

To help ensure your success in this huge enterprise I have translated and commented myself the famous Yoga Sutra’s of Patanjali. And in such a way that you can also easily use this fantastic knowledge of the Yoga practice on top level to reach paradise. You can download it for free from my website www.raja-yoga.org or www.xs4all.nl/~rajayoga/EN

Namaste,
Yours friendly,

Shri Yogacharya Ajita
(Philippe Barbier)
Honorary Secretary of the International Yoga Federation for the European Union
President of the European Yoga Council of European Yoga Alliance
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Member of the Coregroup of the Samenwerkende Yogadocenten Nederland
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