

LAYERS of the MIND

Through the process of meditation the mind is expanded. Yogic philosophy describes five layers of mind. Through regular practice of meditation, one is able to transcend or elevate through each layer of mind until one enters the ocean of infinite consciousness.

The physical body

The complex symphony of the body is conducted by a system of glands, which secrete hormones into the bloodstream. Over- and under- secretion of various glands can cause mental disturbances and negative emotions such as anxiety, hatred, anger or fear, which destroy health and peace of mind. Thus, the practice of asanas (yoga postures) is important in the proper balance of the body's hormonal secretions for the control and elevation of the mind.

Conscious mind

The conscious mind has three functions:

- (1) sensing external stimuli from the outside world through the five sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin);
- (2) having the desire on the basis of those stimuli; and
- (3) acting to materialise those desires by using the five motor organs (hands, feet, vocal chord, sexual organ and digestive / excretory organs).

This layer of mind controls the organs and the instincts.

Subconscious mind

The sub-consciousness is more expanded than the conscious mind. It has four functions:

- (1) memory;
- (2) contemplation;
- (3) experience of pleasure and pain; and
- (4) dreaming.

The vast majority of most people's thinking goes on at this layer of the mind. The images that one perceives during dreams are the thoughts that are stored in the sub-conscious mind.

Supramental causal mind

This is the first layer of the three layers of the expanded, superconscious 'causal mind', the all-knowing mind which can transcend the bondage of time, space and person and 'see' into past, present and future. This is the layer of intuition and creative insight.

Subliminal causal mind

Discrimination and non-attachment are the functions of the fourth layer. Decisions are based on the capacity of the mind to see the situation clearly, sharply and precisely. The greater the capacity of this layer of the mind to discriminate, the better the possibility for proper decisions, without fear or favour. However decisions must be acted on. Action is prejudiced by the attachments of mind and proper action depends on non-attachment.

Subtle causal mind

The subtle causal (cosmic) mind is the last gateway to perfection. When this layer is experienced, one feels very near to the infinite self within, and the desire for supreme union becomes almost unbearable.

Beyond the layers of mind

Beyond all the five layers of each individual mind is the realm of "spirit" or infinite consciousness, the pure Self within. In this state of perfect peace, beyond any vibration or manifestation, all conflicts and contradictions of the lower mind dissolve ... here all is one. When one attains this state, even for a moment, one's entire existence is flooded with inexpressible joy. This is the goal of Yoga and the goal of life to elevate the mind through higher and higher layers until one realises the infinite, blissful self within.