



Soul Consciousness - Ishvara

By Swami Durgananda

A lot of people ask, "Who am I? Why am I here?" These questions have been asked since time began, and so I want to give to you the explanation found in the ancient books written thousands of years ago by learned men of the East.

Firstly, let me stress that there is a much wider aspect than the world we see and the way we spend our lives. It is written that the human body, which is what we are interested in at this time is a field of individualized consciousness. This city of nine gates - our body, the mind - controlling the city, the Self -the soul consciousness residing in the city as overall controller is called our Ishvara form. This is our universe and we should get to know this universe, to which we bring the life force and of which we are the principal tenant. So we should get to know and understand this human field. We should become the knower of the field.

For instance, when I was younger I used to go mushrooming with my grandparents. We often asked the farmer if we could go mushrooming on his farm and which fields had the best crops. He would say, "Go through these gates, then after the third gate walk one hundred meters. You will find a flowering eucalyptus near the creek, and ten meters from the trunk of the tree on the left hand side you will find the best mushrooms." We would then go exactly as he had told us, and we would find the good mushrooms, and we would comment, "Oh! He knows his field".

Just like the farmer, we should get to know our field, as we are responsible for it, and the many universes that make up this universe called the human body.

The Upanishads which are the fourth and final portion of profound holy texts said to have been recorded in the Sanskrit language somewhere between one thousand five hundred to six hundred years B.C. Prior to that time they were verbally taught in hymn form from spiritual teacher to devotee these texts advise us we are the mini Ishvara. Ishvara translated means, the great Lord, the Super Will, and the Universal Entity who sits quiet and is a witness to all. So we are the little witness, limited by the fact that the universe we control is our body.

From the Upanishads we are also taught the trilogy of consciousness within the body (everything in Yoga is in threes). There is the consciousness of the body: this consciousness resides in the solar plexus. Then there is the consciousness of the mind dwelling in the subconscious. And beyond these is the super consciousness, the witness. Body, mind and soul make up the limited Ishvara.

When we go into conscious relaxation, similar to when we drift into sleep, we relax everything and become a witness. We are actually inviting the real self to wake up, to realize it is the witness and in control - it is the supreme controller in the body. When at the time of death it decides to leave, it will take the life force with it, and the body will die left behind like an old cloak no longer of use to the soul consciousness. The witness will return from whence it came, or rather where it thought it came from, deluded by the mind. Our delusion of grandeur and importance will make us believe that our just reward on death is anything but

negative when in reality only the meek and humble will be welcomed into the higher astral realms.

So eventually the soul consciousness returns to the astral states of rightful vibration where, eventually, when the time is right it takes another body and the cycle of reincarnation begins again.

Let us think for a moment how many universes are contained within the universe of the body. For instance, bacteria: this life has no idea that you exist, it is in your world, and you are not in its world. So long as you are bringing the life force into this body, its world exists. Then there are cells: living, dying, dividing, etc. Just think of the immensity of this statement alone. Look at your hand at this moment. There are many species being born and dying, on the surface and within.

Brush your hand. Have you just destroyed a world? Do you know how many worlds exist in and on your hand?

I cannot attempt to understand the entire goings on within this body. I cannot attempt to grasp the creation, annihilation, of other species of life within this body. But because of the life force, I have brought with me to this vehicle called the body, they survive, worlds within it exist.

If I leave the body, the life force will be gone and all the worlds with this universe will decay and die. Their life as they know it will be destroyed.

Now I am asked, why then are we here? What is the true purpose of our existence? We are here to experience this physical plane of opposites - the Upanishads call us the embodied souls. With each experience of a physical life we will learn and evolve. This is the purpose of human beings, our evolution.

Let me explain the physical field - that plane of existence that is here and now.

The solid elements are:

1. ETHER has the quality of SOUND
2. AIR has the quality of TOUCH
3. FIRE gives FORM
4. WATER has the quality of TASTE
5. EARTH has the quality of SMELL

To perceive these qualities, five organs of perception are formed by the soul in the body machine:

1. EARS for SOUND
2. SKIN for TOUCH

3. EYES for FORM

4. TONGUE for TASTE

5. NOSE for SMELL

To make contact with the outside world are five organs of action:

1. HANDS

2. FEET

3. VOCAL ORGANS

4. REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

5. ORGANS OF EXCRETION

If we are to believe that we are the controller of this body, and we are pure consciousness, then it stands to reason that we have no hands, no feet, no actual form, as consciousness has no form, but only, as scientists have discovered, weight. Without the organs of action we cannot have contact with the physical world.

To receive perceptions and motivate actions we have a:

MIND

EGO

INTELLECT co-ordination and decision making faculty. (Also known by yogic scholars as the Buddhi or discerning faculty).

Finally, there is the individualized primordial matter, in which all thought impressions are recorded and stored, a seed for future cause and effect. This last seed formation is something rather like a memory bank in a computer - one must know how to access it.

These working parts do not have the power of perception by the senses, but become conscious with the presence of the consciousness that comes to reside in it, namely the real you.

The field has four modifications:

SOLID PHYSICAL BODY FORM

We are told in the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita (another popular holy text) that the body works, the mind thinks, and the Buddhi decides - three different conscious levels each with its duty. Let's look at this for a moment. The body is important for a number of reasons. The body works, it is the vehicle in which we are gaining experience of the physical world. We must take care of it and nurture it so that it will last for as long as it is needed.

For instance, when we buy a car, we look after the machine. We give it the right fuel, drive it carefully and keep it tuned. Usually we trade it in when it has outlived its usefulness - reincarnation. All in all, do the right thing because it cost a lot and we are in charge of its destiny. Then why not this most precious machine called the body?

The Body is a finely tuned instrument and needs to be kept balanced and in harmony or it will break down. We must maintain it by watching that it has the best foods, drink and air. Replenishing the life force as it becomes weak or depleted.

The first discipline asked of the Yogi, is to be aware, be mindful of the needs of the body, the vehicle which enables our experiences in the world of the physical plane and assists our evolution.

ASTRAL FORM OR DREAM STATE

This is the state of the mind the Bhagavad-Gita refers to as the demon mind- our greatest enemy, our dearest friend. It is always fighting for control and we are always listening to it. In the Astral or Dream state is where we learn to watch ourselves, to discriminate.

Have you ever had a dream and watched yourself in the dream as a witness? In relaxation we learn to control the mind, it does not control us. Yogis learn to use the mind power for many things, always mindful that it must be kept in prime condition, full of positive vibrations. If we can get it under control, it can be used to awaken our inner energies and help us reach our full potential.

CAUSAL CONSCIOUSNESS - That portion of our consciousness that is the witness in our dreams. Separate from the dream.

The dreamer of the dream, but not the dream itself, the seer but not the seen.

This is the real you. It is not difficult to understand the transition of physical to astral, but astral to causal state, is extremely difficult. It has no outward physical form. It cannot be visualized or made perceptible in any way. At best one can imagine it to be a small bubble of consciousness, with the complete personality of the individual, assuming the form of an eye, hence the reason the Yogis call it the seer body.

Then comes sleep and forgetfulness - this state is difficult to explain here. We would have to go into void, unmanifest, manifest and no doubt I will write an article on this aspect of creation in the future.

As long as the individualized consciousness, that witness, keeps looking at its field, its body and lower mind, never breaking free from the bonds of the machine called the body, never becoming mindfully detached it suffers as a result, happiness and unhappiness, stress and pain, finding no peace of mind.

Yogis say this is an endless process because it takes up one body after the other, never realizing who it really is. But if we learn not to identify our real selves with this body, learn to stand back, to practise detachment, to convince ourselves that we are in control of the body and the mind, we will be able to change our destiny.

We will comprehend that we are of this world but not of this world only a visitor, the witness, the Ishvara and in control.

Mankind has come for a great destiny, to seek and find the source of eternal joy that lies within. This should be our sole aim.

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