

Artikel 1.

Can Yoga Really Transform Consciousness?

Many people think that by walking the spiritual path, our consciousness evolves. But in yoga, changes occur in brain biology, not in consciousness. Spiritual progress through yoga is the result of changes in the biology of the brain and nervous system. The state of the brain and body will determine if any living organism will be able to tune into different dimensions of consciousness or not.

Reptiles have a primitive nervous system, which has helped them survive. The reptilian complex in the human brain is representative of the brain of reptiles and is a mirror for reptilian consciousness. In advanced animals, the brain is responsible for emotions. And in humans, the brain has brought the wonders of self-awareness, through which we are able to experience feelings and emotions. It also gives us the ability to reflect on the past and contemplate the future. We are capable of logical thinking, which has unleashed endless creativity and has led to the emergence of science, art, ethics, religion and culture.

But above all of this, is the incredible ability we possess to feel the presence of the infinite and eternal, the source of the universe itself. The infinite is not an empty void — but contains all that is possible, was possible and will be possible. People have given this feeling of boundless and timeless existence many names, including God, Brahma and so on.

As our brain develops and vibrates at a particular frequency, we experience a specific level of consciousness. The animal brain vibrates at a different frequency than in humans, and so their perception is different. Because we are self-aware, we can change the structure and physiology of our brain, and then become more conscious of those experiences that are not available to other living beings. This is conscious evolution.

Yoga is the science of conscious evolution. Evolution is essentially the evolution of the brain, which can vibrate at different frequencies at various stages of evolution.

Like yoga, all creative and spiritual practices are about changing the structure and physiology of the brain, in order to tune into a more conscious experience. We have the potential to become conscious of every evolutionary frequency, eventually arriving at a point where the frequency becomes infinite. It is here where the pure consciousness of enlightenment (Samadhi) is experienced.

A normal brain, though fully active physiologically, does not typically function at optimal capacity because various parts of the brain remain remain unconnected. But in yogic awakening, not only do some of the physiologically less active parts of the brain become more active, but more parts connect to allow the brain and nervous system to function as one whole.

So really, it's the brain that evolves, not the consciousness. We practice yoga to allow the brain to evolve, so that we can become receptive to higher levels of consciousness which are actually available to us all the time.

Artikel 2

The concept of awareness has explicitly or implicitly been the focal point of many studies within the fields of psychology, philosophy, and not least of religions.

Even though awareness seems to be related to practically every aspect and experience of life, a closer look at its nature raises several non-trivial questions. This essay is about the yogic view on the awareness and its associated aspects such as the mind, intellect, consciousness and the soul.

The very basic question is what exactly we understand by awareness? And how it is different from or related to our mind, intellect, and consciousness? Is complete awareness only limited to one single object or thought (one - pointedness) or can it be broadened to a wider context? Can awareness be broadened to the state of pure consciousness?

When we examine the Kriya Yoga tradition, the awareness is defined as the conscious attention of thoughts on objects, either external or internal, without necessarily being one-pointed. The word awareness then implies a relationship between the activity of perception and the ability of the perceiver (or the mind). In other words, awareness refers to an individual who knows that her attention is at a particular place or on sequence of thoughts. So if the individual does not know that she is perceiving something then she is not aware.

This definition is practical when awareness is examined isolated. However in the yogic literature different terms and concepts are applied in somehow ambiguous ways to refer to the mind, consciousness, the pure consciousness and the soul, which challenges this isolated definition, and which troubles explaining the awareness in relation to them.

Bhagavad Gita, India's holy script of ancient times describes briefly, and yet completely, the relationship between the perception (kshetra or the field) and the perceiver (kshetrajna or knower of the field) and the elements of which they consist. A thorough inspection of all these elements would surely be out of scope of this brief essay. However, scrutinizing the consciousness in the field of perceiver, and examining the mind and intellect in the field of the perception are utmost relevant for our discussion :

According to the yogic principles, there is just one conscious state of being, of perception, of knowledge, which is referred to as chetana in Sanskrit. Chetana is changeless and endless. One can suggest (deduce) that chetana in terms of Bhagavad Gita is the same as the perceiver or the knower of the perception, i.e. kshetrajna. Chetana is the pure self, soul or the pure consciousness, which exist beyond senses, illuminating them all, sustaining everything, without any attachment, without any attributes, but yet perceiving all the attributes of the field or kshetra [2, song 13, sloka 14]. Swami Niranjanda Saraswati gives a thorough discourse of how chetana is divided into the three fields of experience: Wakefulness or conscious mind (jagriti), dream or subconscious mind (swapna), and sleep or unconscious mind (nidra). He explains further on that the awareness should not be confused with consciousness (chetana) - or the knower of the field (kshetrajna) or the soul.

According to Swami Niranjanda, awareness is related to an aspect of the buddhi, which in most of yogic literature is often translated as intellect. Awareness is an attribute or an expression of the buddhi, but it is not equal to buddhi. This subtle distinction at the first sight might sound like a non- important difference or as an intellectual entertainment, but as a matter of fact it contains the key explanation to understanding the shift from the sphere of the mind to that of pure consciousness or the soul :

The intellect is commonly understood as the ability of analysing, comparing, deducing, structuring and storing information and knowledge for later application. Buddhi on the other hand is not bound by external concepts of right and wrong, but also depends on the a priori, or sort of internal, perception of being. It is the intellect which gives birth to the single-pointed or partial broadening of the awareness. However, the complete broadening of the awareness to the stage of the pure consciousness requires more than that, i.e. accessing the realm of the inner truths which seems to be the gateway to the ultimate truth or pure consciousness.

Now, assuming this is true, one can by withdrawing the senses (pratyahara), practise one-pointed concentration (dharana) and meditate on a single gross object by exploiting the capabilities of the intellect as a function of the buddhi. The intellect would also through long practice sustain the process of broadening the awareness of one object to several objects in the field of wakefulness (jagriti). However expanding the awareness from the field of wakefulness to the field of the dream and further to the field of sleep of consciousness seems to require more than just ability to analyse, structure and deduce. Based on the distinction between full capabilities of buddhi and intellect, it could be suggested that broadening the awareness to the rest of the realm of consciousness, i.e. dream and sleep, would require access to the internal perception of the truth within. This requirement is probably the single most important distinction between the early and advanced stages of meditation, i.e. moving from dhyana to the ultimate yoga (state of seedless union or nirikalpa samadhi).

A concluding word on this discussion could be that awareness and consciousness are not the same. However extended utilization of the capabilities of buddhi, beyond the intellect, makes it possible to expand the awareness to all fields of consciousness. Yet, while consciousness is changeless, access to it is not granted without meditative and dedicated effort of expansion of awareness. And while consciousness is endless, maintaining the state of the seedless union or nirikalpa samadhi is not. One could only guess whether this also would be possible through practicing Mahasamadhi, but that would open an entirely new chapter in this discussion, which without doubt would exhaust this essay.

Artikel 3

Edgar Mitchell was on his way home. Two days before he had been on the moon collecting rock samples, and now he was speeding through space accompanied by two other astronauts. Gazing at Earth and the stars through the tiny window of Apollo 14, he was engulfed by a new and startling sensation: an all-encompassing aura of universal connectedness. All sense of boundaries dissolved, and he saw that he, his companions, and everyone and everything on the shining planet in the window were held in a luminous web of consciousness. What is more, he knew with absolute certainty that, as he put it later, “the glittering cosmos itself was in some way conscious.”

The goal of human life, the sages tell us, is to meet Consciousness within ourselves and to know ourselves as That. Mitchell was experiencing a spontaneous glimpse of what the sages of the yoga tradition call higher consciousness—a direct, intuitive experience of the infinite field of awareness that underlies and pervades the entire universe. When this experience is fully expanded, different traditions give it different names—samadhi, nirvana, enlightenment, turiya, shunyata, Brahman, Christ Consciousness, Absolute Truth, Atman, God, the Self, Supreme Consciousness—but whatever they call it, spiritual masters tell us that this experience of an all-pervasive consciousness reveals the truth about ourselves and the world we inhabit: it is all One. There is no division, no multiplicity, no separation. Everything—the astonishing variety of living beings; nature’s myriad shapes, textures, and forms; the sun, the stars, the clouds, and the wind in the trees—all of it is a manifestation of an indivisible field of Consciousness. The goal of human life, the sages tell us, is to meet that Consciousness within ourselves and to know ourselves as That.

The sages also tell us all of our problems, indeed all of the world’s problems, can be traced to a single source: we misunderstand the nature of reality. Hypnotized by outward appearances, we misread the world around us. We see multiplicity instead of unity, separation instead of wholeness. Because we don’t understand that all beings share one life force, one consciousness, we blunder about, damaging ourselves by damaging others. It all boils down to an epic misunderstanding—and leaves us looking for fulfillment in all the wrong places.

“We are all looking for the peace and freedom and security of perfect union with the Atman,” Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood write in *How to Know God*, their classic commentary on the Yoga Sutra. “We all long desperately to be happy. But ignorance misdirects us. It assures us that the Atman cannot really be within us, that we are nothing but individuals, separate egos.... We seek security in the accumulation of possessions, or by the destruction of our imagined enemies. We seek happiness through sense gratification, through every kind of vanity and self-delusion. We seek peace through the intoxication of various drugs. And in all these activities we display an energy of heroic proportions.... It is tragically misdirected energy. With less effort, we might easily have found union with the Atman, had we not been misled by our ignorance.”

The good news is that this veil of ignorance is readily lifted. Experiencing Consciousness is simplicity itself, the sages tell us—after all, it is our own true nature. As the 14th-century master, Vidyaranya Yati put it, “You are whatever you know yourself to be. This is a simple law. Brahnavit Brahmaiva bhavati. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. The moment you know that you are inseparable from Universal Consciousness, you become that Universal Consciousness.”

Five centuries later, Swami Vivekananda put it another way: “The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him—that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.” My own teacher, Swami Rama, had another way of expressing it: “It’s as simple as flipping a light switch. Suppose this room is kept dark for one hundred years. How long will it take to light this room? One second.”

"There! Adjust your gaze at a fraction, you'll see it.
Everything is Consciousness. Everything!"

Swamiji’s spiritual heir, Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, takes the same view, as I discovered one winter morning while complaining to him about feeling spiritually stuck. Panditji leaned forward, took my face in his hands, and turned my head a few degrees. “It’s right there,” he said forcefully. “There! Adjust your gaze a fraction, you’ll see it. Everything is Consciousness. Everything!”

Most of us don’t see it—at least not at first and not easily. It’s like an Escher print. First you see one thing—black ducks flying across a white sky—and then your perspective shifts a hair and you are looking at a picture of white fish swimming through black water. Once you’ve seen the fish, you see them every time you glance at the print. Spiritual teachers say that the unity underlying the apparent diversity is like that—palpable, obvious, and undeniable. The trick is to learn to refocus our gaze.

To do that, it helps to know what we’re attempting to see. The image on the opposite page seems unremarkable, but if you know it’s a stereogram, you will study it more closely. Look at it long enough and in the right way, and the bees recede into the distance and the hummingbirds float across the page in three dimensional rows. That’s what meditation is, looking within from the right angle often enough and long enough for the illusion of separateness to drop away and Reality to snap into focus.

Swami Rama was fond of saying, “It is easy to meet that Infinity within you—to attain that awareness, you just have to be silent.” It’s easy. Sit down, close your eyes, draw your attention inward, quiet your mind, and you are “There”—at least in theory. For most of us, the experience of meditation is quite different. We sit down, close our eyes, draw our attention inward, and come face-to-face with a noisy, scattered, unruly mind. We mean to focus on the mantra but find ourselves composing the grocery list instead; the mind jumps to the day ahead or the upcoming weekend, the vacation we’d like to take or the one we just had; it busies itself sorting through the latest dustup at the office, skitters through the mess in Iraq, then slides off into what we’re getting the kids for Christmas. Silence eludes us—and so does an awareness of Infinity.

It’s the classic chicken-and-egg dilemma. The experience of Oneness is the fruit of a disciplined meditation practice. But a disciplined meditation practice unfolds from a taste of that fruit. Once it’s had a taste of Unitary Consciousness, the mind is drawn to it like a bee to a blossom and is no longer so easily distracted when we sit for meditation. But without that initial taste, we’re at a bit of a loss. We believe—or would like to believe—what the scriptures, the sages, and our teachers tell us: that we are inextricably entwined in a nourishing web of Consciousness. But our day-to-day experience is quite different—we’ve become accustomed to a vision of duality, trained to see ourselves as separate from each other and from the natural world, and so that’s what we see. We’re seeking a deeper, richer vision of ourselves and our world but we don’t quite know how to bring it into focus.

"We all long desperately to be happy. But ignorance misdirects us. It assures us that the Atman cannot really be within us, that we are nothing but individuals."

It came into focus for Edgar Mitchell when he was 240,000 miles out from Earth, seeing his home planet cradled in a nest of stars. His work was essentially finished, the moon-walk had been a success, and he had time to reflect on the mission, time to "absorb the magnificence and beauty of the whole process." As he explained it in an interview with *The Monthly Aspectarian*, as a result of "seeing Earth as it is in the heavens, the precise experience for me was to recognize that the molecules of my body and the molecules of the spacecraft—I had studied stellar formation and knew how the furnaces of the stars and galaxies created our chemical elements—I suddenly realized that those were my molecules being manufactured and prototyped in those stars. Instead of being an intellectual experience, it became a very deep, personal, emotional one, a knowing. It was such a profound experience that I went into a different realm of seeing things."

I had a similar experience during a pilgrimage to Kedarnath, a shrine high in the Himalayas. Much less arduous than a journey to the moon, pilgrimage is a time-honored way of cultivating an expanded vision. Step away from the demands and distractions of daily life, leave the familiar behind, and go—deliberately and with determination—to a place known for its spiritual energy. Pandit Rajmani explains it this way: "If you are seeking a certain kind of knowledge and experience, go to a place where it is readily available. If you are seeking knowledge and experience in technology, go to MIT. If you are seeking an experience of the inner dimension of your life, go to a place charged with spiritual energy. When you go to such places with the intention of connecting yourself to the flow of all-pervading Consciousness, your individual consciousness is expanded and transformed by the collective consciousness which permeates that place."

Mecca, Jerusalem, Assisi, Banaras, Allahabad, Mount Kailash, Mount Fuji, and Mount Kilimanjaro are among the places Consciousness has shaped in Her own image. Here at these and other shrines, the perceived barrier between the physical realm and the subtle realm thins to the point of transparency, and the all-embracing matrix of Consciousness shines through.

I caught a glimpse of it last summer in the Himalayas. From the moment I began the nine-mile climb from the village of Gaurikund to Kedarnath, I was flooded with joy. Everything was perfect—sunlight on thickly wooded hillsides, snowcapped peaks framed by impossibly steep gorges, waterfalls spilling down at every turn, a chilly afternoon rain, the blister on my right heel, a trail that got rougher and steeper as the day wore on, the clammy guesthouse, even the cold-water-only shower. During the two days we stayed on the Kedarnath plateau and through the long walk back to Gaurikund, perfection reigned.

Nothing I did, nothing anyone around me did, could dislodge the all-encompassing beatitude. On the trek back, I deliberately brought things to mind that had been troubling me before I set foot on the trail—my mother's slide into dementia, a financial snafu, a friend's duplicity—but they had lost their sting. Everything I knew, remembered, or could imagine was supported and nourished by a munificent web of Consciousness.

For three days, I saw it and felt it. The feeling has faded, but the memory remains. And it is that memory that pulls me into meditation practice, erasing much of the tendency to distraction. My mind settles and moves toward silence more readily now. It hasn't become as easy as flipping a switch—not by a long shot—but having walked in the light, however briefly, I have come to understand why Swami Vivekananda said: "We put our hands over our eyes and weep that it is dark."

Artikel 4.

The mind indeed is the cause of
one's bondage and one's liberation.

Amritabindu Upanishad (verse 2)

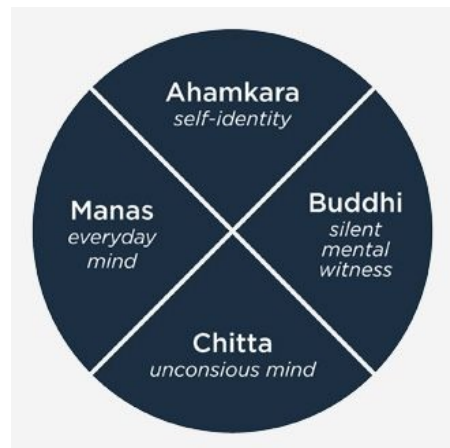
Yogic scriptures describe the mind as an inner instrument. It stockpiles our memories, manifests our hopes and desires, and manages our daily activities. Yet despite the central role it plays in our lives, we rarely think about the mind itself. Few of us could even easily define what we mean by “the mind.”

For meditators, a working knowledge of our mental terrain is like a map. It allows us to see where we are going in meditation and shows us how to get there. Fortunately, yoga philosophy provides a map of the mind that complements the practice of meditation. It opens the door to a new way of seeing human affairs and helps us solve the puzzle of who we are. Let's have a look, with a view to what this map reveals about the mind in meditation.

The Landscape of the Mind

To gather experience, the mind must be connected to a body. It is through the channels of the senses and the sense organs (the eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc.) that the mind receives impressions from outside, and acts on the outer world. Mind and body are thus a subtly integrated team.

Even though the mind's functions are seamless, yogis nonetheless identify four distinct realms of activity. The first is the everyday conscious mind, manas. Next is the subtle and quiet witness of experience, buddhi. Third is the sense of individuality or self-identity, ahankara. Finally, the mind serves as the reservoir for storing habits and latent impressions (samskaras), deposited in the unconscious mind, chitta.



The Everyday Mind

The everyday mind, manas, is often called the “lower” mind or the “mundane” mind. Manas serves as the screen of consciousness, blending sense impressions of the outer world with experiences already stored in the mind. Through the operations of manas, we see that a feathery creature has a rust-colored belly, hear it begin singing early in the morning, and remember its name: robin.

Manas is also sometimes called the “indecisive” mind because it is a good collector and displayer of information but a poor decision maker. It can choose a vacation destination, select the best available dates for travel, plan the route, and calculate the costs of the entire trip. But it will be unable to decide whether or not to go. It cannot come to a conclusion. For that, we will need to employ buddhi, the part of the mind that helps us determine the value of our actions.

Take a few moments to identify the functioning of manas within yourself. Read these brief instructions, then pause and take in your immediate environment.

See the world presented to you on the screen of your awareness. Hear the sounds of your surroundings as they reach you through your ears. Notice how sensations of touch, taste, and smell are also completely integrated into your consciousness on this multidimensional screen of awareness. Notice how quickly you identify the objects around you (by naming them or simply recognizing them), thus constructing a coherent environment. It is important to be aware that the mental screen not only registers impressions from outside, it colors them as well. Memories of past encounters with the world, and images of future ones, shape the present. You shy away from buzzing bees, but cuddle up to fluffy kittens. The image of sailing seems inviting, but “don’t forget the sunscreen!” your manas tells you. Both desires and memories are constantly shaping the content of our thoughts.

The Silent Witness

Given the many activities of manas, the everyday mind, we might imagine it to be the mind’s chief operating officer. It is the scene of constant hustle and bustle, passing without interruption through periods of waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. But its activity is a mask of sorts, one that conceals a deeper dimension of life. Meditators learn to see behind this mask of frenetic activity, and discover a natural tranquility of mind that is far more compelling.

Indeed, the activities of manas are often described as a kind of sleep. They focus on sensory experience, on the fulfillment of instinctual urges, and on the pursuit of everyday pleasures. Yet they sleep to the deeper experiences of life. Thus, a voice calls to us from within, saying, “Wake up! Return to yourself!” That is the aim of meditation and the goal of the spiritual journey. But how is it accomplished?

For meditators, the first step is to give the lower mind a stable focus. Usually that focus is the breath or a mantra. This is the beginning of the process of resting your attention. As you do this, the busy senses, including the sense of imagination, follow along. They are quieted and relaxed. Thus by giving the mind a focal point you calm the activities of manas.

As manas quiets and calms, you begin to wake up. You develop an awareness of yourself as a silent witness—a center of consciousness from which other mental activities can be quietly observed. You become aware of your own awareness.

The function of mind capable of this kind of awakening is the buddhi. The term comes from the Sanskrit verb budh, meaning “to wake up.” Interestingly, this is just what happens in meditation. A quiet shift in consciousness occurs, calming the emotional distractedness of the manas and awakening a calmer, steadier mind.

The verb from which buddhi is derived has other meanings as well, each related to the nature of the mind in meditation. It means, for example, “to return to consciousness,” that is, to restore awareness of one’s deeper self, as well as “to attend,” to gather awareness rather than to let the mind be distracted.

A simple experiment will help you sense this. Close your eyes and feel the flow of your breathing, following these basic instructions:

Stay with the breath for a few minutes until you find you can relax the effort you are making, resting your mind on the pleasant sensations of exhaling and inhaling. Begin to notice in a very simple way that you are not the breather. You are awareness, witnessing the sensations of the breath. You will not sense buddhi by anything it does, but by its quiet presence. You, as buddhi, are silent, restful awareness.

Continue resting your mind by watching the breath. When manas is calmed, and attention rested in this way, it is possible to go beyond the lower mind, to see its activities, and yet to know yourself as the inner witness of these activities.

The journey does not end here. During meditation, distractions arise that alert us to the many layers of experience stored in chitta, the unconscious mind. Buddhi examines these impressions, both in the form of thoughts and feelings, and later as the habits and behaviors of everyday life. In this process, buddhi observes and registers a thought (“Vacation!”), forms an understanding of its significance (“It’s been years!”), and makes a decision. That decision will either be foolish if it is based on attachment (“I’m going no matter what!”) or wise if it is based on an assessment of real needs (“It will provide a much-needed rest”). Buddhi is the decision maker, and as it awakens, it learns to make decisions wisely.

But while an awakening of the buddhi can help us in daily life, the goal of meditation is not simply to make us better decision makers or to enable us to gather more life experience. The awakening of the buddhi helps us turn back into ourselves. It shows us how to recapture awareness of the inner Self, the source of our conscious awareness.

This is a process that unfolds slowly and gradually, but it is not uncharted territory. Start by quieting yourself, learn to observe the passing activities of your lower mind, and awaken your buddhi, the inner witness. In the next issue we’ll talk more about how to address the unconscious mind (chitta) and manage self-identity (ahamkara) in meditation. But for now, begin to recognize the terrain of your mind when you sit to meditate. There is no landscape on earth more beautiful or more compelling.

Artikel 5.

Classical Yoga

The Yoga Sutra, ascribed to Patanjali, is a concise summary of the Classical Yoga psychotechnology. We can call it psychology due to its deep delving into the shape and structure of mind, and the way we experience the world. We can call it technology because of the practical methods it offers to traverse the mind, and to make us ready for final liberation. In fact, the Yoga Sutra is so technical that it takes a lot of study to truly understand it. A guide is essential, for there are many important aspects of Classical Yoga technology that the Yoga Sutra merely hints at. It is a map that, at times, gives only general directions; at other times it provides crystal clear explanations.

The second line of the Yoga Sutra sums up the purpose of Classical Yoga. It tells us exactly what yoga is: *yogas-citta-vritti-nirodaha*. These four words - *yoga citta vritti nirodah* - cannot be easily and succinctly translated into English; in general, the sloka tell us that yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. Yoga is a way to stop the mind's movements but what is meant by mind and what is meant by fluctuation and just how do we stop them? These answers are provided.

The Yoga Sutra uses the term *citta* as the overarching term for what, in the West, we would simply call the mind. Iyengar [1] offers a detailed view of the various aspects of *citta* in his book *Light on Life*. *Citta* itself means consciousness, in its various manifestations. There are three major forms of *citta*. First, there is the lower mind's consciousness, called "*manas*." *Manas* is our perceptions, as we have seen in the Samkhya psychocosmology. Second, there is *ahamkara*. *Ahamkara* literally means "I-shaped," according to Iyengar. It is *ahamkara* that gives rise to our ego and our mistaken view of self. And third, there is *buddhi* or intelligence, which is the first manifestation out of the cosmic consciousness called "*mahat*." *Manas* and *ahamkara* are the outward-facing projections of consciousness. *Buddhi* turns us around and looks inward.

Vritti means whirlings, turnings, or fluctuations. *Nirodah* means restriction, death, or stillness. Although the Yoga Sutra provides a methodology for stilling the mind, before that is explored, an unspoken question is answered - "Why would we want to do this?" The answer is *tadadrashtuhsvarupevasthanum*. When the mind is still, the seer can rest in her true nature. Now, before we learn how to still the mind and come to this rest, the Yoga Sutra provides a deeper view of the mind and the problems we face in trying to look behind it.

Artikel 6.

Yogic Understanding of the Mind

He who knows the receptacle (ayatana) verily becomes the receptacle of his people. Mind is verily the receptacle (of all our knowledge).

Chhandogya Upanishad

Happiness has always been the prime aim of every human being. All your activities are directed towards acquiring maximum happiness in life. However, through the deluded notion that objects will provide happiness, you search for it outside. The result is that in spite of lifelong effort, there is disappointment. Real and lasting happiness lies within. This is not perceived because the mind is usually completely externalized. As long as the mind is restlessly wandering amid objects, ever fluctuating, excited, agitated and uncontrolled, this true joy cannot be realized and enjoyed. To control the restless mind and perfectly still all thoughts and cravings remains our greatest problem.

For gaining mastery over the mind, you have to know what it is, how it works, how it deceives you at every turn and by what methods it can be subdued. The vast majority of people do not know the existence of the mind and its operations. Modern doctors know only a fragment of the mind. It is only the yogis and those who practise meditation and introspection that know the existence of the mind, its nature, ways and subtle workings. They also know the various methods of subduing the mind.

Mind is one of the ashta-prakritis. In the Bhagavad Gita (7:4), it is said:

Bhoomiraapo'nalo vaayuh kham mano buddhireva cha;
Ahamkaara iteeyam me bhinnaa prakritirashtadhaa.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and egoism,
these constitute the eightfold division of My Nature.

How the mind originated

Mind is nothing but atma shakti, power of the self. It is through mind that Brahman manifests Himself as the differentiated universe with heterogeneous objects. It has been said in the Aitareya Upanishad (1:3-4):

Brahma thought, 'There, indeed, are the worlds; I shall create the protectors of the worlds.' He gathered the Purusha from out the the waters and fashioned him. He heated him by the heat of meditation. When he was thus heated, his heart burst out.

From the heart, the mind came; from the mind,
the moon, the presiding deity of the mind.

Heart is the seat of the mind; therefore, the mind emerged when the heart burst out. In samadhi, the mind goes to its original seat, the heart. In sleep also, it rests in the heart with a veil of ignorance between it and Brahman.

Cosmic mind and individual mind

Hiranyagarbha is the term used in the scriptures for cosmic mind. It is also called Karya Brahman and sambhuti, for it is the sum total (samashti) of all minds. Hiranyagarbha is the cosmic prana, the sutratman (the conscious energy which operates in the macrocosmos), and represents the cosmic powerhouse. The different jivas, individual beings, represent the different, small bulbs. Electricity from the powerhouse flows through the insulated copper wires into the bulbs. Similarly, power from hiranyagarbha flows into jivas. The individual mind is ever connected with the cosmic mind.

The individual mind is also in close contact with other individual minds. As your mind evolves, you come into conscious experience of the mental currents, with the minds of others, near and distant, living and dead. The individual mind of A, although separated from the mind substance of other individuals, B, C, D, E, X, Y, etc. by a thin wall of the finest matter, is really in touch with the other apparently separated minds and with the universal mind of which it forms a part.

If A is a friend of B, A's mind is connected with B's mind. The minds of friends and relatives of A are attached to A's mind. Several minds are similarly linked to B's mind also. The minds of those who are attached to A's mind are, therefore, connected in turn with the minds of those who are hanging on B's mind. In this manner, one mind is in touch with all the minds in the whole world. This is the Vibhu theory of mind of raja yoga.

The mental body

Mind is atomic, according to Nyaya, the Indian school of logic. It is all-pervading, according to Patanjali Maharshi's school of raja yoga and is of middling size (same size as that of the body), according to the Vedantic school.

Mind is material, made up of subtle matter. Just as the physical body is composed of solid, liquid and gaseous matter, so also the mind is made of subtle matter of various grades of density with different rates of vibration. A raja yogi penetrates through different layers of the mind by intense sadhana.

The mental body or manomaya kosha varies in different people. It is composed of coarse or finer matter, according to the needs of the more or less unfolded consciousness connected with it. In the learned, it is active and well defined; in the undeveloped, it is cloudy and ill defined. There are several zones or slices in the mental body just as there are various compartments in the brain for particular types of thought. During intense anger, for example, the whole mind is suffused with the black hue of malice and ill-will, from which fiery arrows of anger dart forth.

Fourfold mind or antahkarana chatushtaya

Antahkarana is the term used by Vedantins to include manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. When used in a broad sense, it means the internal instrument. Antah means internal, karana means instrument. It is the inner instrument (as distinguished from bahyakarana, outer instrument or the senses) through which you sense, perceive, think and reason.

Ahamkara, ego, is derived from the prithvi (earth) tanmatra. (Tanmatras are subtle elements from which the five gross elements are derived.) Chitta, consciousness, is derived from jala (water) tanmatra; buddhi, discriminative mind, from agni (fire) tanmatra; manas, finite mind, from vayu (air) tanmatra; heart from akasha (space) tanmatra.

Mind is chetan (intelligent) when compared with the senses. It is jada (non-intelligent) when compared with buddhi. In Sankhya philosophy, buddhi is will and intellect combined. Some put chitta under mind and ahamkara under buddhi. Manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara are only functional aspects of the mind. Manas has all things for its objects and extends through the past, present and future; it is one, but has various functions. You are a judge when you exercise your judicial powers in the court. You are a cook when you work in the kitchen. You are the president of an association when you sit on the chair in that capacity. You are the same person, but you function differently and are called by different names according to those different functions. Similarly, when the mind does sankalpa-vikalpa (will-thought and doubt), it is called manas; when it discriminates and decides, it is buddhi; when it self-arrogates, it is ahamkara; when it is the storehouse of samskaras and seat of memory and also when it performs concentration and enquiry, it is chitta.

Who gave coolness to water, warmth to fire, motion to air? These qualities are their very nature. Even so, mind has its swabhava, inherent nature, of running towards objects, buddhi of determining, ahamkara of self-assertion and self-identification, chitta of thinking of those objects which are identified by ahamkara. When the mind is at work, buddhi and ahamkara work simultaneously along with the mind. Mind, buddhi and ahamkara work in healthy co-operation. Mind thinks whether a certain thing is good or bad. Buddhi comes in for determination. It is buddhi which discriminates the vishaya, subject. The swarupa, essential form, of mind is thought only. It is discriminative when it forwards the decisions of buddhi, the messages from buddhi, to the organs of action for execution. The mind selects, attends and rejects.

The three avasthas

Mind has three avasthas or states: jagrat (waking state), swapna (dreaming state) and sushupti (deep sleep state).

- **Jagrat avastha:** The individual soul is called awake as long as it is connected with the various external objects by means of the modifications of the mind, which constitute limiting adjuncts of the soul. The mind apprehends the external objects and identifies itself with the gross body, which is one of the external objects. During the waking state, the mind occupies the brain.
- **Swapna avastha:** When the mind enters the hita nadi, which proceeds from the heart and surrounds the great membrane around the heart, the individual soul or jiva experiences the state of dream. In the dream state, the senses are quiet and absorbed in the mind. Mind alone plays during dream. There is no land, sea, horse or elephant in dream, but the mind creates everything out of its own body, out of the materials supplied from the waking consciousness. The mind itself assumes the various forms of bee, flower, mountain, elephant, horse, river, etc. It is the subject and object as well. The seer and the seen are one. Perception takes place through the internal organ called manas.

- **Sushupti avastha:** When the mind enters the puritat nadi, the state of deep sleep sets in. In dridha sushupti (dreamless sleep), you have a cessation of empirical consciousness. There is no play of the mind in this state. There is neither raga nor dwesha (attraction or repulsion, like or dislike). The mind dissolves into its cause. Manolaya (involution of the mind) takes place.

This state of profound sleep is not a complete non-being or negative, for such a hypothesis conflicts with the later recollections of a happy repose of sleep. The self continues to exist, though it is bereft of all experiences. The consciousness is continuous. You feel you have existed even during sleep as soon as you are awake. Vedantins build their philosophy around this sushupti avastha. This stage gives them the clue to the non-dual or advaitic state.

Shankara observes in the Chhandogya Upanishad that the phenomenon of duality caused by the action of the mind is present in the waking and dreaming states only, but absent in the deep sleep state. In waking and dreaming states, there is play of thoughts (and the simultaneous occurrence of names and forms) and hence the world as well. In dreamless sleep, there are no thoughts and hence, there is no world either. We taste the nature of absolute bliss in dreamless sleep.

The three gunas

The mind has three gunas or qualities: sattwa (light, bliss, goodness), rajas (passion, motion) and tamas (inertia, darkness). There are three vrittis in the mind corresponding to the three gunas. Santa vritti (peace) comes out of sattwa guna, ghora vritti (violence) from rajo guna and mudha vritti (ignorance) from tamo guna. Equilibrium or balance is santa vritti; anger is ghora vritti; laziness (alasya), carelessness (pramada) and drowsiness (tandri) are mudha vrittis.

Characteristics of sattwa guna: Sattwa guna is purity. It is prakasha, illumination, light. It is a force favourable for the attainment of moksha. The effect of sattwa guna is brahmavichara (enquiry or search for truth; differentiation between sat and asat, real and unreal.)

A sattwic mind is always steady. It finds delight internally. It may stick to one place indefinitely. It keeps friendship with persons for a long, long time. It can read the scriptures for any number of days. It can live on simple food for years together without grumbling.

During sattwic moments, when there is preponderance of pure sattwa in the mind, you are in touch with the divine source owing to the cleanness of the mind mirror and feel inspired. There is purity of thought (bhava samshuddhi) and purity of heart (sattwa samshuddhi). It is the fourth jnana bhumika or stage of jnana.

Characteristics of rajo guna: Rajo guna is a hostile force that pulls you down into samsara. It represents negative qualities such as pride and anger. The rajasic mind always wants new sensations and variety. It has a tendency to look into the defects of others, remembers the wrongs done by others and easily forgets their good acts. It splits, separates and shows plurality whereas a sattwic mind unifies.

The three doshas

Milk is agreeable to some and disagreeable to others. There is nothing wrong with milk itself. Surely, there is something wrong with the mind. The viewpoint differs in these cases owing to the dosha of the mind.

Dosha means fault or defect. Mala (impurity), vikshepa (tossing), avarana (veil of ignorance) are the threefold defects of the mind. The mind is tossed about among objects of love and hatred like a feather in a stormy wind. Not resting on any object firmly, it is characterized by an excessive fluctuating power. It will fluctuate and be confused, will flit away from an object and then return to it, will rejoice in vain and be intoxicated with ahamkara, egoism. The mind becomes a prey to fear through its fluctuation.

The mind should be rendered fit for salvation, fit to approach its substratum, its father, Brahman by removing the three doshas. Mala (such as lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy) is removed by performing nishkama karma, selfless service. Vikshepa is removed by upasana, trataka, pranayama and raja yoga. Avarana is removed by jnana, wisdom, study of spiritual literature, nididhyasana, deep meditation, and abhedha chintan, constant contemplation, after duly understanding the right significance of the mahavakya, Tat Tvam Asi, Thou Art That.

The six important powers of the mind

There are three principal shaktis (powers, potencies) in the mind: ichha shakti (will), kriya shakti (action) and jnana shakti (knowledge). A desire arises in the mind. This is ichha shakti. The mind exerts to have this desire gratified. This is kriya shakti. It plans, schemes and finds out methods, etc. for the achievement of the desired object. This is jnana shakti. There are also six other important powers of the mind: vedana shakti (power of perception), smarana shakti or smriti shakti (power of memory), bhavana shakti (power of imagination), manisha shakti (power of judgement), sankalpa shakti (will or volition) and dharana shakti (power to hold).

- **Vedana shakti:** Vedana shakti is the power of cognition or sensation, or power of perception and knowing through the indriyas or senses (indriya jnana or sense knowledge).
- **Smriti shakti:** Smriti shakti does three things. It grasps. It holds. It brings to memory whenever a thing is needed. Though the power of grasping is performed by vedana shakti, smriti shakti also participates in the act of grasping. Suppose you hear the sound of a bell in the temple. The memory shakti grasps it and retains it. When you again hear the sound of the temple bell, it at once reminds you, "This is the temple bell. This is not the hostel bell."
- **Bhavana shakti:** You have never seen an elephant riding a cycle. When a man, who has actually seen it, gives you a description, your mind forms a mental picture at once. This is done by the bhavana shakti (power of imagination) of the mind.
- **Manisha shakti:** Power of comparing and contrasting, drawing inferences, discussion, conclusion, all belong to manisha shakti of the mind. The manisha shakti (power of judgement) has two subdivisions, nirnaya (ascertainment) and tarka (logical reasoning).

A is mortal. B is mortal. C is mortal. Therefore, all men are mortal. Mr. Choudhary is a man. Therefore, Mr. Choudhary is mortal. This kind of drawing of conclusions through deductive and inductive logic with major and minor premises and middle term or through the five parts of syllogistic reasoning of the system of Nyaya are performed by manisha shakti of the mind.

- **Sankalpa shakti:** Will is atma shakti. It is the dynamic aspect of Brahman. Will is Brahman in motion. In Vedanta, will plays a very conspicuous part. Some say that will is greater than imagination. Among the Vedantins, will is regarded as a greater faculty than imagination. What will imagination do without the impelling power of the will to execute the desires, wishes and ideals?

There is correlation, co-ordination and co-operation among the different principles in the mind. Therefore, who can say which is great or small, important or unimportant when each depends on the other for its power? It cannot be truly said that one is greater than the other, for their independence and power are derived from each other.

- **Dharana shakti:** Dharana shakti (power to hold) is really a part of memory or smarana shakti. In common parlance, we say, "Mr. Ramakrishna is a man of good dharana in Vedanta." Here, it means that Mr. Ramakrishna holds fixed and steady ideas in Vedanta. He cannot be changed by anybody. He does not possess a wavering nature. He sticks to Vedanta alone and nobody can shake him.

How to unfold latent powers of the mind

There are many higher mental faculties latent in man. The mind is a magazine of power. The unfoldment of these latent, psychic powers is possible through proper sadhana. The sadhana should be systematic, constant and intense. The student must have reached the proper stage of development. There must be genuine faith also. Only then is success possible.

The mind is no doubt extremely turbulent. However, through repeated attempts you can subdue it perfectly. You are the master of the mind. By practice and non-attachment, assert your mastery. Feel the power, bliss and splendour that result from self-conquest. The only true laboratory is the mind. Study it, test it and then go beyond it. Remember, mind is the bridge that connects the human with the divine.

Artikel 7.

Uncovering the Unconscious: Meditation for Emotional Healing

From a yogic point of view, the mind is a sophisticated implement of awareness. It links us to the outer world, provides for an enormous spectrum of inner experience, and serves as a bridge to pure consciousness itself. Understanding the general landscape of your mind can help you navigate both meditation and daily life with greater ease.

Yoga divides the functioning of the mind into four components: manas (the lower or sensory mind), buddhi (the inner witness), chitta (the bed of memory), and ahamkara (self-identity). The first two, manas and buddhi, were the focus of the last column, A Meditator's Map to the Mind. Here's a brief recap.

During meditation, the conscious mind, manas, is quieted and focused. The senses (the gateways between manas and the outer world) relinquish their contact with sense objects. Imagination is relaxed and a restful concentration is established, bringing ordinary awareness into the present moment. Thus, during meditation, everyday activities of mental life are gathered and integrated.

These transformations in manas are complemented by changes in buddhi. Buddhi is the aspect of mind identified with our moral sense and our capacity to acquire self-awareness. As manas is calmed, buddhi awakens. This is experienced as a silent blossoming of awareness. As buddhi awakens, consciousness shines more clearly. A subtle distance is created between awareness and the contents of the mind. Thus a meditator becomes the quiet witness of his or her inner experience.

Memory

Chitta is the mind's capacity to retain experience in memory. It is a vast reservoir of stored impressions, habit patterns, and desires. In this unconscious repository, seeds of the future are planted by our experience in the present. We might envision chitta as a lake, a body of water into which various streams of experience are constantly flowing. Some of these streams arise from our encounters with the world around us. We see it, hear it, taste it, smell it, and rub against it. But chitta also records encounters with processes occurring within the mind itself. Each time we remember the words to a favorite song, we anchor them more deeply in chitta.

The information we gather from all these encounters remains dormant in the unconscious. But memories surface from this lake to contribute to fresh experience. Thus, that favorite song might pop into your head while you're in the shower. But if we define the contents stored in the unconscious too narrowly, we'll misunderstand the real significance of chitta. The mind does not simply store facts as sterile information. Experience is more complex than this. It is emotional.

The peach I eat pleases me. The pear, for some reason, does not. The shirt I see at the store entices me, but its price is dismaying. I attach emotions to experience, and then deposit the combination of fact and emotion in the mind. Pleasure and pain are the sources of emotion. They lead to likes, dislikes, wants, wishes, hatreds, cravings, aversions, and aspirations. Each of us pursues happiness and avoids pain. Thus the seeds of experience stored in chitta are not placed there randomly, but carry with them, appropriately or not, our desires for the future.

A Working Mind

During meditation the mind's conscious activities, largely the province of manas and buddhi, are brought to awareness and gradually mastered. This is the central purpose of meditation. But as we have seen, the mind also stores impressions in the unconscious. These impressions, called samskaras, remain latent until triggered into activity. Meditation must also address these latent impressions in some manner. Only then can meditation perform its deep-seated work of healing and integrating the disparate elements of the mind.

Swami Rama portrayed the beginnings of meditation in a memorable way. Suppose, he would say, someone were to grasp your big toe. You might be amused at first and pretend that it had little effect on you. As time passed, however, you would wiggle your toe a bit to see if the person's grasping could be easily dislodged. If this failed, you would shake your foot with even more energy, until, if nothing else was successful, you might kick the annoying toe-holder and rid your-self of the aggravation once and for all.

The struggle we put up in meditation, he said, is quite similar. The act of giving the mind a focus is like grasping your mind by its toe. At first the mind plays along, only occasionally wiggling to see if you are serious. But over time, forces within the mind demand the freedom to play themselves out. The mind becomes more and more agitated until it finally kicks at the process of meditation and shakes free from the effort to concentrate.

As we saw in the previous column, A Meditator's Map to the Mind part of the solution to this kind of mental reactivity is to train the manas to rest in its focus—a process that evolves naturally when we strengthen our concentration. The buddhi's natural function as inner witness also calms mental agitation.

But the mind's agitation is largely the result of forces in the unconscious mind—samskaras that press upward toward awareness. Every meditator knows the experience of being distracted by such thoughts. In a moment, I can be transported from "here" to some far away "there," from a one-pointed focus to I-shouldn't-have-said-that-to-my-friend. Distracting impressions are a part of the very nature of chitta. They seize their opportunity to arise during the relative quiet of meditation.

Some of these impressions are duties and current affairs needing attention; some are hopes and designs for the future; others are reflections of the news, weather, and entertainment mill; and still others are fancies long abandoned. For better or worse, the emotion naturally fused with these impressions brings them to awareness, like a bubble seeking the surface of a body of water.

The effect of these impressions on meditation depends upon how much attention is given to them. Some thoughts are important, and require contemplation. Other thoughts are driven by worry or desire, and have little place in the meditative process. As meditation deepens, even constructive thinking is set aside in order to clear the way for restful concentration.

Transforming the Unconscious

We cannot go directly into the unconscious mind to alter or wipe away the collection of impressions there. But meditation influences the unconscious nonetheless. The question is how?

Recall the function of chitta. It is a storehouse of experience, a reservoir of latent impressions. We deposit both joyful and unpleasant experiences there, and later we are influenced by these same impressions. Thus the mind is colored by countless experiences of greatly varying qualities and intensities.

Meditation itself is an experience—one that is deposited in chitta. Meditative experience, like all other experiences, transforms the color of chitta. In the same way other experiences are deposited in memory, meditation reaches deeply into the mind and leaves its subtle impression. But meditation is not simply a new color added to the mix. Meditation is a transformation of color. It transforms the unconscious mind, like a smile transforms a somber face.

Focus and Let Go

Two methods are used in meditation to transform the chitta, each complementing the other. The first is restful concentration. The second is a cultivated detachment from distracting and disturbing thoughts. These are the classical meditative techniques, given in both the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali (1.12) and in the Bhagavad Gita (6.35).

During meditation, we learn to gradually shift attention toward a meditative focus. We concentrate on the work of centering the mind. The outcome of this patient inner work is profound. While it may seem that meditation is unproductive and even boring, quite the opposite is true. With each passing moment, impressions of relaxed concentration are deposited in chitta. These impressions incline the mind toward clarity and tranquility; they calm the mind and give it a meditative quality.

But what about efforts at cultivating detachment? Non-attachment in meditation calls for a paradoxical approach. We must initially learn to accept the distracting thoughts appearing in us rather than pushing them away. It doesn't help to fight with ourselves. The very thoughts arising in meditation—our wants, wishes, fantasies, and fears—are part of who we are, at least in the present moment. So even when such thoughts are distracting or painful, accepting them remains a necessity. Only then can we see them as they are, with all their subtlety and motivating power.

But these distractions must not become the primary focus of our attention. We can watch these passing thoughts and observe their hungry nature without feeding them new energy. By fully accepting what appears on the surface of the mind, yet seeing it with detachment, we purify chitta, lessen the momentum of distracting thoughts, and strengthen the mind's ability to focus.

Focus and let go. This is the way of deep meditation. It plants seeds of patience and self-acceptance. It reveals underlying motivations, and reinforces unselfish intentions. It creates a dialogue between the conscious and unconscious elements of ourselves, and in transforming chitta, it opens the way to a more lasting happiness within.

Artikel 8.

Unconscious Mind

Freud unconscious mind is the iceberg. While we are fully aware of what is going on in the conscious mind, we have no idea of what information is stored in the unconscious mind. The unconscious contains all sorts of significant and disturbing material which we need to keep out of awareness because they are too threatening to acknowledge fully.

The unconscious mind acts as a repository, a 'cauldron' of primitive wishes and impulse kept at bay and mediated by the preconscious area. For example, Freud (1915) found that some events and desires were often too frightening or painful for his patients to acknowledge, and believed such information was locked away in the unconscious mind. This can happen through the process of repression. The unconscious mind contains our biologically based instincts (eros and thanatos) for the primitive urges for sex and aggression (Freud, 1915). Freud argued that our primitive urges often do not reach consciousness because they are unacceptable to our rational, conscious selves. People has developed a range of defence mechanisms (such as repression) to avoid knowing what their unconscious motives and feelings are.

Freud (1915) emphasized the importance of the unconscious mind, and a primary assumption of Freudian theory is that the unconscious mind governs behavior to a greater degree than people suspect. Indeed, the goal of psychoanalysis is to reveal the use of such defence mechanisms and thus make the unconscious conscious. Freud believed that the influences of the unconscious reveal themselves in a variety of ways, including dreams, and in slips of the tongue, now popularly known as 'Freudian slips'. Freud (1920) gave an example of such a slip when a British Member of Parliament referred to a colleague with whom he was irritated as 'the honorable member from Hell' instead of from Hull.

Critical Evaluation

Initially, psychology was sceptical regarding the idea of mental processes operating at an unconscious level. To other psychologists determined to be scientific in their approach (e.g. behaviorists) the concept of the unconscious mind has proved a source of considerable frustration because it defies objective description, and is extremely difficult to objectively test or measure.

However, the gap between psychology and psychoanalysis has narrowed, and the notion of the unconscious is now an important focus of psychology. For example, cognitive psychology has identified unconscious processes, such as procedural memory (Tulving, 1972), automatic processing (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Stroop, 1935), and social psychology has shown the importance of implicit processing (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Such empirical findings have demonstrated the role of unconscious processes in human behavior.

However, empirical research in psychology has revealed the limits of the Freudian theory of the unconscious mind, and the modern notion of an 'adaptive unconscious' (Wilson, 2004) is not the same as the psychoanalytic one. Indeed, Freud (1915) has underestimated the importance of the unconscious, and in terms of the iceberg analogy there is a much larger portion of the mind under the water. The mind operates most efficiently by relegating a significant degree of high level, sophisticated processing to the unconscious.

Whereas Freud (1915) viewed the unconscious as a single entity, psychology now understands the mind to comprise a collection of modules that has evolved over time and operate outside of consciousness. For example, universal grammar (Chomsky, 1972) is an unconscious language processor that lets us decide whether a sentence is correctly formed. Separate to this module is our ability to recognize faces quickly and efficiently, thus illustrating how unconscious modules operate independently.

Finally, while Freud believed that primitive urges remained unconscious to protect individuals from experiencing anxiety, the modern view of the adaptive unconscious is that most information processing resides outside of consciousness for reasons of efficiency, rather than repression (Wilson, 2004).

Artikel 9.

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