

PART 1

States of Consciousness

ALL souls (*atmas*) were, are and will be in the Over-Soul
(*Paramatma*).

Souls (*atmas*) are all One.

All souls are infinite and eternal. They are formless.

All souls are One; there is no difference in souls or in their being
and existence as souls.

There is a difference in the consciousness of souls;
there is a difference in the planes of consciousness of souls;
there is a difference in the experience of souls and thus
there is a difference in the state of souls.

Most souls are conscious of the **gross** body (*sthul sharir*);
some souls are conscious of the **subtle** body (*pran*);
a few souls are conscious of the **mental** body (mind or *mana*);
and
a very few souls are conscious of Self.

Most souls have experience of the gross sphere (world);
some souls have experience of the subtle sphere (world);
a few souls have experience of the mental sphere (world); and
a very few souls have experience of the Over-Soul.

Most souls are on the gross plane (*anna bhumika*);
some souls are on the subtle plane (*pran bhumika*);
a few souls are on the mental plane (*mano bhumika*); and
a very few souls are on the plane beyond the mental plane
(*vidnyan*).

Most souls have great binding; some souls have little binding; a few souls have very little binding; and a very few souls have absolutely no binding.

All these souls (*atmas*) of different consciousness, of different experiences, of different states are in the Over-Soul (*Paramatma*).

If, now, all souls are in the Over-Soul and are all One, then why is there any difference in the consciousness, in the planes, in the experiences and in the states?

The cause of this difference is that the souls have different and diverse impressions (*sanskaras*).*

Most souls have **gross** impressions; some souls have **subtle** impressions; a few souls have **mental** impressions; and a very few souls have **no** impressions at all.

Souls having gross impressions, souls having subtle impressions, souls having mental impressions and souls having no impressions, are all souls in the Over-Soul and all are One.

Souls with gross impressions have consciousness of the gross body (*sthul sharir*) and have experience of the gross sphere.

Souls with subtle impressions have consciousness of the subtle body (*pran*) and have experience of the subtle sphere.

Souls with mental impressions have consciousness of the mental body (*mana* or mind) and have the experience of the mental sphere.†

Souls with no impressions have consciousness of Self (soul, *atma*) and have the experience of the Over-Soul (*Paramatma*).

* [See also Meher Baba, "The Formation and Function of *Sanskaras*," *Discourses*, 7th ed. (Myrtle Beach, SC: Sheriar Press, 1987), 32–39. Ed.]

†	SPHERE	BODY		
	Mystic	Mystic	Sufi	Vedantic
	Gross Sphere (World)	Gross Body	<i>Jism-e-Kasif</i>	<i>Sthul Sharir</i>
	Subtle Sphere (World)	Subtle Body	<i>Jism-e-Latif</i>	<i>Sukshma Sharir (Pran)</i>
	Mental Sphere (World)	Mental Body	<i>Jism-e-Altaf</i>	<i>Karan Sharir (Manas)</i>

Thus souls with gross impressions experience the gross sphere through the gross body; that is, they experience different and diverse experiences such as seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, sleeping, clearing the bowels and urinating. All these are experiences of the gross sphere.

Souls with subtle impressions experience successively three planes of the subtle sphere through the subtle body, and in these three planes they have only the experiences of seeing, smelling and hearing.

Souls with mental impressions, through the mental body or **mind**, in the mental sphere experience only seeing, and this seeing is the seeing of God.

Souls having no impressions, through the Self experience the infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss of the Over-Soul.

The soul that is conscious of the gross body is **not** conscious of the subtle body, **not** conscious of the mental body, and **not** conscious of Self.

The soul that is conscious of the subtle body is **not** conscious of the gross body, **not** conscious of the mental body, and **not** conscious of Self.

The soul that is conscious of the mental body is **not** conscious of the gross body, **not** conscious of the subtle body, and **not** conscious of Self.

The soul that is conscious of Self is **not** conscious of the gross body, **not** conscious of the subtle body, and **not** conscious of the mental body.

The soul that has experience of the gross world does not have experience of the subtle world, nor experience of the mental world, nor does it have experience of the Over-Soul.

The soul that has experience of the subtle world does not experience the gross world, nor does it have experience of the mental world, nor does it have experience of the Over-Soul.

The soul that has experience of the mental world does not experience the gross world, nor does it experience the subtle world, nor does it have experience of the Over-Soul.

The soul that has experience of the Over-Soul does not experience the gross world, nor does it experience the subtle world, nor

does it experience the mental world. That is, the soul that is conscious of Self and has experience of the Over-Soul is not conscious of the gross body, subtle body and mental body and does not experience the gross, subtle and mental spheres (worlds).

This means that in order to have consciousness of Self and to have the experience of the Over-Soul, the soul must lose consciousness of the gross, subtle and mental bodies. But as long as the soul is impressed either by the gross, subtle or mental impressions, the soul consistently and respectively has consciousness of the gross body, subtle body or mental body, and the gross, subtle and mental experiences are persistently and necessarily undergone.

The obvious reason for this is that as long as the consciousness of the soul is impressed by gross impressions, there is no way out except to experience these gross impressions through the gross body.

Similarly, as long as the consciousness of the soul is impressed by subtle impressions, there is no way out but to experience these subtle impressions through the subtle body.

Similarly, as long as the consciousness of the soul is impressed by mental impressions, there is no escape but to experience these mental impressions through the mental body.

As impressions of the gross, subtle and mental vanish or completely disappear, the consciousness of the soul is automatically and obviously directed and focussed towards itself, and this soul then necessarily has no alternative but to absorb experience of the Over-Soul.

Now, gross, subtle and mental bodies are nothing but the **shadows of the soul**. The gross, subtle and mental spheres (worlds) are nothing but the **shadows of the Over-Soul**.

Gross, subtle and mental bodies are finite, have forms and are changeable and destructible. The gross, subtle and mental worlds are false; they are zero, imagination and vacant dreams. The only reality is the Over-Soul (*Paramatma*).

Therefore when the soul with its gross, subtle and mental bodies experiences the gross, subtle and mental worlds, the soul actually experiences in reality the shadows of the Over-Soul with the help of its own shadows.

In other words, the soul with its finite and destructible form experiences falsity, zero, imagination and a vacant dream.

Only when the soul experiences the Over-Soul with its Self does it experience the Real with reality.

When the soul is conscious of its gross body, then this soul identifies itself with the gross body and takes itself as the gross body.

This means that the infinite, eternal, formless soul finds itself as finite, mortal and having form.

Impressions (*sanskaras*) are the cause of this ignorance. In the beginning the soul, which is eternally in the Over-Soul, at first acquires ignorance through impressions rather than acquiring Knowledge.

When the soul acquires a particular form (body or *sharir*) according to particular impressions, it feels and experiences itself as being that particular form.

Soul in its stone-form experiences itself as stone. Accordingly, in due course, the soul experiences and feels that it is metal, vegetable, worm, fish, bird, animal, man or woman. Whatever be the type of gross form and whatever be the shape of the form, the soul spontaneously associates itself with that form, figure and shape, and experiences that it is itself that form, figure and shape.

When the soul is conscious of the subtle body, then this soul experiences that it is the subtle body.

When the soul becomes conscious of the mental body, then this soul experiences that it is the mental body.

It is only because of impressions (*nuqush-e-amal* or *sanskaras*) that the soul without form, the Infinite Soul, experiences that it is veritably a gross body (*sthul sharir*), or a subtle body (*pran*) or a mental body (*mana* or mind).

The soul, while experiencing the gross world through gross forms, associates with and dissociates from innumerable gross forms. The association with and dissociation from gross forms are termed **birth** and **death** respectively.

It is only because of impressions that the eternal, immortal soul, existing in reality without births and without deaths, has to experience births and deaths innumerable times.

While the soul has to undergo this experience of innumerable births and deaths because of impressions, it has not only to experience the gross world, which is a shadow of the Over-Soul and which

is false, but together with it the soul has also to experience the happiness and misery, virtue and vice of the gross world.

It is only because of impressions that the soul, which is beyond and free from happiness and misery, virtue and vice, has necessarily to undergo experiences of misery and happiness, vice and virtue.

Now this much is established, that the experiences of births and deaths, happiness and misery, virtue and vice are experienced only by the gross form of the soul while experiencing the gross world; but the gross form of the soul is a shadow of the soul and the gross world is a shadow of the Over-Soul.

Thus all the experiences of births and deaths, virtue and vice, happiness and misery experienced by the soul are nothing but the experiences of the shadow. Hence all that is thus experienced is false.

Atma in Reality Is *Paramatma*

In order to clarify the relationship of “*atma-Paramatma*” we compare *Paramatma* with an infinite ocean, a limitless ocean, and the *atma* as a drop in this ocean. The *atma* is never out of this limitless ocean (*Paramatma*).

The *atma* can never be out of *Paramatma* because *Paramatma* is infinite and unlimited. How can the *atma* come out of, or have a place beyond, the limitlessness of the limitless? Therefore the *atma* is in *Paramatma*.

After establishing the primary fact that the *atma* is in *Paramatma* we go a step further and say that *atma* is *Paramatma*. How?

For example, let us imagine an unlimited ocean. Let us also imagine that we separate or take out one iota of ocean from the limitless expanse of this unlimited ocean. It follows then that this iota of ocean, while in the limitless ocean, before separation is ocean itself, and is not there in the shoreless ocean as an iota of the ocean, because every iota of ocean, when not limited by the limitations of a drop, is unlimited ocean.

It is only when an iota of ocean is separated from the unlimited ocean, or is taken out of the unlimited ocean as a drop, that this iota of ocean obtains its separate existence as a drop of the shoreless

ocean, and that this iota of ocean begins to be looked upon as a drop of the unlimited ocean.

In other words, the infinite, unlimited and limitless ocean itself is now looked upon as merely a drop of that infinite, unlimited and limitless ocean. And in comparison to that infinite, unlimited and limitless ocean this iota of ocean, or this drop of the iota of ocean, is most finite and most limited with infinite limitations. That is, the infinitely free iota finds itself infinitely bound.

Similarly, the *atma*, which we have compared with a drop of the infinite ocean, obtains a seeming separate existence, though in reality it can never be out of the limitlessness of the limitless, infinite *Paramatma* which we have compared with the infinite, unlimited and limitless ocean.

But just as the iota of ocean acquires its limitation as a drop through being in the form of a bubble on the surface of the ocean, and the bubble bestows upon the iota of ocean an apparently separative existence from the infinite ocean, likewise the *atma*, which is **in** *Paramatma* and **is** *Paramatma*, apparently experiences separative existence from the infinite *Paramatma* through the limitations of a bubble (of ignorance) with which the *atma* shrouds itself. No sooner does the bubble of ignorance burst, than the *atma* not only finds itself **in** *Paramatma* but experiences itself as *Paramatma*.

Through this limitation, formed by the bubble of ignorance, self-created by the *atma*, the *atma* apparently inherits a separative existence from *Paramatma*. And because of this self-created separateness from infinite *Paramatma*, the *atma*, which is itself infinite, unlimited and limitless, apparently experiences itself as most finite with infinite limitations.