

**Excerpt from the Upcoming book**

***Evolution Revolution:***

***Yoga, Ayurveda, and the Rise of the Soft Power Culture***

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### Esoteric Meaning of Listening

According to the Vedanta philosophy, the entire world is a projection of the mind. The mind is the projector of thoughts onto the screen of life. Projections are created by our recurring thoughts that are essentially subtle energetic vibrations that carry life-force energy. The thoughts of the mind are projected into the world energetically. Each thought is like an energy missile that shoots through the ether every time it arises in the mind. The more a thought is carried within the mind, the greater vibratory momentum it carries to manifest as a higher density of molecules and atoms, eventually manifesting into material existence. People who have a powerful mind can make their thoughts manifest very quickly while people who have a less developed mind have to repeat thoughts for perhaps many months or years before they actually manifest. A powerful mind is found in one's capacity to concentrate; thus, a focused mind is very powerful and can be used to create anything attention is placed on.

Through repeated embodiments, the soul carries with it the qualities and patterns of the past life. These appear in each life in the form as habits, many of which we become aware of as tendencies and patterns within one's lifestyle. The mind carries these seed impressions or samskaras from one life to the next, particularly the deeply seated ones such as major events and repetitive experiences that shape a person's life. Each impression may lay dormant for months and years until as it continues to ripen (vasana). Eventually, every impression will either manifest into an actual desire (kama) or dissolve itself through spiritual purification practices or sadhana. Life on earth is made up of actions, events, and stories that animate our lives and keep us engaged in the stories of our time. For most of us, these events are important, and shape our attitudes, speech, and influence many of the choices we make. In other words, one's human nature is shaped by the environment one is most exposed to. As our environment changes,

we are affected and influenced for better or worse. The interconnectedness of the human spirit with nature is the backbone of yogic thought.

According to the yoga tradition, the universe that we live in on the planet earth exists because of a vibrational field of energy known as *Hiranyagarbha*, the cosmic mind. This vibration is distributed into three parts or aspects that can be correlated to the earth (body), moon (mind), and soul (sun). In some yogic systems they are referred to as dimensions. We live in the world where the illusory power of maya is created by the perpetual cycles of the sun, moon, and earth as they revolve around each other. As they move, they create daytime and nighttime, and the positive and negative polarities that are the foundation for the fundamental laws of life on earth. These three planets can be considered the original factors that gave rise to the human being and the three bodies that make up every human being.

As briefly mentioned in chapter two, this trinity can also be seen in the human brain with hind, or reptilian, brain correlated to the earth, the mid, or emotional, brain correlated to the moon, and the frontal brain, or cerebral cortex, correlated with the sun. These three energies of earth, moon, and sun also make up the quality of the consciousness (gunas) that emanate through the chakras (energy centers along the spine) with the earth ruling the first three chakras, the moon at the heart and the sun at the top, symbolic of illumination. The moon and the heart are interconnected and correlated to the fickleness of the mind. This equates to a personality which lacks commitment and maintains an unsteady nature. The human being is essentially a small replica of the grander universe.

The Vedic culture of India thrived in the exploration of these distinct entities, and the three layers of human existence comprise one of the most fascinating yogic teachings. The study of the body, and the laws of healing the operations of what we call the fleshy body, developed into a unique system of medicine called ayurveda. As I explained in my first book, *Sun, Moon, and Earth*, the fragmentation of the mind-body relationship is the basis for disease and disorder or what is referred to in ayurveda as *dosha*. Ayurveda is a science of learning to listen to the body, its needs, signs, and symptoms. For example, even today, modern medical science has discovered the very close inter-relationship the gut shares with the mind and heart.

Listening is the formative power of the soul. Listening becomes the most essential skill with regards to the mind-body relationship. Your body is your little piece of earth, your ecology that you can connect to and listen to. The body is a guru in this sense because it has a language of expressions with different signs and significant symptoms. The body's most subtle form of expression is in the feelings which are interpreted by the neurological and motor systems and then beyond in the thoughts and cognitive aspects of the mind. As feeling is experienced physically through the central nervous system, it is connected to Vata dosha in ayurveda, and for this reason much emphasis is placed on balancing vata. Vata is linked to how one feels, to the nervous system, and to the mind.

If the mind is disturbed, then one can become distracted from the body and potentially ignore messages the body it is trying to communicate. On one level, the capacity we have for feeling comes through of the body. On a higher and more sublime level when feeling is blended with attitude it is referred to as *bhavana*, one of the most important factors in spiritual evolution. When we blend positive feeling that is derived from the heart with a positive attitude it yokes the head with the heart to produce a thrusting energy of spiritual progression, even though a person's actions may not be consistent. Feeling positive can also be equated with thinking positively. Feeling good begins with how we feel in relationship to our body, and this requires communicating with it. Be careful not to confuse this with listening to the endless sensory demands experienced by the senses that come from mental conditioning.

***It's important to distinguish the two: reacting to negative impressions is different from listening to positive feeling.***

Whether it is emotional eating, over-eating, or many of the other poor eating habits we bombard the body with, our choices reflect our mental quality; and vice-versa, what one experiences or, better yet, feels in the gut, is indicative of the mind-heart interplay. When a person goes on ignoring the more subtle signals of the gut and signals felt in the heart, the body proceeds to provide increasingly visible signs of disharmony. These symptoms give us something to look at, ponder, and try to understand.

Science has demonstrated that a brain-gut connection exists via the vagus nerve, which serves to control the parasympathetic nervous system. The vagus nerve releases the neurotransmitter norepinephrine into the amygdala which controls our stored emotional experiences in the brain and influences the heart rate variability. The release of norepinephrine into the amygdala occurs when a thought is connected to a prior trauma or experience of the ego. The ego correlates the thought to the past trauma or mental impression and reacts as if the same experience is occurring again, when in actuality, the recent experience has nothing to do with the past one. This is the sad case found in most intimate relationships where one blames the other for things neither person is responsible for. Think of the amygdala part of the brain like soil that can hold water, and the water is made of the tears derived from all types of emotions and traumatic experiences. If one continues to water the soil with emotions, the soil becomes damp enough that things begin to grow and manifest as actual events.