

MANAGEMENT OF SELF TRANSFORMATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND EMPOWERMENT

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THE knowledge about the self, its attributes, powers etc. form the first step towards its transformation. The transformation also requires proper understanding of the desired state of the self. To manage the self, it needs to be continuously monitored for its state and if the state is different from the desired state, then proper action needs to be taken to transform the state of the self to the desired state. In many circumstances, the self may be lacking the required power (inner power) to take the right actions necessary to bring about the transformation and in such cases, empowerment of the self is required to bring about the desired transformation. The whole transformation process has to be managed by the self. This paper discusses how the knowledge of Rajayoga can be applied for self empowerment and transformation.

Key Words: Self Empowerment, Transformation, Management, Rajayoga.

Introduction

There are two circles which affect and individual's life (Usha, 2002). The circle of influence and the circle of concern. The circle of influence is where we have control and the circle of concern is where we do not necessarily have direct control, but it is, concerned with all our dealings. We cannot control everything outside ourselves, but we can control our own internal self to lead change. The circle of influence is the internal circle of our own values, vision, beliefs, attitude, assumptions, thoughts etc. The circle of concern is the external circle comprising the people, environment etc. which is beyond our control. When we become too concerned about external conditions and want them to change, it starts pressurizing the inner circle of influence. It pressurizes our values, vision, attitudes, our beliefs, thinking process, and we develop a reactive focus. Reactive focus is when the inner circle of influence starts producing negative energy waves and contracts, which means the effectiveness and the change that we want to bring about, becomes difficult if not impossible and we start blaming others that they are responsible, the circumstances are responsible, the situations are such that we cannot be effective and as such we cannot change.

However, when we expand our inner circle of influence that is, our values, visions, thought process, assumptions, the gap between the circle of influence and the circle of concern gets reduced and this is when we become proactive – which means we are able to focus on the things that we have direct control and which produce positive energy waves. These positive energy waves carry their influence on to the circle of concern as well as in adverse times when situations try to pressurize us, we can still be effective and bring about the change desired. The result is that we do not get influenced by any external forces but, are always optimistic and are able to bring about the changes in the way we want.

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Self Transformation Through Knowledge and Empowerment

The knowledge about the self is the first step in the process of self transformation. The knowledge about the self imparted as part of the Rajayoga practice at the Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya (Donnel, 1996; Brahmakumaris.com; bkwsu.org) is used for discussion in this paper. The attributes of the self includes *knowledge, purity, love, peace, happiness, bliss, and, power*. These attributes are directly linked to the way actions (Karma) (Pillai, 2006; The Unified field of Karma, 2005) are performed by the self by using the body as an instrument. Any activity performed by an individual is called Karma. It could be physical or mental and the seed of any Karma is a thought. Since the self is always engaged in Karma one could say that self transformation is the process of acquiring the knowledge of performing Karma with perfection. The self transformation is motivated by the fact that when Karma is performed with perfection, it always brings satisfaction to the self and to the environment including others. The law of Karma is well known that is for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. As per the law of Karma, the self experiences the result of its own actions. To manage the self transformation, the state of the self needs to be continuously monitored. If it does not experience contentment while performing an action, it should acquire the knowledge of performing that action in a perfect manner. In many circumstances, the self may be lacking the required power (inner power) to perform the action in a perfect manner and in such cases, empowerment of the self is required to bring about the desired transformation. The whole transformation process has to be managed by the self. The Self realization improves as the self transformation process progresses. The Rajayoga practice also imparts the awareness of God - the Supreme Soul or the Source of Spiritual Power, how to reconnect the Soul with the Source Soul and draw inner power from it, laws of Karma etc.

The Self or Soul

A human being is comprised of Soul and Body. The matter of the body is a form of physical energy and the soul is non-physical (meta physical) conscious energy. It is also called “self” or “consciousness” or

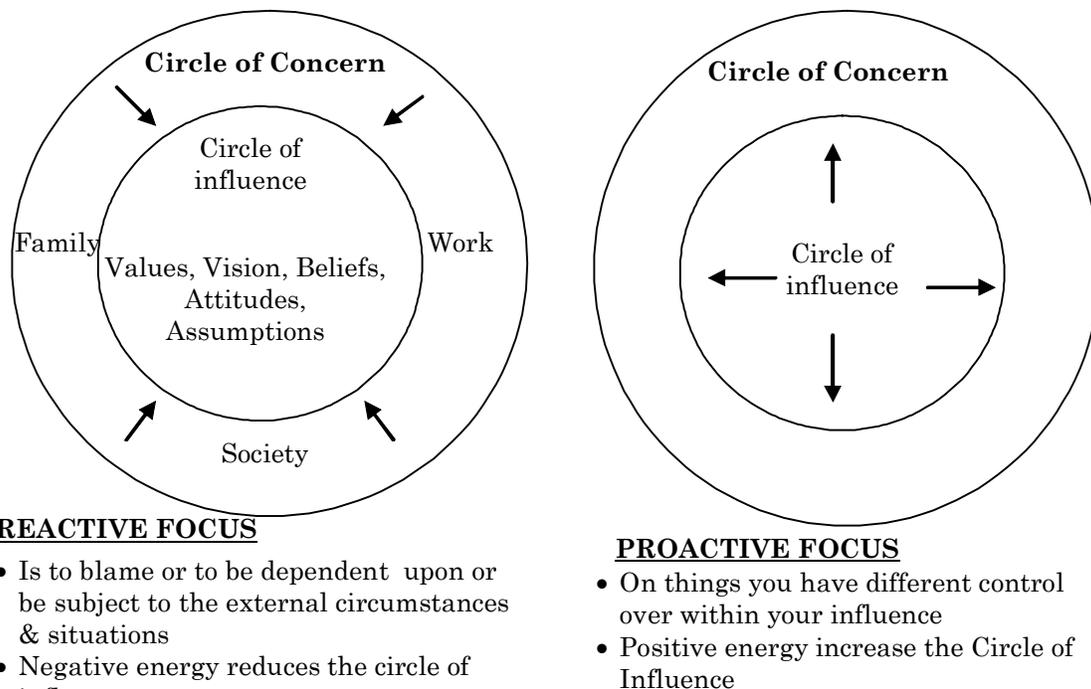


Figure 1: Reactive Versus Proactive Focus

“spirit”. Just as a person who speaks with the help of a telephone or listens to a call with the help of that instrument can be identified as an entity different from the telephone instrument - the soul is a living entity different from its instrument namely the body with various components like eyes, ears, nose etc and is the master of the body. The body is mortal whereas the soul is eternal and immortal. When the soul leaves the body, the body is declared ‘dead’.

The soul is located in the middle of the forehead in between the two eyebrows (In the area of the brain housing the thalamus, hypothalamus, pituitary glands, and pineal glands). This seat of the soul is also known as the “third-eye”. The connection between the physical and non-physical is by means of thought energy. The brain is the “control-room”. Just as a driver controls the car using a control panel, the soul employs the brain to control the body. Brain is a complex machine made of matter by means of which the soul thinks, remembers, receives messages from or gives directions to the sense-organs. The brain is the meeting place of all nerves, which carry sensations from all parts of the body to brain which functions like a control-room and makes the body to work.

The eternal nature of the soul is that of *knowledge, purity, love, peace, happiness, bliss, and, power*. While living in a body, the soul always desire for experiences of these qualities. These are the qualities that naturally emerge when the soul is aware of itself, or in other words, is *soul conscious*.

Faculties of the Self

A soul has three faculties - *mind, intellect and impressions*. It is actually the same energy functioning on three different but closely connected levels (Figure 2).

Mind

Mind is the thinking faculty of the soul. It is the mind that imagines, thinks and forms ideas. The thought process is the basis of all emotions, desires and sensations. It is through this faculty that, in an instant, thoughts can be projected to a distant place, past experiences and emotions can be relieved or even the future can be anticipated. It is the mind that experiences the variations of moods like happiness or sadness.

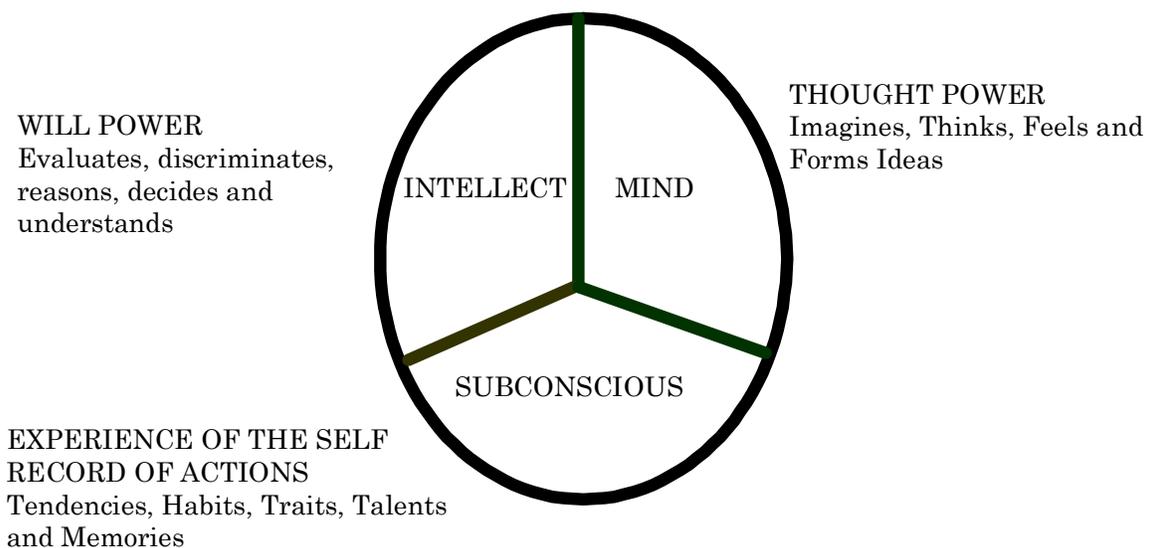


Figure 2: Faculties of a Soul

Intellect

Intellect is used to process and interpret the thoughts. This is the faculty of understanding and decision-making, which stands out as the most crucial faculty of the three. With the deepening and broadening of the intellect, clear understanding and the realization of the knowledge become natural, and the power to decide and reason becomes clear. It is the intellect which remembers, discriminates, judges and exercises its power in the form of will.

Impressions

Impressions are predispositions (called Sanskaras in Hindi) or “subconsciousness” which is the record of all the soul’s past experiences and actions. Sanskaras can take the forms of habits, talents, emotional temperaments, personality traits, beliefs, values or instincts. Every action as an experience either creates a sanskara (this is how a habit begins) or reinforces an old one. Whatever impression is etched in the soul remains within it, forming a complete archive of all the experiences that the soul has had. When we speak of defects, specialties or virtues, we are referring to the sanskaras. These impressions in turn stimulate the mind and influence the quality of thought. And the most fundamental feature of a soul, the personality, is determined by its impressions, the reservoir which we draw upon, often sub-consciously, as a source of thoughts and actions.

Spiritual Energy or Powers

There are powers or energies of various kinds. They may be bodily or subtle. The energy, that lies at the foundation of all other energies or powers, is the Spiritual energy/power. The essential powers include (Positive Change, 2000) the power of tolerance, the power of judgment, the power to make right decisions, the power to face, the power to accommodate, the power to change, the power to cooperate, and the power to pack up.

Karma and Consciousness

Any action (Karma) performed by a soul begins with a thought in the mind (Chander and Hassija). The intellect weighs that thought and judges whether it should be transformed into action. Once the action is performed, it leaves a subtle impression on the soul, which shapes our impressions (sanskaras) (Figure 3). These impressions form the basis of and influence our future thoughts. Thus, if a person performs a wrong action, the impression it forms will impel him to perform more wrong actions. Each time he does wrong, his impression will become stronger, and under its growing influence he will go on doing wrong. It is like a man digging a pit and sinking deeper into it as he digs.

A person is in body conscious when he/she identifies himself or herself with the physical body or an attribute of the body, i.e., when the thinking, feeling, actions and behaviors are with the awareness that he or she is a body. The vices like lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego are all having their roots in *body consciousness*. Karma performed under body consciousness form bad Karma.

When a person is in the state of awareness that “I am a Soul and not this physical body”, then he/she would be in soul consciousness. In other words, the person thinks, feels, acts, behaves, compares etc with the awareness that he or she is a soul, the master of the body. The original qualities of a soul such as *knowledge, purity, love, peace, happiness, bliss, and, power* naturally emerge under soul consciousness. Karma performed under the influence of soul – consciousness form right Karma, and only such Karma can bring lasting peace and bliss.

All our Karmas are motivated by the desire for peace, comfort, and happiness. This aim drives all human actions, as no one deliberately wants to be miserable. Even wrong actions are motivated by the desire for some gain, however short-lived or misguided it may be. This is where Karma reflects the character of each soul. Souls who have character flaws will even perform unrighteous actions

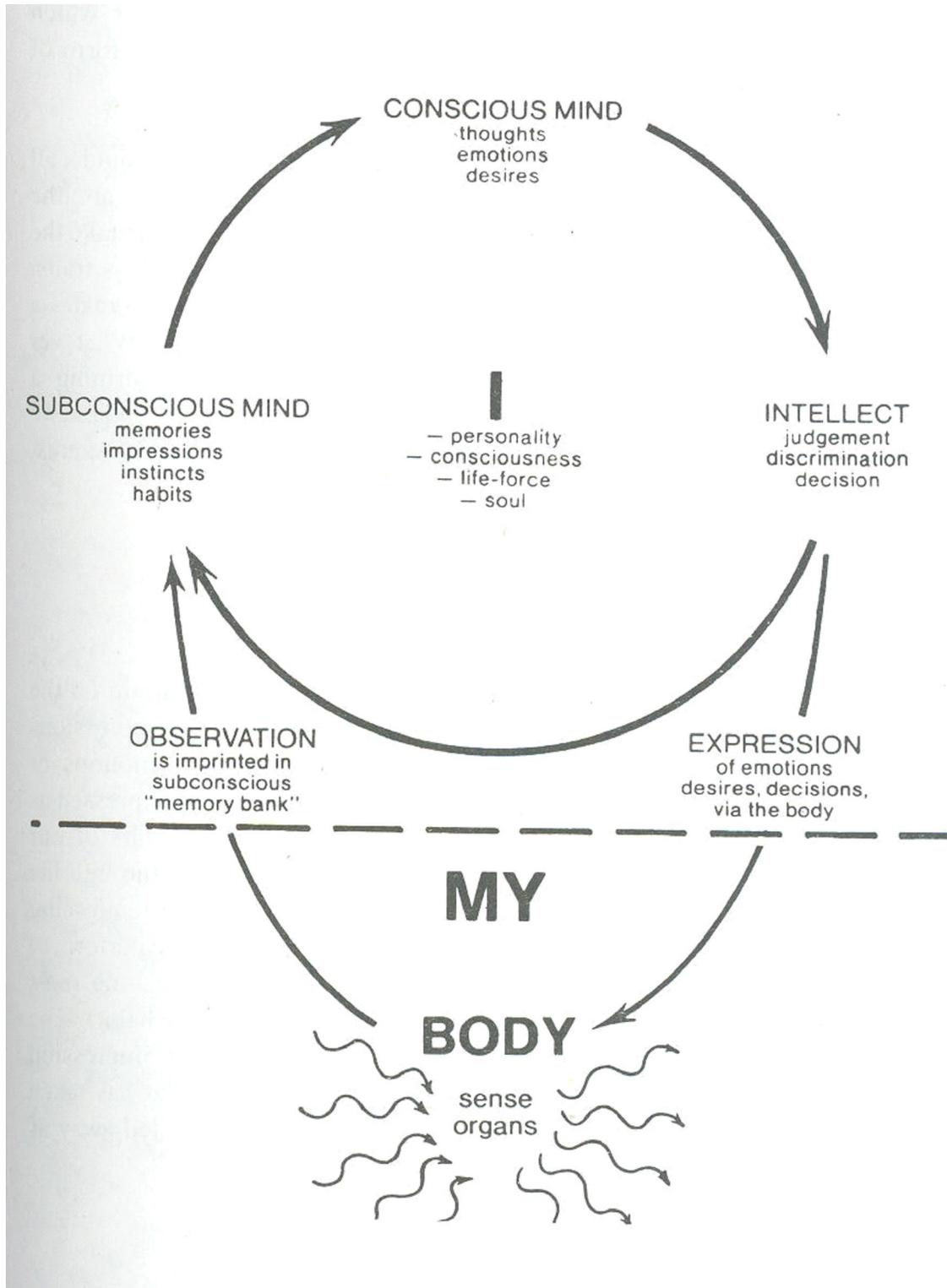


Figure 3: The Interaction Between Various Faculties of the Self

in order to get happiness, whereas some other souls willingly sacrifice transitory gains if they are ill-gotten.

The Law of Karma

Any activity performed by an individual is called Karma. It could be physical or mental and the seed of any Karma is a thought. The Law of Karma is the spiritual equivalent of Newton's Law of Motion for the physical universe: that is for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. That is if happiness is given, happiness will be experienced in return and if sorrow is given, sorrow will be experienced in return. Whatever experience I create in another will become my own experience. This is also known as the law of cause and effect. When we see certain events, there is now the realization that effects can only take place if there is a corresponding cause. Understanding the Law of Karma gives a deeper significance to concepts such as responsibility and justice. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. So we must acquire right knowledge of what is a good action and what is a bad action. The Law of Karma is a natural principle, which governs all our interactions - it begins with the seed of thought and moves through our feelings, attitude, outlook, words, actions, relations and time. It finally settles itself into our souls as personality traits.

Every human action has a moral aspect. If a person's certain act is morally good, the person gets ultimately benefited (good action). On the other hand, if his acts are morally bad, he suffers (bad action). In general, it may be said that, if a person acts under the influence of hatred, anger, lies, prejudice, greed, ego, partiality, lust and such other acts under the influence of body-consciousness, then his actions are bad or negative. These create disharmony and conflict and sufferings in the society. On the other hand, if a person has a balanced judgment, stability of mind, peace of the soul and acts with the feeling of love, justice, sympathy, humility and the such other actions in soul-consciousness, then his acts are good because such acts promote harmony, peace, unity and happy feelings.

Sometimes the Law of Karma is only half understood, particularly in relation to destiny. Someone may think helplessly, "Whatever is happening to me now is because of my past actions, so there is nothing I can do about it". But if the past has created the present, the present can also create the future. Instead of being a slave to one's destiny, the understanding of the Law of Karma allows one to actively participate in the making of one's own destiny.

The key to the Law of Karma is not simply to understand the theory but to become concerned at removing the burden of past negative actions that I am carrying and to break the habit of repeating such actions, while also paying attention to accumulating a stock of positive actions now. Actions are born from the seeds of thoughts and once enacted bring an abundance of fruits. The quality of fruits is determined by the quality of the seed. Good thoughts can lead to good actions, which will be of benefit to others as well as oneself. Thoughts spread in waves, which create or influence the atmosphere around us. The Law of Karma ensures that those waves will come back to us.

Therefore, it is imperative to perform right Karma. As pointed out in Section 2.3, right Karma is performed under souls consciousness. The soul consciousness can be realized through the understanding of the Supreme soul and a meditation practice based on it called Rajyoga. Regular practice of this enable the soul to experience lasting peace and bliss.

Understanding the Supreme Soul

The term 'Supreme Soul' or God means He is supreme among all souls. It implies that, He is also 'a soul', though He is the Highest of all. He does not come into the cycle of birth and death and is

ever pure. Like the soul, the Supreme Soul is also a subtle, infinitesimal point of Light and it is observed that all religions have images, idols or memorials bearing one name or another to represent His form of Light. He is not visible to the naked eye but it is very much possible to experience His presence and proximity in His loveful remembrance or yoga. He is the doer of good or benefactor to all and hence He is called 'Shiva'. He is also remembered by other expressive names like Allah, Jehovah etc. His home is the incorporeal world, an infinite expanse of golden-red light, which is beyond this physical world we live. It is the original abode of all souls as well. The incorporeal world is known as Paramdham or Brahmlok. Knowing where the Supreme Father is, the soul can establish connection with Him through thoughts during meditation. Since He is always in soul-consciousness state, the original qualities of a soul such as *knowledge, purity, love, peace, happiness, bliss, and, power* are always in fully emerged form. Any soul can develop these virtues through His loveful remembrance. This is called Rajyoga.

Management of Self Transformation

As discussed in Section 2, the original qualities or virtues of a soul are *knowledge, purity, love, peace, happiness, bliss, and, power*. All actions of a soul are motivated by the desire experience these qualities. As per the Law of Karma, whatever experience a soul create in another will become its own experience. The consciousness that "I am a soul" automatically brings out these qualities. Actions are born from the seeds of thoughts. Since the seed of an action is a thought, one needs to check whether the seed or thought is filled with these virtues. Very often the seed may be filled with virtues but the action may not be the same one might have thought. This is because the thoughts arising from past impressions (sanskara) due to wrong way of doing the same action in the past might have over powered the thought. Therefore, to realize the thought filled with virtues, the thought must also be powerful. Determination or will power plays a key role in this.

Practice of Rajyoga help in empowering the self to create powerful thoughts filled up with virtues. Through continuous remembrance of the Supreme Soul, one can develop soul-consciousness and fill the soul with all these virtues. Thus all actions will be filled up with virtues and as per the law of Karma, the soul experiences all virtues. This is a positive cycle of transformation. For this, the self has to continuously monitor its state and bring changes to the thought process. This is realized by practicing soul consciousness and through loveful remembrance of the Supreme Soul. A conscious repeated effort on creating thought on any attribute or quality leads to the realization and experience of that thought. Examples of such thoughts are: "I am soul - master of this body, I am a pure soul, I am peaceful soul, I am a loveful soul, I am a happy soul, I am a powerful soul, I am knowledgeable soul, I am a blissful soul". From regular practice of this the soul begins to experience these qualities and every action performed by the soul gets filled with these qualities. This process leads to attaining complete purity of the soul like the Supreme Soul and attains perfection in actions.

Conclusion

The application of knowledge of Rajayoga for self transformation is discussed in this paper. The self transformation is motivated by the fact that when Karma is performed by the self with perfection, it always brings satisfaction to the self and to the environment including others. To manage the self transformation, the state of the self needs to be continuously monitored. If it does not experience contentment while performing an action, it should acquire the knowledge of performing that action in a perfect manner. In many circumstances, the self may be lacking the required power (inner power) to perform the action in a perfect with perfection and in such cases, empowerment of the self is required to bring about the desired transformation.

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