

I'm Meditating, but Where the Heck Am I?

Many meditators, when they begin their practice, often experience the sensation that their attention is moving in inner space. They feel that they are somewhere “inside”—away from the grounded state of awareness—but they cannot identify where they are. They may be sensing certain phenomena such as feelings, sound, or visual images, but they have no reference for what they are experiencing.

Among the purposes for which we developed the Mudrashram® Correspondence Course was to help people develop exact knowledge of (a) where their attention is in inner space, (b) what is the structure of consciousness [e.g., to identify the vehicles or forms through which consciousness expresses], and (c) where their Soul and spirit are on the Path of spiritual evolution.

To combat the “I’m inside somewhere, but I don’t know where I am” syndrome, we have developed a series of markers or parameters for creating a map for inner space.

In meditation, attention moves on the track of the thread of consciousness from the grounded state of awareness through different vehicles of consciousness. As it moves on this thread, it finds stable places to rest and contemplate in these vehicles of consciousness—these places are called *focal points*.

A meditator, whom her Vipassana teacher has asked to “monitor the sensations arising in your body at the present time,” moves her attention to the deep body awareness center focal point, and contemplates the body from this location.

These focal points for the beginning meditator are typically what we term the *seed atoms* of these vehicles of consciousness. When we examine a seed atom, it has a number of characteristics that we can observe.

We can study a readily accessible seed atom as an example of this principle. Characteristics that make up the seed atom for the body awareness center include

- Identity (“I am my body”)
- Volition (“I see that I am able to express what I will, intend, or suggest through this form”—for the body awareness center, this might express, for example, as the ability to relax or tighten your muscles, or to lower or raise your heart rate.)
- Perception (“I perceive the anatomic structures of my body and the physiological processes that animate them.”)
- Intelligence (“I observe that the cells of the body appear to carry out their functions according to an innate intelligence—they seem to know what to do.”)
- Spatial location (“I notice that this seed atom is embedded in a track through the unconscious mind, part of which has been transformed into light, and part of which is darkened.”)
- Associated subcenters within the form (“I note that there are additional centers below the focal point that appear to express the abilities of this form”—for example, in the body awareness center, you might visualize these subcenters as the activity of nerve plexuses or the endocrine organs.)
- Quality (“I feel the body as a whole has a living, vital quality”)
- Integration (“I intuit that all of the tissues and organs of the body are working together as one organism”)

You can observe these same characteristics for seed atoms in other vehicles of consciousness. The content you observe in each vehicle of consciousness will be different. So when you are contemplating your sensory center, you will be aware of each of your senses; when you are contemplating the feeling center, you will be aware of your emotions arising in the present time.

Constructing a Map

As you continue this process of journeying along this thread of consciousness, you observe different content in each vehicle of consciousness.

You note that when you focus your attention on that same focal point you get the same type of content—while each time you visit this location, you will not get the exact same content, you will get similar content.

So each time you visit your feeling center, you will not experience the same emotions—but you will always experience emotions, sometimes in conjunction with their associated memories of experiences.

As you continue in this way, observing each of the vehicles of consciousness for the Conscious, Subconscious, Metaconscious, and Superconscious mind, you find that you begin to experience similar content when you visit the focal point in that form.

If you monitor the present time experience at a focal point, as in Vipassana; concentrating upon it, as in Raja Yoga; becoming absorbed in it using breathing methods or chanting—you will find your meditation is taking your attention to the same level.

Once you verify that (a) this focal point is stable, (b) it is always found at the same location on the thread of consciousness, (c) it has similar content each time you visit it, and (d) you can reliably reach it voluntarily using meditation methods—you can begin to construct a *map of consciousness*.

When you construct your map, you label or name each vehicle of consciousness. For example, when mapping the forms of your Conscious mind, you would label them like this: “This is my waking state of awareness. This is my movement center. This is my sensory center. This is my body awareness center. This is my feeling center. This is my thinking center, or faculty of reason. This is my ego. This is my preconscious.”

Mapping Your Personal Zone and Your Transpersonal Zone

In the Mudrashram® Correspondence Course, we created a map that encompasses each vehicle of consciousness in the Conscious, Sub-conscious, Metaconscious, and Superconscious mind.

We have prepared material that guides people through this *personal zone*.

- We have applied this detailed mapping in the webinar series we did on the vehicles of consciousness of the personality (Conscious, Subconscious, and Metaconscious mind).
- These studies are included in the material for our *Introduction to Meditation* program.
- These studies of the vehicles of consciousness comprising the personality will be encapsulated in our upcoming book, *Adventures in Pinda*.

When you go beyond the confines of the personality into the Superconscious mind, you enter the *transpersonal zone*. Here you encounter the vehicles of consciousness of your Soul, and the track of your spirit, which we call the *Nada*.

When we examine the pathway upon which the Soul dwells and evolves, we find that there are a number of stable points in which the Soul dwells, which we call *nodal points*.

When the Soul evolves, we say that it undergoes the process of *Initiation*. This movement of the Soul from one nodal point to another is reflected in a direct correspondence with the seed atoms of each of its vehicles of consciousness in the Superconscious mind. So as the Soul moves to a new nodal point, the seed atom of each vehicle of consciousness that the Soul animates moves to a corresponding nodal point on its own Plane.

We also find, corresponding to each nodal point on the path of the Soul, there is a corresponding *Nadamic tone* on the path of the spirit. In our Integral meditation system, we teach our meditation students to open the Path of the Nada to a Nadamic tone that corresponds to the nodal point in which the Soul dwells.

So for you to begin to map your transpersonal zone, you will use the techniques of transcendence meditation to begin to explore this zone. You will normally explore this zone with the help of a spiritual guide, who will protect you and show you what is in these realms.

We teach these methods of transcendence meditation in our two foundation courses, the Mudrashram® Master Course in Meditation and the Accelerated Meditation Program. In these programs, you learn how to invoke the guidance and protection of the Mudrashram® teachers, so you can leave the protected harbor of personal zone meditation and travel across the mighty sea of the Superconscious mind safely.

Those who complete these foundation courses can move on to our advanced programs, where you learn how to explore deeper strata of the Superconscious mind, and to work more closely with the Mudrashram® guides. These advanced courses include our guided meditation program, the Satsang Program Home Study Course; our in-person class, the Mudrashram® Advanced Course in Meditation; and our comprehensive study of the Great Continuum of Consciousness, the Mudrashram® Correspondence Course.

The Process of Building Your Map

Most people when they go into meditation simply go to an inner state and become absorbed in that experience. The yogis call this trance-like state of union with the object of meditation, *samadhi*.

In *samadhi*, there is the movement of your attention into an inner space after focusing on an object of meditation. You are not aware of anything outside of that experience; you are one with that experience as you are having it. It is blissful. It is ineffable.

To prepare your map of consciousness, however, you must engage the discernment of your higher mind, which is called *Buddhi*. This means that as you are having this experience, this faculty of your Soul's intuition is identifying where this experience falls on the inner grid or coordinate system that makes up your map of consciousness.

So as your attention becomes completely absorbed in the Self during a centering meditation, for example, your *Buddhi* is registering that you are accessing the Self; that you have reached the Self using a particular meditation; and that this meditation is allowing you to experience discrete characteristics of the Self. With subsequent meditations upon the Self, you might use another meditation that will reveal other characteristics of the Self.

As you expand your knowledge base of each focal point on your map of consciousness, your discernment of what content can be found at each level of your map grows. This progressive mapping of each level within you, fleshing out the bare skeleton of your initial impressions, is called building the *Antakarana*—the bridge to the Soul's illumination.

So as you are having the experience of your meditation, you must ask or invoke your illumined mind to capture your experiences and reveal where they are on the map. Once you can do this reliably, you can begin to guide your own attention in meditation. This takes the form of “This is your vehicle on the Subtle Plane, this is your vehicle in the Biophysical Universe, and this is your vehicle in the Abstract Mind Plane.”

When you can recognize these same vehicles of consciousness in others, you can then guide others through the levels of their mind. Depending on your level of spiritual development, you can guide others up to the level where you have attained on the inner Path.

Guiding requires (a) recognition of a vehicle of consciousness in others, (b) the ability to lead others' attention via suggestion or attunement, and (c) to label each vehicle of consciousness so others can differentiate that focal point from others and gather information about the content at that level. This facilitates their ability to gain discernment.

What Are Your Reference Points?

A *reference point* is an inner marker that allows you to determine how deep you have gone in your mind. For example:

- You can use an *integration center*, such as your ego or your Self, as a reference point.
- You can utilize a *spiritual essence*, such as your attentional principle, your spirit, or your Soul.
- You can employ a *boundary marker* of one of the bands of your mind, such as the gate of the Subconscious mind to delimit the zone of your Conscious mind; the eight petalled lotus for your Subconscious mind; the gateway to the Superconscious for the Metaconscious mind; and the Soul Door (Atma Dwara) at the apex of your Superconscious mind.
- You can identify the *parameters of inner space*, noting the beginning and end of a Subplane; a Plane; or a Division of the Continuum (e.g., the Subtle, Planetary, Transplanetary, Cosmic, Supracosmic, and Transcendental Bands).
- You can trace the track of a seed atom, nucleus of identity, spirit, or ensouling entity across the unconscious mind, discerning what is the beginning of its path; where it is now; what is the furthest extent of its development along that track; and what is the origin [e.g., state of Liberation] for that essence.

To develop these reference points, you will (a) first place your attention on a focal point; (b) note the characteristics you observe, and the content that arises at that level; (c) notice the differences between this and other focal points; and (d) place it in a sequential order [e.g., the sensory awareness center is after the movement awareness center].

As you study each vehicle of consciousness within a zone of the mind [e.g., the Conscious mind, or the Subtle Realm] allows you to construct parameters for this zone; or *landmarks*, which let you know that you are in that zone, and identifies the boundary where that zone ends.

How Do I Know Where I Am on the Path?

Once you have verified that (a) your attention is in a particular vehicle of consciousness; (b) you have labeled this vehicle; and (c) you have noted where this vehicle is in the sequence of vehicles of consciousness comprising each level of your mind—you are ready to move to the next step, which is discerning where you are on the Path. When you can do this reliably, and have a thorough experiential knowledge of the higher Planes, you will be able to do a Soul Reading for others.

So how do you do this?

First, you must clearly differentiate Path landmarks.

- *Division landmarks* include the Light of Liberation at the top of the Subtle Realm; the Light of Nirvana at the top of the Fifth Planetary Initiation in the Planetary Realm; or the blue sun in the Pleiadean vortex at the origin of the Monad.
- *Plane landmarks* contain the horizon image for each Plane. For example, the Light of the Universal Mind is the marker for the Abstract Mind Plane.
- *Subplane landmarks* encapsulate the common content that comprises a Subplane. So the schemas of knowledge are the prototypical content of the Temple of Science Subplane of the Abstract Mind Plane; these are different from the creative space or studio metaphor found on the Temple of Art Subplane.
- *Vehicle of consciousness landmarks* locate your form on this Subplane, and identify in which nodal point your form is embedded.

Once you have done this initial mapping of the Continuum, you can create a statement of where your Soul is on the Path. This starts with locating your Soul, and finding in what Division, Plane, Subplane, and Vehicle of Consciousness it dwells.

To identify this location exactly, you can use Extrapolation, and Parameter Division.

Extrapolation is the process of finding a point between two known parameters. So there are eleven Planes in the Planetary Realm from the Biophysical Universe to the Light of Nirvana at the top of the Fifth Planetary Initiation. You measure that you find your Soul approximately three elevenths of this distance. You know that the first Plane is the Biophysical Universe, the second is the Abstract Mind Plane, and the third is the Psychic Realm. You would then guess that your Soul dwells somewhere on the Psychic Realm.

Parameter Division is fine-tuning your rough estimate into more exact divisions. So once you guess that your Soul is on the Psychic Realm, if you know that there are seven Subplanes on that level, you can more exactly locate where it is. You reduce your scale from what Plane is your Soul on to what Subplane is your Soul on.

So here you might estimate that you are on the third Subplane of seven. This would mean your Soul is on the Healing Subplane. [You would know this information if you had read our book, *The Psychic Realm: Finding Safe Passage through the Worlds of Illusion*. You would have access to this same information in the Satsang Program Home Study Course, or the Mudrashram® Correspondence Course.]

You would then scale down to examining nodal points. From the Mudrashram® Correspondence Course, you would determine that there are fourteen nodal points on that Subplane, and you appear to be about two sevenths of the way, so your Soul is likely established in the fourth nodal point of that Subplane.

When you can do this accurately and reliably, you can determine where your Soul is on the Path exactly. With practice, your attentional principle can travel into the Superconscious, and once you discern the Plane and Subplane markers, you can actually count the nodal points.



1. Contemplate your feeling center. Identify its characteristics
 - Identity
 - Volition
 - Perception
 - Intelligence
 - Spatial location
 - Associated subcenters within the form
 - Quality
 - Integration
2. What vehicles of consciousness in your *personal zone* can you clearly identify? What about your *transpersonal zone*? Can you clearly identify your *essences of consciousness*—attentional principle, spirit, and Soul?
3. Can you identify the *boundary markers* for your Conscious mind? Your Subconscious mind? Your Metaconscious mind? Your Super-conscious mind?
4. Which *parameters* of inner space can you identify? Which tracks across the unconscious can you detect? What vehicles of consciousness can you discern? For which Subplanes, Planes, or Divisions can you delineate where they begin and end?
5. Given your current knowledge of the inner Planes, and using the methods of Extrapolation and Parameter Division, where do you intuit your Soul is on the Path?

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

