

Lataif-e-sitta

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: [navigation](#), [search](#)



This article **is missing [citations](#) or needs [footnotes](#)**. Please help add [inline citations](#) to guard against copyright violations and factual inaccuracies. *(August 2007)*

Drawing from [Qur'anic](#) verses, virtually all [Sufis](#) distinguish **Lataif-as-Sitta** ("the six subtleties"): [Nafs](#), [Qalb](#), [Sirr](#), [Ruh](#), [Khafi](#), and [Akhfa](#). These lataif (singular: latifa) designate various psychospiritual "organs" or, sometimes, faculties of sensory and suprasensory perception. They are thought to be parts of the self in a similar manner to the way [glands](#) and [organs](#) are part of the body. Similar concepts in other belief systems include [Chinese traditional](#) or [vedic chakras](#).

Contents

[\[hide\]](#)

- [1 Description](#)
- [2 The ten Lata'if](#)
- [3 Lata'if in Naqshbandi tariqah](#)
- [4 The Seven Lata'if](#)
 - [4.1 Latifat-an-Nafsi](#)
 - [4.2 Latifat-al-Qalbi](#)
 - [4.3 Latifat-ar-Ruhi](#)
 - [4.4 Latifat-as-Sirri](#)
 - [4.5 Latifat-al-Khafi](#)
 - [4.6 Latifat-al-Akhfa](#)
- [5 Literature](#)
- [6 See also](#)
- [7 References](#)
- [8 External links](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Description

In general, sufic development involves the awakening in a certain order these spiritual centers of perception that lie dormant in every person. Each center is associated with a particular color and general area of the body, as well as ofttimes with a particular prophet, and varies from Order to Order. The help of a guide is considered necessary to help activate these centers. The activation of all these "centers" is part of the inner [methodology](#) of the Sufi way or "Work". After undergoing this process, the dervish is said to reach a certain type of "completion" or becomes a Complete Man.

These six "organs" or faculties, and the purificative activities applied to them, contain the basic orthodox Sufi philosophy. The purification of elementary passionate nature (Tazkiyat-an-Nafs), followed by cleansing of the spiritual heart so that it may acquire a mirror-like purity of reflection (Tazkiyat-al-Qalb) and become the receptacle of God's love (Ishq), illumination of the spirit (Tajjali-ar-Ruh), fortified by emptying of egoic drives (Taqliyyat-as-Sirr) and remembrance of God's attributes (Dhikr), and completion of journey with purification of the last two faculties, Khafi and Akhfa. Through these "organs" or faculties the transformative results from their activation, the basic Sufi psychology is outlined and bears some resemblance to the schemata known as the [kabbalah](#) or to some the Indian [chakra](#) system.

[\[edit\]](#) The ten Lata'if

According to [Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi](#), humans are made of ten Lata'if or components of creation. Five of them pertain to Alam-e-Amr (the divine world) and the rest five pertain to Alam-e-Khalq (Created world). The five lata'if of Alam-e-Amr are Qalb, Ruh, Sirr, Khafi and Akhfa. The five lata'if of Alam-e-Khalq are Nafs, Soil (solid), Water (liquid), Air (gas) and Fire (energy).^[1]

However, for practical purposes, there are seven lata'if in most of the sufi orders. The last four (soil, water, air and fire) are collectively called Latifa Qalbia with reference to Qalib (the physical human body). Latifa Qalbia is also referred to as Sultan al-Azkar in many sufi orders.^[1]

[\[edit\]](#) Lata'if in [Naqshbandi](#) tariqah

Name	Place	Light	Effective for	Prophet
Qalb	Two fingers below the left breast	Yellow	Lust (Sexual and other desires)	Prophet Adam
Ruh	Two fingers below the right breast	Red	Anger	Prophet Nuh and Ibrahim
Sirr	Two fingers beside left breast towards center	White	Greed	Prophet Musa
Khafi	Two fingers beside right breast towards center	Black	Jealousy and scrimping	Prophet Isa
Akhfa	Exactly between breasts at the center of chest	Green	Arrogance and proudness	Prophet Muhammad
Nafs	Center of forehead	Colorless		
Qalib	Center of top of head			

[\[edit\]](#) The Seven Lata'if

[\[edit\]](#) Latifat-an-Nafsi

Main article: [Nafs](#)

According to some, this latifa is located slightly below the navel, and is yellow, for others, it is between the eyebrows and is blue.

The word nafs is usually translated as self or psyche. Its etymology is rooted in "breath" (similar to [Biblical](#) or [Kabbalistic](#) nefesh) and is common to virtually all archaic psychologies where the act of breathing was connected with life, animating otherwise lifeless object. In this respect, ancient notions of "Atman" in [Hinduism](#) (cf. German noun "Atem", breath, respiration) or Greek "pneuma" (as well as Latin "spiritus") -all equate the basic visible process of breathing with energizing principle that confers existence to an individual human being. Some Sufis consider under the term "Nafs" the entirety of psychological processes, encompassing whole mental, emotional and volitional life; however, the majority of Quranic-based Sufis are of the opinion that Nafs is a "lower", egotistical and passionate human nature which, along with Tab (literally, physical nature), comprises vegetative and animal aspects of human life. Ego may be assumed as an equivalent for Nafs in modern psychology. The central aim of the Sufi path is transformation of Nafs (technical term is "**Tazkiya-I-Nafs**" or "*purgation of the soul*") from its deplorable state of ego-centredness through various psycho-spiritual stages to the purity and submission to the will of God. Although the majority of the Sufi orders have adopted convenient 7 maqams (maqams are permanent stages on the voyage towards spiritual transformation), and some still operate with 3 stages, the picture is clear: the Sufi's journey begins with Nafs-e-Ammara (commanding soul), Nafs-e-lawwama (self-accusing soul), and ends in Nafs-e-Mutma'inna (satisfied soul) -although some Sufis's final stage is, in their technical vocabulary, Nafs-I-Safiya wa Kamila (soul restful and perfected in God's presence). In essence, this is almost identical to Christian paradigm of "vita purgativa" and various stages the spiritual aspirant traverses in the journey towards God.

[\[edit\]](#) Latifat-al-Qalbi

Main article: [Qalb](#)

According to some, this latifa is located in the left of Chest and is yellow, for others it is red. In it man witnesses his deeds. By awakening it man also gets the knowledge of the realm of Jins.

The word **Qalb**, stands for heart. In Sufi terminology, this spiritual heart (not to be confused with the blood pumping organ) is again variously described. For some, it is the seat of beatific vision. Others consider it the gate of **Ishq** or Divine love. Yet, for the majority, it is the battleground of two warring armies: those of **Nafs** and **Ruh** or spirit. Here, one again encounters terminological confusion: for the Sufis influenced by [Neoplatonism](#), a "higher" part of Nafs is equated to the **Aql** or intellect (called Nafs-I-Natiqa) or "rational soul" and is the central active agent in spiritual battle: Ruh or spirit, notwithstanding its name, is rather passive in this stage. In short, cleansing of the Qalb or heart is a necessary spiritual discipline for travellers on the Sufi path. The term for this process is Tazkiah-I-Qalb and the aim is the erasure of everything that stands in the way of purifying God's love or **Ishq**.

Often people take their heart's word (inner feeling) as truthful. If the hearts were indeed truthful, then why are not all the people of the heart united? Qalb of the common folk is in a sleeping or unconscious state, and does not possess any awareness or correct understanding. This heart can

err in judgement due to the dominance of the Self and Khannas (the Whisperer), or due to the person's own simple-mindedness. Placing trust in a sleeping (or unconscious) heart is foolish. When the Name Allah does vibrate in the heart, an awareness of Right and Wrong, and understanding follows. It is then called Qalb-e Salim (the sound Heart). Then the prominence of the meditation by Qalb changes its direction towards God; it is called Qalb-e Minib (the repentant Heart). This heart can prevent a person from mischief, but it can not make a right judgement. When the theophanies (Tajalliyat) of God begin to fall on the Heart, it is called Qalb-eshahid (the witnessing Heart). ^[2]

Qalb and Nafs form the "**Rooh-e-haivani**" (**Animal Soul**). This part of the soul has the record of every activity of life. It is also termed as **Joviya** (Confluence).

[\[edit\]](#) **Latifat-ar-Ruhi**

Main article: [Ruh](#)

According to some, this latifa is located in the right side of the chest and is red, for others it is green. After its activation the human gets acquainted with **Alam-e-Aaraf** (the place where man resides after death).

This is on the right side of the chest. This is awakened and illuminated by the meditation and one-pointed concentration on it. Once it becomes illuminated, a vibration similar to the heartbeat is felt on the right side of the chest. Then the Name of God, Ya Allah is matched with the vibrating pulse. The meditation of the soul is done in this way. This is an advancement in rank and status and is better than the Qalb. It is able to travel to the realm of the souls (the station of the Archangel Gabriel). Anger and rage are attached to it that burn and turn into majesty. ^[3]

Ruh or spirit is the second contender in the battle for human life. Again, opinions on Ruh differ among Sufis. Some deem it coeternal with God; others consider it a created entity. Be that as it may, Ruh is the plateau of consensus for the majority of Sufis, especially the early ones (before 11th/12th century C.E.). For those Sufis with Gnostic leanings (which can be found in Bektashi or Mevlevi orders), Ruh is a soul-spark, immortal entity and transegoic "true self", similar to the Christian concepts of "synteresis" or "Imago Dei", or Vedantist notion of "jiva", as well as Tibetan Buddhist "shes-pa", principle of consciousness and Taoist "shen" or spirit. But, the majority of the Sufis would consider this an unnecessarily extravagant speculation and would stick to the more orthodox notion of dormant spiritual faculty that needs to be worked upon by constant vigil and prayer in order to achieve the Tajliyya-I-Ruh, or Illumination of the spirit. Ironically, this spiritual faculty is frequently referred to in terms one encounters in connection with Nafs- "blind" life force or life current that needs to be purified by strict religious observances in order to achieve illumination.

[\[edit\]](#) **Latifat-as-Sirri**

Sirr is located in the solar plexus and is associated with the color white. It records the orders of Allah for the individual in similitude to that which is originally present in **Loh-e-mehfooz** (Preserved Scripturum). After its activation, human being gets acquainted with **Aalam-e-Misal**

(The Allegorical realm - Reflection of knowledge of the preserved Scripturum.) This center is associated with consciousness.

This is also awakened and illuminated by the meditation and one-pointed concentration on it with the Name of God, Ya Hayy, Ya Qayyum. The dream state or by spiritual separation from the physical body "transcendental meditation" it can journey to the realm of the secrets.^[4]

Sirr, literally means "the secret". Emptying of the Sirr (Taqliyya-I-Sirr) is basically focusing on God's names and attributes in perpetual remembrance or Dhikr, hence diverting one's attention from the mundane aspects of human life and fixing it on the spiritual realm. The "emptying" signifies negation and obliteration of ego-centred human propensities.

Sirr and Rooh form "**Rooh-e-Insani (Human soul)** or **Ayan**. This part of the soul is inscribed with commands characterizing the life. It is also termed as Ayan. When a human being gets acquainted with it, he can witness the record and scheme of "all that exists", written on loh-e-mahfooz.

[\[edit\]](#) **Latifat-al-Khafi**

According to some, it is located in the middle of the forehead (between the eyes or third eye position) and is black, to others blue. It's the equivalent of Kitab-e-Marqoom (the written book).

According to others this is to the right of the centre of the chest. It too is taught the Name of God Ya Wahid by meditation. It is green in colour and it can reach the realm of unification.^[5]

The term Khafi means mysterious, arcane or Latent Subtlety. It represents intuition.

[\[edit\]](#) **Latifat-al-Akhfa**

The term Akhfa or ikhfa means most arcane, deeply mysterious, or obscure, subtlety. Its location is deep inside the brain or on center-top of the head. The color of this center, according to some, is green, to others, violet. It's the **Nuqta-e-wahida** (point of unity) in every human where the **Tajalliat** (beatific visions) of Allah are directly revealed. It contains information about the hidden knowledge of the universe. By entering into this point, the human being enters the system of the universe and laws governing the universe and he understands the meaning of "for you, We (Allah) have revealed whatever is in the earth and the heavens ". This center is associated with deep perception.

According to some this is situated at the centre of the chest. It is awakened by meditating on the Name of God, Ya Ahad. It is purple in colour and it too, is connected to that veil in the realm of unification behind which is the throne of God.^[6]

The last center or subtlety is "accessible only to those who have developed the others, and belongs to the real sage." (see "The Sufis" by Idries Shah).

Akhfa and khafa form "**Rooh-e-azam**" (the great soul), also called sabita. It is a bright ring of light in which all the information pertaining to the unseen and seen cosmos is inscribed. The Attributes of God that have been transferred to the existents and have become parts of the mechanism of the universe are collectively known as the Incumbent Knowledge (Ilm-e-wajib). Knowledge of the Incumbent means knowledge that has been transferred to the existents, that is, it refers to those Attributes of God with which existents enjoy affinity and correlation. The Knowledge of the Incumbent is also known as the Knowledge of the Pen (Ilm-e-Qalum).

First Descent is that state when God exhibited the program present in His Mind as He Willed. The creative formulae of the cosmos are the secrets of the First Descent. Why did God opt to create the universe and what is the Will of God, which He intends to accomplish? Reflection of all these things is found in the Great Soul; The Firmly Affixed Inscription. One side of Great Soul is the Obscure Subtlety (akhfa) and the other side is the Latent Subtlety (khafi) Great Soul is the storehouse of eleven thousand beatific visions of God. The person who attains communion with these two subtleties can observe these visions. These two subtleties of akhfa and khafi are found in every human being irrespective of who he is, what he is, or his station in life.

"Great Soul", "Human Soul", and "Animal Soul" are actually levels of functioning of the same soul and are not three different souls. These three components are like three rings of light infused in one another and are collectively called the soul, the indivisible entity, the Lord's edict, or simply the man. Man gets acquainted with them one by one by [Muraqaba](#) (Sufi Meditation), [Dhikr](#) (Remembrance of God) and purification of one's psyche/life from negative thinking patterns (fear, depression), negative emotions (hate, contempt, anger, lust) and negative practices (hurting others psychologically or physically). Loving God and loving/helping every human being irrespective of his race, religion, or nationality, and without consideration for any possible reward, is the key to ascension according to Sufis.

[\[edit\]](#) Literature

- [Robert Frager](#): *Heart, Self, & Soul*; The Sufi Psychology of Growth, Balance, and Harmony
- [Azeemi](#)'s lectures on [Qalander Baba Auliya](#)'s book Loh-o-Qalam.

[\[edit\]](#) See also

- [Awareness](#)
- [Enlightenment \(spiritual\)](#)
- [Spirituality](#)

[\[edit\]](#) References

1. [^] ^{*a*} ^{*b*} [Jalwa Gah-e-Dost](http://urdu.islahulmuslimeen.org/urdu/books/jalwagah/15.htm) (Urdu) 2nd edition (2008) by Khwaja Muhammad Tahir Bakhshi: <http://urdu.islahulmuslimeen.org/urdu/books/jalwagah/15.htm>
2. [^] http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Qalb
3. [^] http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_Human_Soul

4. [^ http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Sirri](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Sirri)
5. [^ http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Khaffi](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Khaffi)
6. [^ http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Akhfa](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Religion_of_God/The_spiritual_entity_Akhfa)

[edit] External links

- [Levels of The Heart complete guide to the unveiling of the secrets of the hearts](#)
- [On the nature of the nafs](#)
- [The nafs in sleep and death](#)