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Question? Mark



# The Teaching of Enlightenment

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This teaching is a revelation of supreme understanding, a breakthrough vision of human enlightenment based on multidimensional evolution into wholeness and transcendence.

Emerging from the intelligence of the now, the teaching transcends concepts of enlightenment that live in traditions of the past. Subtle and challenging in nature, it is directed to sincere seekers of truth, those few who strive for complete understanding and realization.

The essence of this path is the awakening of the inner state, realization of the soul, transformation of consciousness and surrender into the beyond. The gradual unfoldment of the awakening process as taught by Anadi is rooted in the self-knowledge, soul-remembrance and the art of meditation.

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Please note that in the past Anadi was teaching under the name Aziz Kristof.



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## Opening

The purpose of the teaching is to illuminate the multidimensional evolution of human consciousness from the state of ignorance to complete enlightenment. It is a teaching of spiritual guidance directed to uncompromising seekers of truth and wholeness, a precise elucidation of the deepest secrets of the spiritual realm and the path to self-realization. We do not offer it as a manual on the subject of enlightenment, for the ultimate truth of awakening cannot be reduced to a conceptual model, but rather as a guiding light for those mature enough to apply conceptual knowledge towards a non-conceptual apperception of reality. Accordingly, the explanations and tools presented here point beyond words to the realm of direct experience and pure understanding.

Although we aspire to unravel the steps of the awakening process in a clear and comprehensive way, the revelations of the teaching can still be easily misinterpreted and misunderstood. There is an immense chasm between theoretical knowledge and real understanding, and concepts that have the power to illuminate the truth of our inner reality can also obscure it, depending on their interpretation. In most cases, to awaken complete understanding, a seeker must have the support of a fully qualified teacher to penetrate the conceptual constructs set forth herein. Ultimately, to truly understand the teaching, its experiential essence must be realized through the unfoldment of one's own evolution and enlightenment.

Although it is indeed a long journey from ignorance to complete self-realization, the way to truth is far more than the attainment of progressively higher spiritual states. It is not a linear path in the sense of being goal-fixated, because from the standpoint of the soul, each step of the journey is complete, thus whole in and of itself. Neither is it a finite path, for there is no end to enlightenment. That which we are everlastingly realizing yet can never fully attain - the unknown heart of the beloved's presence - is eternally beyond and ever ahead of the intelligence that pursues it. Although the god state can never be entirely grasped, our evolution towards its divine radiance is the very meaning of our existence. It is indeed the journey, not its culmination that is the

essence of our spiritual unfoldment. Honoring this, we should regard the ineffable mystery of the spiritual path with humility and wonder, its majesty with a sense of awe.

The teaching is a response to the deepest need for true understanding that lies within the consciousness of every seeker. It is a vital source of spiritual knowledge addressed both to those commencing their inner journey, as well as those who have already reached higher levels of spiritual realization. The teaching is not a personalized interpretation of spiritual reality, but a reflection of truth with the power to broaden understanding of the inner dimension and assist in navigating the intricacies of the inner path. One should not feel daunted by the complex nature of the path to enlightenment we describe, but seize the opportunity to dive with passion into the rare lucidity of spiritual understanding that is being revealed. There is no greater blessing for a spiritual seeker than to arrive at complete clarity about the way to truth and wholeness.

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It is essential that the teaching material presented here is studied in the context of actual inner work, or else it remains purely conceptual. Without the foundation of practice and experiential knowledge of the inner realm, a reader will not be able to grasp the meaning of the teaching, and worse yet, will create an illusion of understanding. When not based on spiritual realization, intellectual knowledge is merely a hollow substitute for experience. The reality of the awakening process is extremely complex, and must be illuminated gradually in accord with one's inner progression on the path. Unless one is dedicated to the task of awakening, and sincerely seeks true clarity about the path to wholeness, to approach this material solely from the standpoint of the mind, will defeat the very purpose of its presentation.

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## The Goal of Spiritual Wholeness

Crowning the principal aims of evolution - human completion, emancipation from suffering, the end of ignorance and reunion with the self - is its supreme purpose, expansion into the state of wholeness. While it is true that liberation is the highest goal of all traditions of enlightenment, from the point of view of the teaching, liberation that is not based on wholeness is no more than a denial of human existence. True liberation includes transcendence, but is not defined by freedom from ignorance, which could be considered a 'negative' enlightenment. Enlightenment is not release from the false, but expansion into the true.

At the heart of enlightenment lies the state of wholeness, which is founded upon the complete awakening of our original soul identity. The state of wholeness cannot be captured by the earthly mentality - it is beyond the imagination of the human mind. In fact, it does not belong to the human reality at all. Only by transcending the dimension of forgetfulness can we access the truth of our future self.

Although the realization of wholeness is unique for each individual, the awakening of the inner state is the existential foundation all souls require to become whole, for it is only by expanding into the states beyond the mind that the soul actualizes her multifaceted existence beyond the limits of her human identity. Abiding in the inner realm, she gradually merges with the timeless ground of existence, the womb from which she gives birth to her complete presence. We cannot even speak about wholeness and soul-realization in separation from this idea of the unity of the soul with the absolute reality. It is by the power of her union with the supreme self that the soul finally awakens the true identity of her ultimate subjectivity.

Although our journey towards wholeness is rooted in our evolution into the realm of the inner state, we must not confuse abidance in states beyond the mind with wholeness itself. The one who becomes whole is not a state we abide in, but the individual consciousness that embodies it, our pure subjectivity. To expand into her

ultimate potential, the soul must not only reach unity with the beyond, but also awaken her multidimensional body of I am. To know what wholeness truly means, we must become whole and complete on all levels.

Wholeness is a pure reflection of universal perfection in the heart of an individual being. For the soul to become whole, she must reach completion in her human existence and align her human identity with her awakening process. She has to reach maximal integrity within her human personality before she is free to realize herself, for unless the personality matures to the highest level of wisdom and purity, the soul cannot integrate her human incarnation with her eternal essence. The human consciousness of the soul must be refined to the point that it can serve as a suitable vehicle for her awakening and transcendence.

The state of wholeness is the flowering of a multidimensional awakening that moves us through the expansion into the states beyond the mind, human completion, soul-awakening, ego-transcendence, and finally, surrender into the beyond. We enter the path to wholeness when we awaken to our evolutionary goal and begin to serve our soul and her evolution. From here the process unfolds through an energetic expansion into the realm of pure subjectivity realized through the opening of the inner state and the awakening to me. Next comes the awakening of the soul, in which our sense of identity shifts from ego to I am. At the culmination of this process, self-realization, the mind is surrendered and one's relative consciousness merges with the inner realm. The soul reaches the state of transcendence and, liberated from identification with her human personality, returns to the abode of her origin. Dwelling in her primordial home-state, she re-embodies her original condition of wholeness - her eternal identity actualized at last. To become whole is to become a divine being, free of any sense of incompleteness, emancipated from the personality and absolutely merged with the one existence.

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## The Frontiers of Enlightenment

Is enlightenment freedom from the mind? Is it the realization of pure consciousness? An awakening to the dimension of love? The ability to be continuously present or abide in being? Is it multidimensional or can it be reduced to a single state or realization? Does it imply a complete understanding of reality? What do we really mean by enlightenment? Enlightenment to what?

Because one cannot know the unknown unless one transcends the known, the truth of enlightenment is beyond the comprehension of anyone who has not realized it. In spite of being a central concept in the realm of spirituality, enlightenment remains an unknown reality. Although certain past traditions present valid information on the subject, they can be a distorting influence, conditioning us with their incomplete understanding. Rarely, if ever, do they point to complete self-realization and the state of wholeness. Due to their limited vision, they tend to compound rather than resolve seekers' confusion and projections with ambiguous and conflicting interpretations, often twisting earnest yearning into pure fantasy. With so many incomplete teachings saturating the spiritual scene, how can we reach the clarity of mind necessary to grasp the true nature of enlightenment?

The aim of the teaching is to expose the fragmented vision of enlightenment so prevalent in contemporary spirituality, and reveal a holistic vision of human evolution and awakening. It is not our intention to put forward yet another oversimplified explanation of enlightenment to satisfy the unawakened intelligence of the general population of seekers. What we offer is a vision of enlightenment for those who seek spiritual wholeness and never-ending expansion into the realm of universal truth.

The teaching is unique in that it does not view enlightenment as the static climax of spiritual evolution, but as an eternally expanding evolutionary movement of intelligence and consciousness bound to our individual potential and spiritual destiny. Enlightenment is not a uniform state, but a realm of entry into ever-growing unity with

the heart of creation unique for each soul. Although rooted in the inner realm of universal subjectivity, the enlightened reality can only be accessed through the awakening of our individual subjectivity; the presence of the personal I am is what makes the awakening to the ultimate possible. It is our individual essence that journeys through the organic process of evolution, progressively shifting through the states of awakening and levels of surrender that lead us ever-deeper into the supreme beyond.

How far we can expand the frontiers of our enlightenment obviously depends upon our spiritual capacity, inspiration, knowledge and intelligence, but of equal consequence is the limiting factor of our own unconsciousness. It is clear that enlightenment is an expansion of human consciousness, perception and existence beyond the confused condition of ignorance, but our vision of enlightenment cannot be complete unless we know, in addition to our potential, our evolutionary limits. Because enlightenment exists only as the reversal of its opposite, we must see it not only in relation to unconditional truth, but to the depth of our human ignorance as well. Our expansion into enlightenment is in fact a process of breaking through the gravity and resistance of the unenlightened reality; it is a power struggle between the forces of the inertia pulling us into the plane of forgetfulness and our ability to transcend them that ultimately defines the territorial boundaries of our human awakening.

Any kind of spiritual awakening we experience occurs only in relation to the level of evolution we have reached thus far. The more our consciousness evolves, the more its standards are raised for its further, more complete enlightenment. By 'complete' we do not suggest the end of enlightenment, but our completion in the realm of human enlightenment and the realization of wholeness. The concept of complete enlightenment must be seen from the perspective of the infinite and eternally evolving truth of creation, unfathomable by individual consciousness. No one can be said to be completely enlightened in a literal sense, for to apply the notion of completion to the realm of truth presumes its finitude. We must treat the idea of enlightenment with a humility born of understanding our human limits within the limitlessness of the divine mystery; our personal enlightenment is only a point of entry into universal evolution and awakening. To presume that one can arrive at the end of truth and reach the ultimate frontier of enlightenment is totally absurd.

Now that the relative nature of 'complete enlightenment' is clear, we can relate it to our earthly dimension and human identity. Not all souls are destined to reach exactly the same level of realization, but we can make the generalization that although there are many stages of awakening, the ultimate frontier of enlightenment for a human soul is her liberation, the point at which she leaves her personalized identity and earthly consciousness behind. Liberation does not end the soul's evolution, but it does end the human journey of the soul. When she transcends the plane of lower intelligence, the soul merges with the realm of pure subjectivity, leaving the human ego behind. She becomes one with universal evolution, supporting the evolutionary



purpose of creation through her own existence and everlasting enlightenment. The soul, our universal self, continues her eternal expansion of light and consciousness into further enlightenment - beyond enlightenment and beyond.

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## The Complete Map of Awakening

Although many traditions and schools of enlightenment have attempted to draw objective maps of awakening, from our standpoint these maps do not reflect a true model of wholeness, for they fail to accurately describe the stages of our evolution into the inner state, the awakening of the soul, and the soul's multidimensional movement into the beyond. Most available teachings not only lead to a partial realization at best, but create imbalance by stressing particular aspects of evolution while ignoring others. Certain schools point to an awakening in which only one aspect of the inner state is embodied, while others overlook the realization of the soul and focus exclusively on transcendence. Some even misconstrue abidance in the inner state or the realization of one of many mystical states for enlightenment. But perhaps the most misguided of all are those that suggest that everyone is already enlightened.

Incomplete teachings can seriously limit or even cripple our spiritual vision, for without a holistic and complete map of awakening that clearly reflects the fundamental laws of human evolution, a seeker has little chance of finding his way towards the fulfillment of his ultimate potential. Because they are generally so vague and one-dimensional, traditional descriptions of the awakening process do not offer us the precise conceptual tools we need to understand our internal evolution. The plane of enlightenment is so vast and intricate that unless a new, higher level of detail is brought to bear into its description, it will never be seen for what it truly is, a relevant and tangible reality directly connected to the natural growth towards wholeness.

Although the terms 'enlightenment' and 'awakening' are often used interchangeably, it is important to note that they do not signify the same level of spiritual attainment. When we refer to an enlightened state, we point to self-realization - transcendence and the actualization of wholeness. 'Awakening', on the other hand, indicates a singular expansion beyond the mind within the total course of one's evolution. To have arrived at one of the many states beyond the mind is far from enlightenment in

the ultimate sense of the word. It is only by traversing various dimensions of awakening that one finally arrives at complete, multidimensional enlightenment.

One must also be clear that after experiencing an awakening to one of the various states beyond the mind, there is a need to stabilize and then integrate the state that one has shifted to. Seldom, if ever, does sudden awakening result in a lasting inner realization. Unless the state we have awakened is stabilized, its fluctuations prevent it from becoming a permanent foundation of our existence. Once stabilized, the state must also be integrated so that it can reach its final depth and purity, and become energetically and existentially attuned to the body, mind and various other aspects of our whole being.

The map presented below is a condensed description of the awakening process that is explicated extensively further in the teaching. Although the various states of realization do not always manifest in exactly the same sequence, the model presented here provides the necessary guidance needed to grasp the fundamental laws of the awakening process.

### **1. The State of Presence**

The realization of the state of presence, or consciousness without content, is the foundation of our awakening, for without it, there is no way to rise above the mind and become truly whole. The state of presence is the center of the soul's intelligence and the true nature of awareness. Until we regain the essence of I am in the mind we are imprisoned in a shell of personality, with no solid existence, no center of identity, no soul. Only by awakening pure awareness can we break through our false personality and meet ourselves beyond the mental dimension, putting an end to the ignominy of forgetfulness.

Because few teachers and seekers are able to pinpoint the exact energetic location of pure awareness, it is often confused with the experience of being, or an overall sense of presence. It is essential to understand that the correct realization of the state of presence is experienced exclusively in the headspace. The state is initially recognized as the sense of I am in the area of the middle of the head with the eyes closed, and towards the depths of the head with the eyes open. As it matures, the state naturally expands into the entire headspace and around it.

The state of presence is awakened through self-enquiry or initiation from a spiritual guide, and then stabilized through the practice of self-remembrance, which eventually yields an unbroken continuity of pure awareness. The awakening of awareness is of immense significance, for it represents the soul's entry into to the realm of pure subjectivity, which frees her to begin the process of extricating her existence from the collective state of unconsciousness.

## **2. Being**

Awareness alone cannot enter the inner realm unless it becomes absorbed in the stillness of being, the energetic dimension of the vertical reality through which the soul abides in the isness of totality. Being is that which allows us to rest in existence - the intermediary space that links consciousness with the source and maintains the gravitational equilibrium between creation and the original void. It is only through being that the depth of reality can be divulged to our consciousness.

Being is the impersonal ground of the beyond, the true foundation of meditation. The surrender of the soul to the now opens the door to being, which is felt all over the body as an energetic expansion with its main energy flowing downwards. The primary means to reach and deepen the experience of being is the practice of meditation in the mode of 'non-doing', or 'just sitting', which opens us to the gravity of the now so that the energy of the soul can be absorbed into a state of repose. This practice can be supported by belly breathing, which balances our energy and assists the sense of I am to descend towards the unmanifested.

Although it anchors us in the now, the experience of being does not have the quality of complete, unconditional rest prior to the realization of the absolute.

## **3. The Absolute State**

In the profound realization of the absolute, the soul transcends the fluctuations in her experience of being and moves into a state of unbroken rest. In the pure rest of the absolute the complete motionlessness of being reflects the perfection of universal stillness. The absolute state represents our union with the unborn, uncreated source. It is the ground of oneness through which we reach unconditional absorption in the beyond.

In the absolute, one experiences unity with reality only within the being aspect of I am; the mind and the consciousness of the soul have not yet merged with the source.

## **4. The Heart**

The heart belongs to the realm of the beloved, love and grace. No one can reach completion without actualizing its essence. The opening of the spiritual heart is necessary to become whole, but impossible before we have first solidified our identity beyond the mind and become absorbed in the source. Paths that limit their view of spirituality to love and devotion cannot serve as a bridge to reality unless they are grounded in awareness and being. Without the foundation of the inner state, the heart has no reality apart from emotions. In order to open us to the dimension of the soul and the divine, the heart must be met beyond emotion in a space of clarity

and stillness.

The initial phase of our journey into the heart's essence is its energetic opening, which brings us closer to the experience of oneness with creation. The complete enlightenment of the heart requires the purification of one's intention and the realization of the soul.

### **5. Transparent Me**

The awakening of the soul begins in the heart, but its further deepening occurs through the realization of transparent me, a holistic experience of unity with existence reached through expansion into the whole of oneself. The state of transparent me represents our true awakening to the pure subjective existence of the soul. It is a fusion of our existence with the inner state, coupled with the embracement of our complete identity.

### **6. The State Beyond Polarities**

The state beyond polarities is the first step of transcendence. It is the meeting of oneness and non-separation - the heart and the absolute - that manifests when our consciousness enters the realm of surrender. Through a radical integration of awareness, heart and being in which all the three aspects of I am merge into a single state, one moves beyond the polarities of inner and outer, here and now. By the power of this unification, a deeper surrender and absorption in the beyond takes place.

The state beyond polarities is a transitional state between presence and absence. One has stepped into the beyond, but not yet moved fully to the 'other side'.

### **7. The Transcendental State**

In her first entry into the absolute, the soul reaches unconditional absorption in the beyond through the gateway of being. Her consciousness, however, still remains outside of the absolute. The transcendental state can be seen as the second entry into the absolute, for here the consciousness of the soul, her I am in the mind, shifts into the dimension of absence. The mind, the ego and the sense of separate identity are uprooted so that the soul, as pure me, can move freely into the divine realm.

There is still a long journey between the initial shift to the transcendental state and its complete realization. The shift into the realm of absence is not transcendence itself - it is merely the initiation of the complex process of ego dissolution through which the soul gradually renounces her human personality and surrenders her existence to the beyond. In order to reach transcendence, the soul must fully extract her true identity from the construct of subconscious me. Only then does she have enough force to

cross over with her whole existence into the realm of absence to re-embody her original state.

The transcendental state is the ultimate frontier of our human expansion into the inner plane - the final portal through which we pass to liberation. Yet, as mere abidance here can divert us from our ultimate goal, it can also be seen as last barrier. In the transcendental state, the soul reaches her deepest absorption in the beyond, but the human is still bound to the earth; he maintains his grip on the soul, blocking her complete release from the dimension of forgetfulness.

### **8. Samadhi: The State of Surrender**

Prior to realizing the true goal of the transcendental state, liberation, the relative me of the soul has not yet been merged, and continues to exist as a separate entity within our consciousness. To fully embody the transcendental state, one has to reach the supreme state of surrender, samadhi. The state of surrender transcends all states, as here not only awareness, but our very me, becomes absorbed in the realm of absence. Samadhi is a unity of being and non-being, the consciousness of the now and the void of the beyond, I am and the absolute. It is an exalted union of the two polarized aspects of soul-realization - complete awakening and ultimate surrender. Culminating the process of the soul's gradual re-absorption into reality is the unconditional fusion of her me with the heart of the beloved. Samadhi is the true foundation of our liberation from separate consciousness, the ground of our dissolution into the source of creation.

### **9. Liberation**

Liberation is the ultimate fruit of samadhi: the very merging of the personality with the soul, the total dissolution of the I-construct in the mind. Far more than the attainment of another, deeper energetic state, it is our radical transcendence of illusion and the end of incarnations - the state of no-return. Liberation is the end of the process of the soul's transcendence, for here she fully exits the plane of the forgotten self at last. Emancipated from her human identity and earthly consciousness, the soul returns to the abode of universal intelligence and, from the depths of original absence, reclaims the light of her primordial presence.

### **The Measure of Evolution**

It must be noted that one's level of evolution cannot simply be seen as a linear progression through various states of inner expansion. The inner state is merely the internal space requisite for the awakening of the soul. It is the consciousness that embodies the inner reality that is the true measure of the evolutionary value of any awakened state. It is not *what* has been attained that matters most, but *who* has attained it. That who is our level of consciousness and intelligence – and the

existential depth of our very soul, the subject of all stages of awakening. Hence, someone with a profoundly realized state of presence may in fact be more conscious and evolved than someone abiding in the absolute state. The deeper our inner realization, the more we can embody our eternal self; but it is the relative awakening of the who that constitutes the ultimate significance of any attainment.

## Evolution into Wholeness - The Complete Human Being

The map of awakening we have described applies strictly to the internal evolution of the soul. The purpose of evolution, however, is not only to reach self-realization, but to become whole, which includes completion in the human dimension as well. The spiritual path should not be seen as an escape from the difficulties of human life, but a journey towards wholeness. It is only by becoming a real and fully conscious human being that we can face and transform all earthly challenges. The way to wholeness involves the completion of many aspects of our human existence: purification of the subconscious mind, emotional healing, psychological maturation, the development of a harmonious connection with the world, the fulfillment of core desires and the ending of karma.

Purification and healing are essential in order to release the burden of the past, and accompany the entire course of our inner awakening. These extremely delicate processes cannot be completed by willpower alone; for true purification and healing to take place, one has to be in touch with the light of the soul and open to the dimension of grace. Only the creator of the soul can fully transform and ultimately remove the many layers of subconscious tendencies, blocked energies and emotional wounds that exist within us. Still, each soul does have the capacity to develop ways to deal with those areas of her existence that are incomplete. She must take responsibility for her own growth, facing with courage and wisdom all the suppressed, unconscious and immature areas of both her internal and external reality. By exercising her free will and cultivating qualities that reflect a dignity of intelligence, true sincerity, purity of intention and honesty, she prepares the ground to receive assistance from the beyond.

As the weight of the past gradually lifts and we continue to evolve through further life experiences, the soul gathers enough internal space for her intelligence and emotional body to reach the necessary degree of maturity and fulfillment in the human dimension for true opening to the beyond to occur. To arrive at this relative psychological completion is imperative for any seeker on the path. Only when freed from her human identity and the pull of earthly existence can the soul fully expand into her true potential and become her eternal self once again.

The psychological evolution of the human and the internal evolution of the soul are mutually supporting along the path. To reach psychological completion as a human, one must awaken the states beyond the mind and the soul, and for the soul to

expand into the beyond, one must reach a deep sense of completion as a human being living on earth. Only a human who is over and done with the earthly dimension is ready to experience the freedom of the soul - and only when the soul is free can she embody an awakened human existence.

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## Pitfalls and Errors on the Path

Because we are born into the dimension of forgetfulness, we are constantly being diverted as we move towards truth, pulled by forces of unconsciousness that would hamper our evolution or even jeopardize our awakening. Whenever there is progression towards light and truth, opposing forces and energies are present as well. A seeker should be aware of numerous pitfalls awaiting him along the path. Although they can indeed threaten our progress, the obstacles we are likely to encounter on our journey are not inherently negative, for moving through and beyond them is a natural, and therefore positive part of the maturation of our intelligence and consciousness. There are countless types of pitfalls, but we can regard them as falling into three primary domains - understanding, practice and ego - as explored below.

### Understanding in Action

Sadly, the vast majority of seekers get spiritually stuck the moment they step onto the inner path. This is due to their ignorance, or to the fact that they follow teachings that present a shallow vision of spirituality and enlightenment. They perform all sorts of practices in the name of self-realization, but get no closer to truth; lost in the dark, they remain unable to move any further out of unconsciousness. To avoid such stagnation, one has to enquire into the essence of spirituality as well as investigate the complex science of spiritual evolution as embodied in high teachings. Only in this way can a seeker discover the true purpose and significance of the path. True understanding of the inner dimension is a flowering of our intelligence and spiritual intuition and reflects our maturity and sensitivity to the inner realm. It is absolutely essential for our evolutionary advancement.

Spiritual practice is understanding in action based on the science of the inner states that aims at the transformation of our consciousness and being. At the heart of true practice lies insight into the nature of pure subjectivity - awakening to I am - the

primary means through which a seeker cultivates the subtle art of becoming increasingly established in the realm of the self.

In order to experience clear progress, one has to focus in a precise manner on the particular dimension of expansion that corresponds to one's present level of evolutionary development. Unless we have a clear understanding of the state we are in, there is a danger that we will miss the intermediate steps of awakening necessary to bridge us with far deeper levels of realization. In trying to get ahead of ourselves we make a fruitless effort to reach depths that we have no means to access. For instance, to aim at the dissolution of self or the actualization of oneness prior to first establishing the state of presence would be a misguided effort, for without continuity of pure awareness, a practice of surrender may result in even deeper unconsciousness. The inner work is progressive in nature; each phase of expansion must become stable and permanent so that it can serve as a solid foundation for the ensuing awakening. It is inappropriate to pursue advanced goals before first being energetically and existentially grounded in the fundamentals.

The inner realm is such an unknown land that without the proper conceptual tools and guidance, one is simply unable to navigate the process of expanding into and within it. The ability to correctly identify what is still incomplete in oneself and recognize the next step to be taken reflects a well-refined attunement to the natural evolution of the soul towards her wholeness. In the absence of this inner clarity, one must receive support from a competent teacher.

### **Errors in the Verification of Awakening**

There are three common problems in the evaluation of one's inner realization: first, one may mistakenly believe that one has arrived at an awakened state when none whatsoever has been reached; second, one may have arrived at an awakened state, yet due to a lack of sensitivity, be unable to register it; and third, having experienced a real awakening, one may not grasp its true nature and significance due to the fact that intelligence has not yet integrated with the newly awakened state. We find the first problem to be the most common.

Many seekers abandon the inner work altogether having arrived at only a superficial spiritual realization. This is especially true in cases of those who follow the simplistic paradigm of sudden awakening or believe that in order to reach enlightenment it is sufficient to have a purely intellectual insight into the nature of reality. Premature claims of enlightenment often lead to false spiritual confidence, even arrogance. To be caught in the delusion that one has reached enlightenment when one has not, is not only a waste of the evolutionary energy previously accumulated, but can easily block one's further evolution.

### **Attachment to Conceptual Understanding**

In spite of the fact that the spiritual dimension exists beyond the boundaries of the mind, understanding plays an essential role in our awakening process. Right understanding can in fact be seen as a bridge between the plane of unconsciousness and true reality. Superior concepts are not merely intellectual metaphors - they resonate with the energy of the truth they represent. Conceptual understanding of ideals such as the self, oneness or enlightenment can even inspire us to initiate the spiritual quest in order to realize them. Still, concepts are only representations of reality in the mind; reality itself is non-conceptual in essence. There is always the danger that by becoming overly attached to intellectual ideas we might find ourselves living in a virtual reality of mental constructs that actually separates us from reality as it is. For instance, concepts like 'everything is consciousness' or 'there is no self', though they hold relative truth, are still of the mind, not reality. Reality as it is cannot be captured by such notions, as it is neither consciousness nor no-self, nor both, nor neither. Reality is nameless, unfathomable by the limited mind.

A dangerous spiritual delusion tied to the realm of understanding is the mistaking of conceptual insight for actual realization. This is the case of a false, intellectual 'enlightenment', in which one becomes programmed to perceive reality in an 'enlightened' way through pseudo-sophisticated ideas and spiritual slogans. One can be convinced that 'all is empty' or 'there is only the self' and actually mentally experience existence as such, yet still not be established in any state beyond the mind, as ignorant to one's true self as ever. Indeed, there are seekers, even teachers, who fool around with concepts, display fake cleverness, and deceive themselves and others into believing that intellectual insights actually constitute real spiritual attainments.

Even though conceptual understanding is essential in our spiritual quest, attachment to a vision of reality based on the mind can obstruct our expansion into non-conceptual existence. True understanding is a direct and pure knowing of reality that reflects the soul's blueprint and unique angle of perception. It is not a product of personal knowledge, ideas or philosophies, but an expression of the wisdom of universal intelligence beholding the truth of creation and evolution through the eyes of an awakened soul.

### **Evolutionary Imbalance**

One of the most serious pitfalls on the path is an imbalance between one's inner and outer evolution. Some misguided seekers suppress their psychological issues, fears and natural desires in the name of the quest for enlightenment. They see their outer reality as the 'enemy' of inner peace and stillness, and neglect their emotional development by spending all of their time in meditation and solitude. By becoming attached to the peace and calm of meditation, or spending excessive time alone, one tends to develop an unhealthy fear of the world, with its many challenges and distractions. The completion of the human personality requires that we engage in a

well-balanced relationship with the world, for one can never be truly whole without psychological balance and emotional maturity.

In addition to becoming imbalanced in our relationship with the world and our human existence, we can also develop an imbalance in our internal growth towards the self by becoming too extreme or one-sided in our practice. For instance, some over-crystallize awareness, neglecting the expansion into being or the awakening of the heart; others deepen being or awaken the heart, but fail to address the work with awareness. Perhaps the most common imbalance we come across is a disproportionate development between the mind and the heart. Many on path of love disregard the evolution of their intelligence and awareness and become trapped in emotional states devoid of clarity and inner stability, while those who strictly follow the path of awareness and understanding tend to repress their sensitivity, and remain alienated from their divine essence as a result. To become integrated and whole, one has to follow the principle of harmonious evolution and possess a complete and holistic vision of oneself.

### **The Snare of Ego**

Due to their simplistic nature, traditional models of enlightenment do not offer sufficient conceptual protection against the menace of ego. Because enlightenment is commonly misunderstood as occurring through the annihilation of the ego, it is assumed that after awakening, no challenges on the level of our ego-identity remain. However, even though the supreme goal of our evolution is transcendence of the mind and personality, the ego cannot be entirely dropped before our final liberation. Enlightenment is not a static condition that represents the absence of individuality, but a continuous process of arriving at increasingly higher levels of being, consciousness and understanding. Prior to transcendence, the ego, as the intelligence of our relative consciousness, naturally accompanies us through each stage of our growth, witnessing the awakening of the inner states, consciousness, intelligence and the heart. It is not the ego's absence, but its purified presence that supports our internal awakening.

In actuality, the nature of ego is twofold. The aspect of ego that surrenders to the soul's intent is the very energy the soul uses for her evolution towards light. However, as long as the ego is lost in the past and holds on to its ignorance, it inevitably hinders our evolution by continuing to rule our consciousness as host.

Irrespective of their relative awakening, the ego remains the center of identity for most seekers as their false me. They are egos in their essence, not yet souls. Prior to soul-realization, the ego claims awakening, believing that it owns the inner state and the knowledge I am. As it matures in its evolution, however, it begins to recognize that it was originally created to serve our awakening, and that its final destiny is to surrender itself to the soul as the reigning I am. But until the ego has

been sufficiently cleansed with the light of higher intelligence, it will resist its own dissolution; even if it realizes its own unreality, it will continue to return through the back door to assert its supremacy. Not only will the ego refuse to surrender, but it will insist on taking complete control of our inner reality. This is the point where one usually proclaims: "I am enlightened!", "I am a master!", "I have reached.", "I. I. I."

Until the mind surrenders, we remain vulnerable to the ego's impure tendencies. In the initial stages of its spiritual endeavor, the ego's immaturity leads it to treat spirituality as a playground for its basic emotions. It uses spirituality to wallow in self pity, lack of self-worth, a guilty conscience, or any other number of defilements, or alternately, to display its pride, arrogance and competitiveness. The spiritual ego is in fact quite worldly. Entering the path has not changed its basic neurotic nature, only the sphere of its activities. Now, instead of wanting fame or fortune, it wants to reach god or attain enlightenment. In both cases we encounter the same bogus ego displaying its vanity.

In its madness, the ego constantly seeks ways to sneak into spiritual territory. It tries to make itself special in one way or another by taking on any number of roles - holy man, rebel, eccentric, even redeemer. The idea of being holy appeals to the ego because it craves respect, if not from others, at least from itself. Or perhaps it is more attracted to rebelliousness and chooses to perform the role of an unholy character, enjoying the chance to show off how original it is. Maybe it wishes to become a healer or a great master, for it finds the idea of helping others exciting. It may even believe that it has a unique role to play on earth and has been chosen for great things. But perhaps the most insidious way that the ego can assert its self-worth is by assuming a stance of humility and devotion to inflate its false sense of piety. No matter what role the ego chooses to play, its performances are no more than pitiful attempts to maintain its fundamentally empty identity.

The more conscious we become, the more cautious we must be, for the ego's games become increasingly sophisticated as we evolve. Letting go of the ego is not only the final goal of the inner path, but an unremitting act of becoming real inside at any level of awakening. To be true to oneself is to abide in the reality beyond self-image in constant surrender to the purity of one's original I am. As cunning as it is, the ego ultimately has no way to succeed in manipulating the spiritual path for its own purposes. Sooner or later it must relinquish itself at the altar of our original self, for it has no reality in its essence - it does not exist apart from the illusory image it projects.



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# The Teaching of Enlightenment

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## Misconceptions of Enlightenment

Not all teachings point to the highest truth, just as not all seekers seek the highest knowledge and realization. Traditions of enlightenment reveal varying levels of understanding, as they reflect the particular intelligence and capacity of their founders. If we seek complete clarity and illumination, we must exercise caution as we explore the many existing interpretations of enlightenment. To cut through naïve views, spiritual clichés, and false ideas, we must sharpen our intelligence, develop true understanding and pass through the fire of necessary experiences.

Below we explore the major misconceptions of enlightenment in relation to their four sources: preconceived notions, a philosophical basis of a teaching that inaccurately reflects reality, an incomplete vision of the path, and oversimplifications of enlightenment. Although fully tied to one another, we make the distinction between these issues for the sake of clear presentation.

### Preconceived notions

One can argue that objective truth does not exist at all, and what we call 'truth' is only a matter of subjective perspective and interpretation. On some level this notion is indeed correct, since our universe is composed of innumerable interpenetrating angles of perception and viewpoints. However, the more we evolve, the closer we come to universal intelligence and understanding, and the higher our standard for truth becomes. When we speak about truth in this context, we are pointing to the understanding and perception that serves our particular soul so that she may realize wholeness and fulfill her destiny.

The truth about enlightenment cannot be grasped within the ego frame of reference, for it is a state of total being that represents our unity with the light of the beyond. Although there are levels to our awakening, enlightenment is by definition a complete absence of personal interpretation and mind-based perception. Nevertheless, to

reach it, we must possess a workable conceptual knowledge of the evolutionary process. Whether the philosophical tenets of a particular tradition support our evolution towards enlightenment depends not on their legitimacy, but on our ability to discern whether the truths they contain are absolute or obsolete. For this reason, throughout the teaching we analyze a variety of different views of spiritual evolution and address some of the most common misconceptions they propagate, which taken as truth, can easily confuse a seeker on the path to wholeness.

Our primary concern here is not to debate conceptual theories of reality, but to address those perspectives that have a practical impact on the nature of our realization. It is irrelevant whether a particular tradition labels the ultimate reality as 'no-self', 'self' or 'neither self nor no-self', for it is the same reality being pointed to, only through different means. This is not to say that how we perceive certain concepts is unimportant; in fact, it very often determines the core energy of our approach to the path, thus affecting the depth of our enlightenment.

The problem arises when we unimaginatively cling to our preconceived notions of reality, for in doing so, we run the risk of missing the objective truth of our evolutionary purpose. For instance, if our spiritual vision is conditioned by the idea of emptiness, this notion can itself prevent us from realizing the soul, for our insight into reality, if any, is bound to by-pass the essence of our pure subjectivity. If we believe that the ego is non-existent and refuse to see its significance in the evolution of our intelligence towards human completion, we are likely to fall into spiritual denial and remain unwhole, failing to embrace an essential part of ourselves. If we limit our realization of the ultimate reality to non-identification and non-suffering, we will stagnate in a partial awakening to impersonality, failing to get in touch with the divine aspect of the absolute existence. If we assume that we can reach liberation and wholeness through devotion alone and refuse to take responsibility for doing the inner work, we will miss the opportunity to engage the fundamental qualities of human will, intelligence and inner strength.

Our preconceived notions about the path affect not only the nature of our experience, but can also lead us to misperceive our attainments. Having realized the state of presence, an adept following a tradition that regards awareness as the ultimate attainment may falsely believe that he has reached his destination, while in fact remaining stuck in horizontal consciousness, unaware of the need to merge with the source of the now. Similarly, a seeker who arrives at the state of being, but lacks any concept of wholeness and multidimensional evolution, may naively interpret his shallow realization as 'the goal has been reached and there is nowhere further to go'. Due to an imbalanced identification with the universal, one who is strongly influenced by non-dualism may reach the state of transcendence and realize himself on an energy level, yet still not know who he is as a soul. All of these examples show us that despite having positive inner experiences and even true awakening, we can remain perceptually deluded.



But why is it necessary to seek philosophical accuracy in a teaching if the realm of enlightenment lies entirely beyond concepts? A correct vision of the path in all its elements is simply fundamental to our completion. We must bear in mind that to reach a non-conceptual condition represents only one aspect of spiritual realization. Two different seekers who have arrived at the non-conceptual state may in fact abide in two entirely different realities. The absence of conceptualization, or even thoughts for that matter, does not presuppose enlightenment, for the energetic opening to the absolute reality is independent of, and beyond, the presence or absence of concepts. In its final expression, non-conceptualization is the surrender of the mind to the previously realized being and consciousness that enables the purity of reality, free of veiling concepts, to be fully embodied. One should not discard spiritual concepts before reaching completion on the path, for they are essential means for the mind to channel our consciousness towards transformation and awakening. We must only be mindful that insensitive readings of existing concepts can easily distort our vision of the path.

### **A philosophical basis of a teaching that inaccurately reflects reality**

Some of the most common misconceptions on the spiritual scene relate to notions about the nature of the universal self and the soul, and the role of ego, such as those espoused by philosophies of non-dualism. Traditions that offer an impersonal interpretation of reality tend to negate not only our ego-identity, but also our individual soul. In their desire to express the truth of universality, they overlook the significance of our sacred individuality. Rigidly applying the idea of non-duality, they miss one of the defining features of reality - the dynamic interplay of truth and consciousness between individual and universal. The idea that there is only the self, and no individual, when taken to an extreme, denies any evolution towards awakening. Enlightenment is perceived as no more than the removal of the false self, when in fact, experiential clarity reveals that it cannot exist without the individual, who must not only transcend his own ignorance, but whose presence is necessary to actually experience the state.

We may wonder why teachings of non-duality founded by seers of the highest order and expressing extraordinary depth have repudiated the existence of a personal essence. It is not that the conclusions of these masters sprang from incomplete realizations, but rather that their perception of reality was conditioned to express their experience in a purely impersonal way. The traditions we are referring to were created in times when humanity was not yet ripe enough to embrace the consciousness of the soul. They may have been revolutionary in their time, but from the viewpoint of the now, their spiritual vision is outdated. At its conception, any new tradition of enlightenment naturally reflects the unconscious evolutionary needs of the contemporary collective mind, otherwise it is rejected and forgotten. It is in fact the will of the divine cause to express truth at a level in accordance with the evolutionary capacity of humanity at any particular stage of its development. Traditions of the past were not designed to reflect the subtle dimension of the soul;



their objective was the strict realization of impersonal peace and freedom. It's not that their teachings were incorrect, only incomplete - and not in their time, but from the present perspective of the expanded potential of human consciousness. Even though enlightenment is a timeless realization pointing to the changeless principle of absolute reality, insight into that reality eternally evolves as the subject of illumination becomes increasingly whole. Ancient questions about our true identity and the nature of self have to be revisited in order to unravel the ultimate mystery of me within. In spite of the fact that the majority of seekers and teachers find their sense of security in conforming to past definitions of truth, it is the responsibility of our human intelligence to honestly probe the reality of self until it is seen for what it truly is, as it is.

### **An incomplete vision of the path**

Inferior teachings, though they speak of enlightenment, do not point to the dimension of pure subjectivity in a clear way. Their concept of enlightenment is so idealistic that it lacks any tangible link between practice and realization. The possibility of enlightenment appears so abstract - so remote and incredible - that seekers become forever lost in the jungle of their practices, unable to cut through ignorance.

There are teachings that *do* point to the essence, but because they ignore the complexity of gradual evolution towards increasingly deeper states of awakening, they can be considered one-dimensional oversimplifications of the path. Even traditions that do acknowledge the need for gradual evolution are difficult for seekers to relate to experientially, due to their ambiguous terminology and imprecise descriptions of the various levels of realization.

In addition to a clear explanation of sudden versus gradual awakening, a teaching must also present a balanced vision of the relationship between practice and grace. Some teachings emphasize the important role of grace in awakening, but offer no intelligent connection between one's personal effort and the possibility of receiving that grace. They create the illusion that enlightenment is merely the outcome of passive transformation descending from above, failing to see the importance of conscious cooperation in the evolutionary process. As challenging as it is, to discover the complete vision of the path is the very foundation of our spiritual evolution towards complete understanding and wholeness.

### **The oversimplification of enlightenment**

Oversimplification of the awakening process is a phenomenon particular to so-called 'sudden-enlightenment' schools. A seeker must be aware that although the term enlightenment describes the simple reality of the natural state, it also reflects the complex reality of our multidimensional existence as realized through a long and arduous evolution that involves the actualization of many aspects within our

consciousness. Hoping to inspire awakening, teachers sometimes skillfully apply concepts that point directly to the ultimate reality, such as 'you are already that', 'there is nothing to attain', 'when the seeker is no more, the search is over', 'being is enlightenment', 'all is consciousness'. These ideas can be useful teaching devices, but when taken as absolute truths or ends in themselves, they can warp a realistic vision of the spiritual path. If a student thoughtlessly identifies with the declaration of a non-dual teacher that 'everybody is already realized', without seeing its figurative character, he simply ends up confused.

The responsibility of an intelligent teacher is to precisely describe the nature of enlightenment and the multidimensional reality of the path, and to dispel the various misconceptions and myths of self-realization. Although many of the simplistic statements about enlightenment popular on the spiritual scene carry some element of truth, they must be seen in relation to the path as a whole in order to prove constructive. Simplistic teachings that absolutize fragments of truth in the name of enlightenment do not promote true awakening, but in their lack of complete vision, keep indiscriminate seekers in ignorance.

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## Verification of Attainment

We should not assume that a state of awakening is automatically self-evident to the one who has reached it. This may be so in the event of complete transcendence and liberation, but not before. Unless one possesses the necessary understanding of the spiritual realm and receives precise guidance from a competent teacher, there is always a danger of inaccurately evaluating one's inner realization.

To assess our awakening is challenging at any stage, but the more deeply we enter into the inner realm, the more difficult it is to precisely appraise the nature of our experience, for the inner territory becomes progressively more subtle and transparent as we evolve. Initially, progress is measured by the level of our inner expansion; next, by the degree of the transformation and purification of the ego; and finally, by our transcendence and dissolution into totality.

There is always a danger that one may believe that one has reached a particular stage of awakening, when in fact there is no existential basis for such an assumption. One may feel oneself to be in the state of presence, confusing it with an experience of strong concentration, or imagine having reached the absolute state, mistaking a deep sense of being for the actual realization of the source. Expanding into a state of emptiness or boundless consciousness, a seeker may assume that he has reached liberation, blind to the fact that his ego has neither been dissolved nor purified. Conversely, one may reach a real awakening, but disbelieve it, due to an inability to see it in the proper conceptual frame. For example, sincerely following a model of impersonal enlightenment, an adept who has shifted into one of the awakened states may doubt his attainment due to the continued experience of his relative personality, unaware that the presence of his ego does not negate his realization. All of these misinterpretations and their consequences can be avoided if one has a clear vision of the inner realm and sufficient understanding of the complex nature of multidimensional awakening and ego-transcendence.

We often come across seekers who presume they have arrived at an enlightened state after having had an experience of a radical shift in consciousness, such as a sudden sense of oneness or a feeling of ecstatic union with the divine. How can they know the difference between what they believe they experience and what they actually experience in reality? How can they know if their shift into an altered state of consciousness has anything to do with enlightenment? What someone chooses to translate as a realization of oneness, or even enlightenment, may in fact be any one of numerous relative experiences that do not reflect an existentially valid or permanent state of awakening at all.

The fundamental cause of inaccuracies of self-assessment is the fluidity, generality, imprecision, and even inaccuracy of spiritual terminology. Terms like 'oneness', 'emptiness', 'self', 'cosmic consciousness' or 'absolute' have become clichés so packed with significance that the mind, unable to contain the potency of their true meaning, actually renders them meaningless. To make these terms more useful we must bring them into clearer focus so that a seeker can relate them to his experiential reality with clarity and precision. We must imbue these overused concepts with new relevance, so they can inspire, explain and verify any awakening experience. In this way, what was once pure abstraction becomes a practical tool for spiritual illumination.

As we stated at the outset, the intention of our work is to bring clarity and understanding to the complex subject of enlightenment. In presenting a detailed conceptual model of the inner realm, describing the various stages of the awakening process step by step, and strongly emphasizing the importance of the processes of stabilization and integration, we offer indispensable tools for the verification of attainment. However, as we have also pointed out, no matter how extensive our conceptual knowledge, extreme caution must be exercised in evaluating any type of inner realization; no amount of theoretical knowledge can completely safeguard us from misinterpreting our spiritual attainment. For this reason, in addition to studying the science of the inner states, we must also create a foundation of inner experience through practice, and develop our spiritual sensitivity, intuition and discriminative wisdom. We are fortunate indeed if we are also blessed with the assistance of a living spiritual guide.

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## The Realm of Entry

In the dimension of forgetfulness a human being lives fully locked within the claustrophobic walls of physical and psychological reality. His true nature is veiled by mental states and emotional moods. He knows nothing beyond his body and mind. He knows not reality. He knows not the way. The false and unreal is his domain. He lives in a dream state, tethered to constant change and the fluctuation of appearances, painfully disconnected from the unconditional refuge of the absolute principle. Constantly striving to find satisfaction and security in the realm of illusion, he only perpetuates his alienation from the source while reinforcing the self of separation. Unless he starts to question the unreal and seek the real, he will find no way out of ignorance and no way in to the consciousness of truth.

Beyond the turmoil of our phenomenal existence, beyond our insatiable search for happiness, lies hidden the great way, the inner way to our original state of wholeness and completion. Discovering the way, we finally realize the purpose of our creation and the meaning of our life on earth. To live unconsciously is to be bound by lower intelligence, lost in forgetfulness. Our true life as conscious existence dawns only in the moment we awaken from the dream of human consciousness and begin our journey to the heart of the self.

The great way is an opening in the plane of illusion through which the soul can return to a state of unity with the love, light and perfection of the god state. The great way is the inmost river of pure intelligence through which we journey into the infinite depth of universal subjectivity. It is the way of the self, by the self, through the self, to the self.

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## Awakening to the Way

The inner search begins in complete darkness. To enter the path is to take a risk on the level of our very existence, because initially we have no real way of knowing what we lack or what we seek - we enter the unknown. No matter how much knowledge we gather, how much reassurance we receive from others, or how much we are inspired by the teachings of great masters, until we awaken to the way we simply cannot know if there is any substantial reality behind the search for spiritual enlightenment.

Awakening to the spiritual path is not the expression of a conclusion reached by the linear mind, which is unable to fathom the truth of the inner dimension. It is an existential opening to the beyond, a major breakthrough in our evolution as a human being. We make the decision to enter the path from a place of higher wisdom - the intuitive realm of the soul, the timeless intelligence of our inner being.

### The Inner Call

From a superficial standpoint, entering the inner path is a choice, a positive exercise of free will. But seen from a higher perspective, we actually have no choice. The spiritual path is the only antidote for the fragmented, unconscious and painfully ignorant state of human existence. To be imprisoned in the human mind, in complete identification with the collective psyche defines spiritual amnesia and existential death. The mind may *think* that entry onto the path is elective, but the soul knows that the inner search is the only intelligent response to the ignominy of forgetfulness.

The unconsciousness of each individual reflects the unconscious condition of humanity as a whole, and can be transcended only through the initiative of one who becomes conscious of his capacity to evolve beyond it. This shift in the perception of our purpose on earth emerges from the core of our deepest intuition. We cannot enter the spiritual path unless we are called, summoned by our soul and exposed to the remembrance of our destiny that arises from the innermost recesses of our

being.

To respond to the inner call, we must first awaken our spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is the highest kind of intelligence - not mind-based, but rooted in our sensitivity to the realm of pure subjectivity and founded upon the silent wisdom of the self. It is this type of intelligence that allows us to recognize the call of the soul, which although eternally present, has to be remembered and actualized in our conscious mind. Only our essence can remember the inner call and reveal the innate knowing of our evolutionary purpose.

### **The Role of Suffering**

The experience of suffering can serve as a major impulse in our search for transformation and freedom. In the hierarchy of truth, suffering is inferior to the inner call as an incentive to awaken, because it is not based on a positive longing for self-realization, but still it serves as a valid motivational force.

Suffering is a fundamental characteristic of the earthly dimension. It does not occur exclusively during times of misfortune; it is a permanent shadow of the un-awakened self. We may disagree, citing the example of those who appear to be content within the confines of human existence. However, like most human beings, these people just do not recognize their suffering. Because it is habitual and existential in nature, suffering can only be seen for what it truly is from a conscious perspective. From that standpoint, it is obvious that most people who seem 'normal', or even 'happy', are only satisfied on the surface, and that humanity as a whole actually lives in a collective state of suffering due to its complete unconsciousness.

One has to employ sensitivity, wisdom, and imagination to recognize the condition of existential suffering. Most humans are too unconscious even to register that they are alive, let alone to recognize their suffering. Existential suffering only becomes an issue when consciousness has matured enough to register its condition as painful and dissatisfying. Awakening to the true root of this suffering represents a crisis of ego through which our mind begins to doubt its preconceived vision of reality stemming from the collective unconscious. It is indeed the shocking recognition of our suffering that compels us to seek a way out of it, and serves further to reinforce our sense of an evolutionary emergency. Suffering, in fact, is a passage between our past bondage and future freedom. Because the chief attribute of the collective mind is spiritual inertia, if not for suffering, in most cases there would be no real incentive to evolve.

Suffering is not only a painful characteristic of human life, but also an important tool in the development of spiritual sensitivity. Existence uses suffering to awaken the recognition of our incompleteness and lack of wholeness, an existential sense of discontent that points to the gap between our present state and the unfoldment of

our potential: the awakening to our future self. The end of suffering cannot be reached by abolishing the causes of our anguish, since they are infinite; it can only be achieved through the expansion into spiritual light and our transcendence from the realm of illusion.

### **Longing for the Light**

When the inner call is recognized, it naturally gives rise to spiritual longing. The birth of inner longing indicates that we have matured enough to rebel against our fundamental unconsciousness. To evolve to the point where we can identify our longing for the self is itself a sign of awakening, because it suggests an activation of a profound thirst for spiritual fulfillment - a thirst not of the earth-plane, but of the beyond. This dimension has in fact been designed to veil true reality and seduce the soul into a state of forgetfulness. All our thoughts, concerns, disturbed emotions and infinite desires actually are the tentacles of lower intelligence holding us captive in the plane of ignorance.

We begin our spiritual journey in darkness and move towards light. Even though our inner longing initially lacks clarity, it nonetheless sets in motion our future split from the plane of forgetfulness. While in its nascent stages, inner yearning remains vague and fragile, and can easily be disturbed by the forces of ignorance, if not obliterated. Only with the passage of time, practice and guidance does this spark of spiritual intuition become transformed into the light of clarity, true understanding and unbroken certainty. The more we awaken, the more darkness is dispersed as we approach the bright sun of the self. The light of the self has a naturally magnetic force that pulls all souls to its source; however, it is our openness, our yearning and our yielding to that light that make the miracle of illumination possible.

### **Conscious Seeking**

There is often a significant gap between the awakening of inner longing and the conscious commencement of the spiritual journey. Even after their longing arises, most seekers grope in darkness for long periods of time, having no clarity whatsoever about the nature of their search. Such is the sad truth revealed by a careful examination of today's spiritual environment. Spiritual seeking seems to have become just one more expression of the collective unconscious.

Most seekers seem inauthentic and fragmented, lost in the pursuit of an *idea* of enlightenment that lacks any connection to the reality of I am. Locked in the unconscious mind, they seek in a fantasy world, totally unable to relate their quest to the truth of the self. This type of unconscious seeking defines one of the ways that the collective mind distorts the real meaning of the spiritual path, molding it into the likeness of ignorance. Seeking that is not anchored in a connection to our essential nature has no relevance to the soul's purpose.



What does it mean to begin the inner search in a truly conscious way? The heart of conscious seeking is the deep recollection of the fundamental truth that enlightenment signifies our return to the state of pure subjectivity. Conscious seeking, by its very nature, must point directly to the essence of consciousness, the light of I am.

### **Meeting a Spiritual Guide**

For many seekers, the spiritual search remains equivalent to 'finding a master'. The true purpose of the inner search, however, is to seek oneself, not merely a master to whom to surrender. To seek an outer master without being in touch with the essence of the path is no more than a displacement of our avoidance to take responsibility for our own awakening. It is the self that is the supreme master - and this master is within, not without.

Our progress requires that we intelligently balance receptivity with self-reliance, vigilantly avoiding overdependence on a teacher at one extreme, or willful independence at the other. Even though the spiritual search essentially takes place in our aloneness, we always need a spiritual friend to aid our progress. An intelligent seeker is never closed to receiving help and guidance, because he clearly recognizes what a great blessing he receives when he meets a true teacher in human form. Those who believe that they do not need a guide most often are caught in idealistic or naive notions of enlightenment, or have an overblown sense of self-importance.

A spiritual friend is an experienced guide who has already traversed the inner territory of the unknown and embodies self-realization. Because he holds the secrets of the path and the key to the inner realm in the very molecules of his being and consciousness, he has the ability both to transmit the conceptual understanding of the path and to energetically initiate the soul of a seeker with the seeds of awakening. What matters most for a student is a natural openness to learn from someone who has completed the path, or a large portion of it. He should not relate to his teacher through the energies of unconscious devotion or imbalanced surrender, distorting the reality of inner work with spiritual projections. However, a sense of sacredness, natural respect and gratitude should permeate the connection to a spiritual guide. It is important to bear in mind that such a relationship is not personal, but takes place on the inner plane of truth and light.

Most seekers find it extremely difficult to discern whether a particular teacher is genuine and offers the necessary tools of awakening. Although open-mindedness is essential in the search for a guide, a seeker must also be judicious. The clearest indicator of whether or not we are receiving the proper guidance is our progress or lack of it; it is through our own awakening that we gradually develop trust and confidence in a teacher.

The manifestation of a spiritual guide on our path is the natural response of existence to our passion for truth and our dedication to the inner quest. The depth of our aspiration, the intensity of our longing, the capacity of our intelligence and the sincerity of our intention are the factors that determine the quality of the spiritual guide who comes our way.

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## The True Seeker

If the spiritual search begins within the state of ignorance, how can it possibly yield truth? How can reality emerge from illusion? Even when lost in forgetfulness, a part of us simultaneously abides in both the state prior to our creation and our ultimate future; the inmost essence of the soul has never lost its connection to our unborn self. By awakening to this primordial link, we finally meet the aspect of our true identity that timelessly knows and remembers our destiny in earthly time, and our desperate search for awakening is infused with profound value. The pre-cognition of our spiritual purpose is a revelation that arises from the encoded knowing inherent to our original nature. To be in touch with this knowing is in fact what makes one a true seeker. Without it, our whole perception of the path and the inner search is disconnected from any existential or evolutionary truth. The authenticity of a true seeker is reflected in the depth of his connection to the light of the soul; he seeks from the soul, not the mind. That which gives reality to the inner quest is the presence of our higher being, which even prior to the actualization of our awakening eternally knows the goal of our evolution. To begin the search for truth, we must feel its essence within our existence. Unless the one who begins the inner journey is in touch with the realm of I am, any effort to awaken remains futile.

### Becoming a Seeker

To become a seeker is to begin serving the light by taking responsibility for the realization of our evolutionary purpose. It is to use all of the resources given to us by existence - the mind, heart, intelligence, and the powers of energy and will - to penetrate and ultimately transcend the thick veil of ignorance. For a true seeker, not a single moment passes that the inner work is not in progress. His life is completely dedicated to that which is real, and to renouncing, with courage and complete attention, that which is false. To seek is to acquire a new identity - not of the ego, but of the soul. It is not just one of the many roles that we play in our life or something we do in our free time, but our very reason to live.

Awakening is the call and command of each individual soul; our existence demands awakening, but it has universal implications as well. Our inner quest is not merely our personal affair with spirituality, but a part of the much greater plan of universal evolution. Anyone who does not move towards the light actually hinders the universal expansion of consciousness; our individual contribution as a conscious seeker serves the universal movement into the fathomless wisdom and mystery of the creator's supreme presence.

### **The Essential Qualities of a Seeker**

To seek is by no means an easy task, but in fact the most challenging endeavor in human existence. While striving for illumination, not only we have to face the exacting challenge of cutting through innumerable layers of our own unconsciousness, but also we must cope with the complexities of living in the world and the ignorance of the collective mind, and last but not least, we must face personal psychological issues and often conflicting desires and fears. In order to meet these challenges and ultimately realize our higher being, it is critical that we develop certain essential qualities:

*Sincerity:* Sincerity is truthfulness to oneself and others. It expresses our purity of intention and the deep honesty of the soul. Sincerity is the only true remedy against the ego's games and manipulations, and can be seen as the virtue that connects our human identity with the integrity of the soul. When there is a lack of sincerity, the ego becomes arrogant and succumbs to the impurities of the mind. The presence of sincerity proves that the soul has already purified the mind and heart to a significant degree.

*Honesty:* Honesty is the aspect of sincerity that guards us against self-deception. A typical example of self-deception can be seen in a seeker who pursues the path of renunciation while still having significant desires to fulfill. Such a radical approach is entirely inappropriate, in this case even counterproductive. Lacking self-awareness, the seeker mistakes his willingness to make sacrifices for what he believes to be a superior way of life for true readiness to transcend his human existence, and risks forestalling his essential maturation. In another classic scenario, a seeker deceives himself by indulging intellectually in spiritual matters, while refusing to actually do the inner work. He believes himself to be 'spiritual' but lacks the honesty and integrity to face his own fragmented state of being.

*Maturity:* The level of maturity of a seeker can be seen as the measure of his evolution through many lifetimes. Maturity can be measured by the ability to take responsibility for realization of one's spiritual potential - the capacity to discriminate between one's own lower and higher nature, and to serve the latter. The keystone of maturity is the sensitivity through which one can identify the dimension of pure subjectivity, the state of I am, as the essence of the path.

*Inner strength:* There can be no true progress on the spiritual path unless one has the necessary inner strength. Inner strength is the power of our will to prevail over the major obstacles and difficulties on the path. Without it, we cannot transcend the darkness of unconsciousness and overcome the hindrance of the mind. Furthermore, inner strength is crucial for the upholding of our own truth in the face of the collective ignorance. A seeker must be completely dedicated to the inner work - like a warrior - courageous and one-pointed in following that which is real.

*Inner discipline:* Inner discipline is required in order to maintain our spiritual focus. Through inner discipline, one can surmount a lack of inspiration and reluctance to continue the inner work. For instance, this quality is an essential support in the work with the mind, for it helps us to arrest the flow of unconsciousness.

*Patience:* Because the evolution of consciousness takes many turns, and progress is mostly gradual, a great deal of patience is required when we tread the inner path. Patience can be seen as an aspect of our inner discipline, an opposing force against our subconscious tendencies. Essential to meditation, it pacifies frustration, restlessness and mental agitation. We cannot cultivate the inner state without complete patience, endurance and inner softness. Patience develops from the growth of humility, spiritual maturity and our trust in our perception of the path.

*Determination:* To grow on the path and persevere in the face of difficulties, one must have steadfast determination. Determination is founded on the awakening to one's evolutionary purpose; it is total conviction in the truth of the inner work. When one sees that there is no choice but to walk the path, regardless of the many obstacles, one unwaveringly persists with the work of awakening.

*Discriminative wisdom:* Most seekers remain half-asleep, functioning in a semi-conscious state, not making any effort to truly understand. Through the evolution of intelligence, we begin to comprehend the significance of the path and the truth of enlightenment. Discriminative wisdom, born of our spiritual intelligence, not only enables us to discern what is true, but moreover, to recognize that which is false; it guards us against various pitfalls on the path.

*Sensitivity to the realm of I am:* Sensitivity to the realm of I am - the dimension of pure subjectivity - is the marrow of a true seeker. Unless one can recognize I am as the fundamental nature of the spiritual dimension, one will compulsively cling to the objective side of reality. Unfortunately, most spiritual practices and methods of meditation do not point to the heart of pure subjectivity, but to experiences of expansion within the mind. Sensitivity to the realm of I am is the quality most lacking among the majority of seekers.

*The ability to meet oneself:* The ability to meet oneself is a complementary quality to sensitivity to the realm of I am. Many seekers are lost in artificial forms of self-

enquiry, unable to really touch the core of their existence. Their difficulty lies not in an inability to awaken the inner state, but in the fact that they lack the maturity required to meet their souls. The ability to meet oneself is either an expression of wisdom acquired from past evolution or the result of present awakening. However, even a lack of evolutionary maturity cannot justify spiritual inertia, because awakening is ultimately a function of the present. How can we mature without sincerely facing the challenge of awakening in this very now?

Due to the intangible nature of the spiritual search, even if we intuitively recognize the essence of the way, we cannot truly know our final destination. Like a seed that cannot foresee its future destiny as a tree, a seeker entering the path cannot grasp his ultimate goal. Only by possessing the virtues described here can we persevere in the face of the unknown and unravel our final destiny.

### **Commitment to the Path**

It is better not to begin the spiritual journey if we are not ready to complete it - better not to open the wound of unconsciousness if we are not determined to heal it fully. Many seekers give up their search having reached only a partial awakening. Some prematurely assume the role of teachers, while others simply idle, believing there is nowhere further to go. Both are mistaken, for there is always more to be realized before becoming truly complete on all levels. Unless we harbor the deepest commitment to the path, we will lack the necessary strength and determination to accomplish our evolutionary purpose. It is our burning desire to expand into light and understanding that inspires us to move forward, in spite of all obstructing forces, into the unknown land of future wholeness.

Commitment to the path is an absolute requirement for all seekers. It assures our steady progress and helps us to avoid the danger of relinquishing the inner work prematurely. Many possible temptations may lead us to abandon the path. A common one is the error of presuming that one has arrived at the destination, having only completed a portion of the inner journey. Other reasons for giving up the inner work can be a sense of stagnation, a lack of progress, or the inability to recognize the next step. In many instances, a seeker can become overwhelmed by a sense of futility, hopelessness and a lack of inspiration. One can be beset by doubts and skepticism, or give in to the collective mind with its utterly unconscious perception of spirituality. Regardless of these difficulties, one should never desert the inner work under any circumstances.

### **Living the Path**

The inner work takes place at all times, our unbroken enquiry into the nature of reality and continuous awakening to the reality of the now. The path is our silent secret beneath the apparent reality. It is not something that we announce to others or

even speak about, but the inner jewel we treasure above all else. The inner journey is not merely a means to reach a degree of inner awakening so that we can move on with our 'normal life'. Entering the path, we should be aware that we are embarking on an adventure for our whole life and beyond.

Living the path is the very essence of our existence. Some may choose to live the path in the mode of renunciation; others, by actively participating in the world; but ultimately, living the path is beyond the polarity of being in the world or renouncing it. It is an eternal love affair with the light of the self - the very meaning of life itself.

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## Clarity about the Path

It is so easy to become entangled in erroneous concepts or an incorrect vision of the inner work, that to unravel the true meaning of the spiritual path from within the plane of unconsciousness is truly a supreme achievement. Unless our intelligence reaches a profound degree of clarity and true understanding, we will never arrive at our spiritual destination. The lucidity of our intelligence is our only defense against confusion in the realm of forgetfulness.

The evolution of intelligence remains the most mysterious facet of the soul's awakening, reflecting her very consciousness and the frequency of her light. We have to mature over many lifetimes before we reach a level of intelligence that mirrors the truth of our blueprint. Our quest for clarity precedes all the other steps of our inner journey. Clarity is our ultimate and only guarantor of success on the path.

### The Spiritual Goal

To uncover the nature of our spiritual goal, we must deeply ask ourselves what we are truly seeking. Unless we bring focus to our inner search, our path will lack strength and clear direction. How can we summon the recollection of our evolutionary purpose? How can we avoid living in an illusion of spiritual fantasies and expectations, lost to the essence of the path?

Through knowledge imparted by superior spiritual teachings, the help of a spiritual guide, and our own enquiry, we need to intuitively sense the direction and aim of our internal evolution. Upon entering the path, this can be a great challenge, because we are moving into entirely new territory; however, our initial task is not to uncover the final purpose of the path, but its essence. Even though the inner way is the great unknown, within its intangibility, we can intuitively sense its core of silence, the light of I am.

True recognition of why we follow the path coincides directly with our discovery of its



essence. To discover the essence of the path, we must rely explicitly upon our spiritual sensitivity and wisdom to recognize the realm of pure subjectivity, the dimension of no-object, as the immanent truth of the path. The spiritual search is not the pursuit of an abstract idea of enlightenment, but of our very self. Only by looking within and diving into the stillness beyond thought can we enter the domain of our ancient self. What we strive to awaken is our inner potential, through which the light of I am can be established once again as the heart of our identity. Awakening to I am is of the ultimate importance, for its presence accompanies all the steps of our journey towards the increasingly complete realization of the self.

### **Encountering a True Teaching**

A mature seeker entering the path should by all means take into account the experiences of those who have reached self-realization. Many generations of seekers, monks, sages and mystics have explored the inner realm, and their testimony is an invaluable resource of spiritual understanding. Nevertheless, due to the extremely varied and often contradictory visions of the inner path presented by different individuals and spiritual traditions, the process of finding the correct teaching and guidance for oneself can be extremely confusing.

Despite the considerable effort many great thinkers have made through the ages to try to prove the unity of all religions and spiritual schools, that indisputable differences exist between them simply cannot be denied. They differ and disagree not only in their practices, but also in their philosophies and interpretations of spiritual illumination. No one has yet arrived at an interpretation of spiritual evolution that would be universally accepted.

The interpretation of spiritual truth is not only a matter of philosophy and belief system, but also an expression of the evolutionary level and spiritual potential of each individual or group of souls that seeks to convey it. Although truth is universal, its perception and reception are by nature subjective, determined by the capacity and point of view of the consciousness that asserts it. For this reason, we cannot simply declare the superiority of one tradition over another, for such judgment is only relative. The ability to recognize and understand truth cannot be separated from an individual's constitution, spiritual maturity and depth of intelligence .

For some seekers, excessively high doses of truth are indigestible, even destructive. When the level of truth administered surpasses one's capacity to receive it, this truth is either missed or misused. Because truth is the ultimate elucidation of reality, it needs to be dispensed appropriately and absorbed gradually. As truth is none other than the highest frequency of light and understanding, in order to safely receive it, the ground of our intelligence and consciousness has to be prepared as a suitable container

What are the criteria for choosing the most suitable tradition and spiritual teaching for oneself? Most seekers choose according to their karmic predisposition. They feel an immediate sense of familiarity and recognition when they encounter a tradition known personally from past incarnations and naturally gravitate towards it. However, feeling a connection to a particular teaching does not always indicate that to follow that tradition is in one's best interest. Often the soul needs to break specific connections in order to learn new lessons and de-condition herself from her karmic past. It may be that an association with a specific tradition or teaching is a temporary affair, meant only to be experienced for the sake of learning a specific lesson before moving on. A seeker has to use discrimination. He needs sensitivity and deep intuition in order to truly feel which spiritual teaching is the proper vehicle for one's inner journey.

The intensity of one's identification with a specific teaching does not necessarily correlate to one's commitment to the path. Through our commitment to the path, we serve the truth of universal evolution, not a single interpretation of the spiritual dimension channeled through a specific human belief system. A spiritual tradition remains just one of the many vehicles we use to journey within on the path to the self. Complete understanding cannot be expounded by any one tradition, for the very simple reason that truth is beyond traditions. Truth belongs to the tradition of universal intelligence, which oversees the whole of existence, and to the intrinsic knowledge of the soul's blueprint encoded in the consciousness of our higher being.

### **Recognizing the Next Step**

The inner way is an unbroken continuity of evolution consisting of many separate steps and gradual progressions. Because we cannot possibly have a panoramic view of the inner realm at the outset of our journey, our advancement depends upon the clarity of our present state and our ability to recognize the next step. We can liken the inner journey to the ascension of a steep mountain: in order not to slip and fall, we focus not on the mountain's peak, but on each individual step we need to take to reach it.

The ability to identify and take each next step upon our inner journey is an outgrowth of spiritual knowledge and our clear insight into where we are in our process. But because it is often impossible to identify one's exact or even approximate place on the path, the majority of seekers need a qualified teacher to verify their state and present the necessary explanations.

As we gradually move deeper into the inner realm, the vision of our evolutionary purpose becomes increasingly apparent, and we grow more independent. Our personal intelligence progressively merges with the higher wisdom of the soul, who timelessly knows her final destiny and recollects all the steps of awakening as the natural landscape of her evolution and blueprint.

## **The Role of Doubt**

No true understanding can be reached without first going through the fire of doubt. Doubting supports the development of clarity, and in many instances protects us from pitfalls on the path. The function of doubt is particularly critical at the outset of our search, when we are faced with a vast and varied array of spiritual teachings; we must exercise doubt as we weigh our options. An intelligent mind does not subscribe to a teaching indiscriminately, but investigates and considers it thoroughly before making a commitment. Only a dull mind blindly accepts a teaching.

On the spiritual scene, doubt plays a critical role. Naive and immature seekers routinely become victims of teachers with inadequate and even questionable qualifications. The price they pay is grave, because they can become spiritually stagnant for long periods, or worse yet, regress in their evolution. To assure the positive movement of our evolution, we must remain alert and critical in our perception of the path as a whole, as well as its elements. We are not suggesting that one should be resistant or closed. On the contrary, constructive doubt serves as a positive test of reality that leaves the doors open to all possibilities in choosing both a spiritual teaching and a teacher. Although our capacity to verify a teacher's qualifications and recognize the quality of a teaching is restricted by the level of our own maturity, within our limitations we absolutely must practice discrimination with the highest level of clarity, wisdom, intuition and simple common sense, for choosing the right teaching and teacher is of the highest importance, often determining the course of our whole lives.

If the absence of doubt is coupled with insincerity and arrogance, one can easily develop a dangerous kind of spiritual ego that can block the evolution of the soul. One has to honestly question one's intention, spiritual direction and inner experience. Only with the emergence of complete clarity and truth can doubt be abandoned.

Although the role of doubt is essentially positive on the path, excessive doubting can undermine the inner work. Doubting can become an addiction based on fear, insecurity and the inability to discern between right and wrong. For this reason, we must keep the doubting mind in check so that doubts will not erode our basic trust in the path and our courage to enter the unknown.

## **The Role of Trust**

When our doubt exceeds our trust and faith in the path, we lose our spiritual force - we become helpless and powerless. Trust is the quality that directs the doubting mind into a positive direction and maintains the basic balance of our intelligence. Trust must be founded upon clear discernment. We must not believe with blind faith to follow the path, but recognize the truth of the direction we have taken. Our trust should be rooted in the intuition and wisdom of the heart, for not everything can be

verified by the mind. The mind, in fact, often proves quite limited in its ability to find the right way. To trust does not mean that we are one hundred percent certain of what we believe to be true. In fact, once we have reached a particular point of certainty, there no longer exists any need for trust - we simply know. Rather, to trust is to follow a sense of rightness into uncharted territory.

Trust serves also as the foundation of the student-teacher relationship, growing as a student obtains increasingly more confirmation from his inner experience of the accuracy of the guidance received - trust in a teacher is the natural outcome of a student's progress. In the process of seeking out and committing to a teacher, the initial degree of trust should be based on a sense of the quality of the teacher's heart and being. One should not look for eloquence, charisma or 'spiritual' gestures. A student has to feel genuine light and truth behind the presence of a teacher, their pure intention and true wisdom.

### **Cutting Through Confusion**

Just as doubt can be caused by confusion, so confusion can be the result of unresolved doubt. If we are cannot transcend our confusion because we keep feeding it with doubts, we can create a major crisis in our evolution. However, the presence of confusion, like the arising of doubt, is a natural aspect of the spiritual path. If a seeker never experiences confusion or doubt, it suggests a serious lack of spiritual refinement and a gullible type of personality.

Confusion can be defined as a feeling of being lost, of lacking a clear sense of direction or a satisfactory understanding of one's inner situation. It is not an enemy, but a challenge to be faced and overcome so that at a certain point the light of clarity can reemerge. We must accept confusion as an inevitable part of spiritual exploration, but also know how to break through it. To cut through confusion, we must call upon our passion for understanding, faith in the spiritual path and determination to find clarity.

There exist two basic types of confusion. There is the natural and gentle kind of confusion that arises from the simple impossibility of comprehending all the intricacies of the path prior to our arrival at higher states of spiritual attainment. Then there is the kind of confusion that arises from intellectual dullness and lack of imagination, indicating that we are stuck on the path. This latter type of confusion can become a real problem, because when left unresolved, it may seriously impede our spiritual progress.

Although the presence of confusion often serves as an incentive to strive for a higher level of understanding, we should never dwell on it or allow it to take root in our inner life. Confusion is intrinsically unreal, and according to the law of reality, must eventually be dissolved by the light of truth and understanding. Sooner or later, a

true seeker will triumph over any kind of confusion or doubt.

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## The Role of Practice

The conceptual models expounded by various traditions differ in their perception of the inner work: some deny that to reach enlightenment is a process, or that there is any need to exert effort on the path; others emphasize the necessity of concentrated practice and meditation. This can be quite confounding for a seeker who strives to discover the objective truth of spiritual evolution. In order to go beyond simplistic views and one-sided notions on the subject of self-realization, we must comprehend the complex nature of the laws governing the process of awakening. Only by critical examination and experiential knowledge can we grasp the reality of the spiritual path as a whole, and embrace the sudden and gradual dimensions of enlightenment in holistic understanding. To seek the truth about the role of practice is in fact to seek the truth about our deepest responsibility in actualizing our spiritual potential and enlightenment. The highest expression of this responsibility manifests through two fundamental forces within our spiritual existence: self-knowledge and indeed practice.

### The Necessity of Practice

Several elements are required in order to grasp the essence of the path and accelerate one's spiritual progress. We have already spoken about the need for clarity in understanding the basic principles of the path. We also have mentioned the importance of cultivating an enquiring mind and developing sensitivity to the realm of pure subjectivity. However, regardless of our level of inner preparedness and awakening, we are still certain to recognize the presence of numerous hindrances in our experience of the self on the level of its continuance, depth and purity. What we face here is the imperfection of our relative consciousness and our lack of inner integrity. Due to the gravitational force of unconsciousness - the primary obstacle in our ability to move beyond the mind and consistently uphold the light of I am - we simply cannot maintain that which we have awakened or understood, nor can we establish its final depth. Before long, we realize that without practice, conceptual understanding, self-knowledge and even the experience of awakening cannot bring us to a stable place within the inner realm. Only by seeing this clearly can our

attitude towards practice become more humble and open.

Practice should be understood as an organic extension of our understanding, self-knowledge and awakening. It must not be mechanical or based on exaggerated effort. It needs to be implemented in a very natural way, so that concentration and other appropriate exertions eventually transmute themselves into an effortless flow of inner abundance. The dynamic between effort and effortlessness should be aligned and balanced according to the level of our awakening and energetic expansion. For example, due to the disturbing nature of the mind and the strong pull from our lower nature, a beginner cannot afford to be too relaxed and spontaneous, but must apply a great deal of mindfulness and discipline. As we evolve, our effort becomes increasingly skilful, and in time, lighter and more transparent.

Although grace does play a vital role in our evolutionary progress, this fact does not diminish the necessity of the inner work. Practice manifests out of a deep command within the soul to use all means available to accelerate her spiritual enlightenment - an expression of our innermost collaboration with the divine will. Unless we activate our own capacity to support our evolution, how can we expect the divine to assist us? Waiting indolently for grace to do the inner work for us is an arrogant approach. It is no different than expecting water to spring from the ground without first digging a well. One needs to be prepared to receive grace, and through conscious cooperation with one's evolution, to increasingly mature into that readiness.

### **The Tools of the Inner Work**

Across the vast spectrum of spiritual traditions, different methods and tools are offered as a means to reach inner awakening. But in all mature schools of enlightenment, the essence of an adept's effort remains the practice of meditation. Meditation, in the broadest sense of the term, denotes the effort of consciousness to maintain a focus on the self. For our meditation to be real, this internal concentration of energy and consciousness must be based on self-knowledge and a certain degree of awakening, because in their absence, we cannot relate to the self and remain confined to the plane of forgetfulness. We need to sensitively practice self-enquiry in order to turn consciousness back to its source, just as we need to practice meditation to support our self-enquiry, so that our awakened experience deepens and becomes permanent.

The nature of the inner work changes as we focus on different areas of awakening: the work with awareness demands a great deal of concentration and mindfulness; the work with the heart is based on an opening to sensitivity, prayer and the divine; the work with being is founded upon the art of letting go and the consequent vertical expansion of energy; the work with the ego and the mind requires self-observation, non-identification and the cultivation of purity.

Spiritual practice has to be intelligently applied, with sensitivity to both our potential and our limitations. Practice is not an end in itself, but rather a means to achieve a natural state, free from effort. The responsibility of a teacher is to prescribe a practice according to the specific needs of the student. The responsibility of the student is to understand the nature of that practice, and to recognize the point of its completion.

### **Right Effort**

It is not enough to practice 'hard'. Practice has to be correct, and our effort has to be right. Practice that is not skilful can create the opposite of its desired effect - it may damage rather than help us. Unskillful practice remains a serious problem on the spiritual scene, preventing many seekers from making real progress in spite of their sincere efforts. This is unfortunate, but an important lesson can be learned here: even our most genuine efforts go to waste when they are not founded on self-knowledge and real understanding. Lack of progress on the path and the suffering that results can be seen not only as a call to awaken, but also as a call to awaken from bad practice.

What is right effort? The right effort is not always fixed; it has a fluid nature as our response to both our general evolutionary needs and to the specific need of the moment. We must be able to clearly see what we need to accomplish through practice and thereby determine the appropriate effort to make. For instance, we apply the effort of self-remembrance in order to attain a continuity of presence. Or we apply the effort of concentration to gain control over the mechanical mind and counteract unconsciousness. Only when we are clear about our target, can we channel our effort into the right direction and with the proper quality of energy.

Through right effort we are able to assist in the process of our own evolution in a highly effective and intelligent way. Right effort on the path is rooted in the realm of pure subjectivity and must directly coincide with an ability to meet our true self. It is the evolutionary movement towards our higher being that reflects our optimal contribution to the awakening process.





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## Realm of Meditation

Meditation is the way and the goal - the entrance to the inner realm and the inner realm itself. It is both the state of objectless abidance in the supreme reality and the self-contained presence of our true being. In the plane of forgetfulness, meditation is the most powerful tool we have to awaken our dormant self.

There are two gateways to the dimension of meditation: the inner gate of the now through which we enter the pure subjectivity of universal I am, and the gate of our individual essence through which we meet the pure subjectivity of the soul. The first gate leads to the beyond; the second, to the heart of our own existence. From the ultimate perspective, however, there are not two gates, but one - upon entering the beyond we realize our own soul, and upon awakening to our soul we merge with the beyond.

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## An Open Secret

Meditation is an open secret. Its essence is hidden to those who are ignorant, but clear to those who have passed through the gateway to pure subjectivity. To meditate is to abide in reality, anchored in the ground of existence. It is a natural state, the foundation of spiritual sanity and integrity. The path of meditation is not any particular way; it is the only way - the pathless path to the heart of the now.

### The Meaning of Meditation

The common concept of 'meditation' has no relation whatsoever to knowledge of the inner realm. Most people incorrectly assume that meditation is a mind-based activity involving concentration upon mental, aural or physical phenomena such as visualization, mantra repetition or conscious breathing. Pure meditation, however, is none of these performances - it is an entirely new dimension of existence and consciousness.

The original meaning of the term meditation was, 'thinking about', suggesting some kind of conscious reflection, and did not refer to the reality beyond thought. To meditate was to use the power of the mind in a focused way to attain goals confined to mental reality alone. In order to avoid associating meditation with deep thinking, some meditation masters used the term 'contemplation' instead of meditation. However, even the word contemplation, which is drawn from the vocabulary of mystical traditions, has mental connotations. To contemplate is to reflect upon religious, sacred or spiritual objects. Contemplation is therefore also an imperfect word to accurately reflect the reality of pure meditation. Unfortunately, because language has been created by the collective mind that dwells exclusively in the reality of appearances, it cannot convey the essence of pure subjectivity. Consequently, throughout history, mystics and spiritual masters of various traditions have had to compromise, attributing uncommon meanings and explanations to common words, or otherwise inventing entirely new terms to try to communicate the true nature of meditation. Their challenge was to transmit the understanding of a

completely new domain of being to which the mind itself cannot enter - the objectless realm of pure reality - to the ordinary mind that functions entirely in objectified reality. Because the nature of meditation is beyond our ordinary perception, it is not enough to use words to express its profound meaning; we have to go beyond words to experience in true silence that to what they point: our very self.

### **The Only Medicine**

Meditation is a revolutionary withdrawal of the mind's energy from thought to pure awareness and being; it is total attention given to the source of the now. Meditation is the only medicine for the disease of unconsciousness without which the transformation of the mind and the transmutation of human consciousness cannot occur.

Because the force of ignorance is so strong, we have to use special means in order to shift the balance of power within our consciousness so that the state of meditation can manifest. Sitting in meditation is the basis of meditation practice, the sitting posture itself symbolizing our complete dedication to the inner state. Through the practice of concentration and relaxation while sitting, we gradually establish our attention in the state beyond the mind and open the door to being.

Sitting in meditation and maintaining a meditative state in action have a profound impact on our whole energetic system, brain and various inner channels. Indeed, meditation embraces both body and mind, bringing our whole psychosomatic existence into complete attention to the essence of being. The birth of the inner state signifies a quantum leap in our existence, and meditation is the ground upon which this conversion takes place.

### **From Illusion to Reality**

The paradox of meditation practice is that even though it points beyond thought, prior to our awakening it remains entirely confined to the mind. The one who begins his practice is in fact indistinguishable from the mind itself, for his essence lies dormant and his sense of self is completely identified with chaotic, compulsive thinking. How can that which is unreal, ignorant, false, and which itself must be transcended, attain reality? The saving grace of each meditator is his 'minimum soul', the trace of me that links him with the dimension of I am. This sense of me can be considered to be the minimum reality within the unreality of one's unconscious self. By empowering his subjective presence, crystallizing the observer and establishing his existence in the state prior to thought, an adept gradually moves his sense of identity from illusion to reality.

### **The Practice of Meditation**

Before we can open up experientially to the state of meditation, we need to face the fragmented condition of our mind, its restless and unconscious nature that blocks us from recognizing the heart of pure subjectivity. Meditation is an essential tool to integrate our mind, solidify our presence, transcend mechanical thinking and move our existence into the inner state. Our work changes and evolves as we grow roots into the inner realm and become increasingly aligned with the natural state of meditation. However, to enter the dimension of meditation in a real way and establish oneself in the realm of objectless consciousness, a beginner has to commit to the cultivation of inner discipline and formal practice.

***Sitting Meditation:*** Although meditation ultimately transcends any bodily point of reference, to enter the state of pure subjectivity we must centralize our dispersed existence in the strict form of sitting meditation. Because in meditation we move beyond the body *through* the body, we must respect the state of our energy and the condition of our physical form, for they greatly influence the ease of our entry into the inner realm.

Sitting meditation should be practiced by assuming a solid posture in which one sits on an elevated pillow to help keep the spine erect. If possible, one should sit with the legs crossed and the knees comfortably resting on the ground. If one is not supple enough to cross the legs in one of the variations of the lotus posture, one should seek another suitable position that assures an erect spine and physical stability. The placement of the hands and fingers in mudras bears little significance and hence is not indicated here. We should not concern ourselves with too many details, for they only burden our meditation with concepts and mental constructs.

As we gain more mastery in the art of meditation, we need not follow the above recommendations literally, but can sit in meditation in any comfortable position, even on a chair. However, prior to becoming completely one with the state of meditation, formal sitting holds significant benefits for a practitioner. A sitting posture with the spine erect instantaneously activates alertness, opens energy flow, generates inner strength, and offers solid, yet comfortable support for the physical body. The meditation posture exemplifies a perfect unity of relaxation and stability through which we can transcend our body-reference and enter the realm of being.

***Time and length of meditation:*** There are no fixed rules regarding the length of each sitting, but in general, meditation should last up to one hour. One should certainly meditate daily, preferably in the morning and the evening; additionally, it is important to always find time for a short meditation just before going to sleep in order to integrate meditative consciousness with the subconscious mind.

Apart from daily practice, one must occasionally sit in the more concentrated form of silent meditation retreats, where one can accumulate more energy to establish oneself in the inner state, or to deepen the state already present. A retreat can be

done alone or in group context. During retreat, one needs to sit between 6-8 hours a day. The length of a retreat should suit one's internal needs, but it usually confined to one, three, seven, ten or twenty one days.

***Walking Meditation:*** Between sitting sessions on retreat, one should practice walking meditation to move the body and energy, and further integrate meditation with activity. Walking meditation is the first step in extending our meditative consciousness into daily life; it is meditation in action or 'living' meditation. One can walk very slowly, quickly or just naturally. What counts is our internal concentration and the ability to maintain in activity the internal state we have reached during sitting meditation. If one is unable to cultivate self-remembrance or abide in the inner state during walking, one should practice either mindfulness of each step or conscious breathing. However, the deepest expression of walking meditation is unconditional abidance in the state of pure subjectivity that itself transcends the polarities of sitting and walking, repose and action.

***Breathing:*** A meditator has to know how to breathe. The way we breathe is a reflection of our consciousness; a direct manifestation of our physical, psychological and spiritual well-being. When we are lost in the mind and disconnected from inner peace and harmony, our breathing is shallow and limited to the chest. The more deeply we abide in our true nature, the deeper our breathing becomes. Correct breathing takes place from the lower belly and involves complete exhalation. In order to balance our breathing, we must drop our existence into the depth of being and become one with the breath. Often a certain opening and healing of the diaphragm are necessary to unlock our breath, for this is a place in the body where we accumulate tensions, fears, anger, and power issues. When contracted, the diaphragm does not allow us to expand our belly so that we may inhale freely and completely.

The first step in our work with breath is usually the practice of conscious breathing through which we bring relaxed awareness to our body and sense of being. It is essential to do this in a natural and comfortable way, for if we are too self-conscious of the body and breath we can actually disrupt our natural breathing and become tense and agitated. To bring true consciousness to the natural act of breathing, we surrender our awareness to the breath and do not try to control it from the place of an observer; to transform our breathing we have to merge with the breath on the level of our consciousness and existence.

***Eyes Open or Closed:*** It is a matter of preference whether we sit in meditation with our eyes open or closed. As we tend to leak consciousness through the eyes and become distracted by visual signals from our surroundings, the most common approach is to keep the eyes closed. The advantage of having closed eyes is that we have more energy to focus inside. The disadvantage, especially for a beginner, is that we daydream or fall asleep more easily. Another possible drawback of meditating with closed eyes is that we can develop an addiction to various states of

bliss or quietude and begin to perceive the outer world as a threat to our own private peace. From this point of view, we can say that to meditate with open eyes is on some level more 'real', because this way we avoid the pitfall of spiritual escapism.

Meditation with open eyes generates more alertness and enhances our ability to integrate our inner experience with the external world. But beyond that, closing the eyes in meditation is more logical, because our aim is to withdraw attention from the seen to the seer. Closing the eyes gives us more force to dive deeper inside and merge with the inner realm. If a meditator is unable to internalize his whole consciousness with eyes open, he may become stuck on the surface of the now. In such a case, it is best to close the eyes to generate more internal energy and establish the necessary depth of being.

There also are benefits to alternating meditations with open and closed eyes to keep the balance between exclusive surrender to the inner state and the integration of that experience with consciousness of the outside world. Ultimately, we should not restrict ourselves to a single approach, but remain flexible and adapt our practice to suit our present needs and natural tendencies. When we finally merge with the inner realm and begin to experience it as not separate from the outer realm, we realize that having the eyes open or closed makes no difference from the standpoint of reality as a whole.

***The Direction of Attention:*** Our relative consciousness functions by creating endless points of reference. In order to exist and operate, it must constantly relate to something or other. It never ceases to grasp at objects both external and internal. Due to this total instability, we are unable to experience any real clarity and calmness. For this reason, before we can transform the chaotic state of the mind, we must train it to maintain a single point of reference, for instance by watching the breath. By developing one-pointed attention we harness the mind's energy so that it can be channeled towards our awakening to the non-referential state of being.

The fundamental questions for a beginner in meditation are how to cope with the commotion of the mind and where to direct attention. Due to the physical inactivity of sitting immobile, the mind can become even more disturbed and chaotic in meditation than usual. In the absence of a host, the mind cannot bear a vacuum and must compulsively populate the space of consciousness with endless thoughts. The only way to pacify and transcend our mental agitation is to gain the ability to behold and embrace it from a level of our existence that lies deeper than the mind itself. The mind cannot be conquered by the mind, and any effort to control or repress thinking only increases its restless nature. We should never struggle with the mind, but rather accept it as it is from a place of detached observation and being. Unless we bring more consciousness to the mind and embrace it with the light of our presence, it cannot be transmuted into a force that is aligned with our spiritual awakening.

We can approach the directing of our attention in meditation in three ways: towards the mind's activity, towards a single object of concentration or, beyond it, to our subjective essence. By directing our attention towards the mind in vigilant self-observation, we develop disidentification, understanding and awareness; by paying one-pointed attention to areas of our reality other than the mind, such as breathing or bodily awareness, we develop concentration, calm and mindfulness; but stepping directly out of the mind by turning our attention back to our true center, we radically transcend objectified concentration or directed attention in the sudden awakening to our fundamental awareness.

The practice of watching the mind, one of the universal methods of meditation, is the first step in transcending our habitual and unconscious identification with arising thoughts. Through this method we strengthen the position of the observer, creating a stable counterforce to the continuous stream of thoughts invading our consciousness. The observer is the aspect of the ego responsible for bringing integrity to the functioning of our mind and linking us with the essence of our innate subjectivity. By watching arising thoughts, yet remaining uninvolved, we create a space in our intelligence to disidentify from our own subconsciousness instead of just thinking mechanically. However, though this approach is beneficial, it cannot bring us to the true state of meditation. It is a technique that serves only as a preparation for becoming more conscious, and at some stage must be transcended. Self-observation or detached watching cannot take us beyond the mental realm, because the watcher himself is a faculty of the very mind he watches. It is only when the observer links himself to the essence of awareness that he can gain the necessary depth and solidity to move out of the vicious circle of thinking, identifying, observing, disidentifying and thinking again.

In the approach to meditation that emphasizes the development of one-pointed attention, our relative awareness is trained to constantly focus on an object external to the mind, to keep it from being distracted and lost in thought. To develop this skill, we may initially practice conscious breathing, feeling how our belly rises and falls with each breath, or in a more advanced method, we direct our attention to the inner space of our abidance. Instead of working directly with the mind, we channel our attention towards conscious repose in being or the heart. Although we cannot fully pacify the mind in this way, we open enough space beyond the mind to experience a level of tranquility and immersion. By expanding into being, we become empowered to work with the mind in a much more efficient and conscious way. Even so, the practice of one-pointed attention is still a mental exertion confined to the mind. Attention is not awareness, but its functional expression. Because it is fundamentally objectless, for awareness to be realized, attention has to turn back to its source.

Watching the mind, cultivating mindfulness, or bypassing the mind by directing attention to areas of our existence other than awareness itself, do not allow us to reach true and abiding peace. To transcend the mind in a real way, we have to illuminate it by giving birth to the center of awareness. A meditator who is spiritually



mature should strive to awaken his essence beyond the mind from the very start, paying attention not to an object of attention, but to its very subject. When the energy of our mind turns towards the original source of its attention, we enter the domain of consciousness without content. The essence of the mind is not thought, but objectless attention, the core of our subjective existence untouched by the coming and going of thoughts. The birth of pure awareness allows us to shift out of the mind into the essential nature of our luminous presence, the entryway to the natural state of pure meditation.

**Pure Meditation:** True meditation is beyond directing attention to any area - it is an objectless state of being. Attention actually has to become absorbed in the depths of the now for the state of meditation to manifest. Otherwise, it is the very thing that separates us from our positive absence: unity with the inner realm. To embody the fullness of our abidance in the state of meditation, we have to pass through the gate of pure subjectivity and submit our existence to the beyond. To enter the state of meditation, a meditator must first move beyond the mind by establishing his attention in the center of awareness, and then surrender his attention by dwelling vertically in content-free awareness. Now he can surrender beyond awareness by merging with being, finally actualizing the state of pure meditation, the natural space of absorption in existence.

**Just Sitting:** The purest form of meditation practice is 'just sitting'. Just sitting is at once a practice and our natural state of abidance in the now, for though it must be actualized through effort, it is intrinsic to each moment of being. By cultivating the mode of just sitting, we attune our existence to the natural repose of reality as it is. The most sublime aspiration of a meditator is just to be, just to sit. In just sitting, it is not our body that sits, but our awareness; our attention is at rest, absorbed in the vertical plane of pure being.

We practice just sitting by continuously returning to the condition of 'sitting mind'. We grow in our consciousness, establish an unbroken presence, and drop our awareness into the depths of reality. The practice of just sitting involves an element of transparent exertion through which the state of just being can fully manifest and reach unconditional naturalness.

### **Beyond the Mind**

Meditation is the subtle art of the mind's transcendence. A correct attitude towards arising thoughts is essential to regain our autonomy from the mind and awaken the state of meditation, for they are the main distraction in our effort to reach our deeper self. In meditation, we should neither indulge in thinking nor battle with the mind. Meditation is not an absence of thoughts, but rather an unbroken continuity of being undistracted by arising thoughts. As a thought arises, we neither accept nor reject it, for acceptance and rejection are energies linked to the mind itself, and therefore



cannot take us beyond it. When we accept a thought, we fuel it with our affirmation; when we reject a thought, we fuel it with our denial. The moment our me is not involved in thinking, a thought cannot sustain itself and dissolves, for it has no energy of its own. The approach of neither accepting nor rejecting thinking, however, is limited in its power to take us beyond the mind. Unless our me has a stable place beyond the mind to anchor itself, we remain caught in a wheel of arising and disappearing thoughts towards which we must constantly cultivate our limited non-identification.

It is the nature of relative consciousness that it must be conscious of the objective in order to exist. In an unconscious person, consciousness recreates itself through psychological and phenomenal awareness. The mind cannot exist in emptiness. It must fill up the space of consciousness with objects, thoughts and impressions to maintain its status quo. The moment it is faced with the impasse of inactivity, it generates boredom or falls asleep, but even then, it constantly dreams. No wonder it is so common to drift and daydream during meditation - the mind becomes stifled by stillness, and seeks release through other outlets.

Although the crystallization of attention and the cultivating of observation are the essential means to go beyond our mechanical mind, they are not enough to transfigure the construct of our consciousness. Our consciousness has to become conscious of something other than thinking, other than observing, other than objectifying itself. We have to give it the ultimate object - its own subjectivity. In the same instant that we neither accept nor reject an arising thought, we must become aware of the pristine space that dwells at the root of the mind - awareness itself. The moment we pay total attention to our innate presence, the chain of thinking is broken and awareness without content alone prevails.

Usually, a beginner loses his focus and by force of habit leaks his consciousness into thinking, objectifying his sense of me in the mind. However, whenever he returns moment to moment to his center of awareness and gradually anchors his attention in pure subjectivity, the whole structure of his consciousness becomes increasingly centralized in being rather than thinking. By giving our consciousness the supreme object of our presence, we decondition it from pursuing the inferior objects of relative reality. As we gradually learn how to live through pure consciousness, our mind surrenders to its host, the ground of I am - the soul.

Unless the ghost of the mechanical mind is laid to rest by becoming reabsorbed in its original awareness, we will never enter the realm of meditation and become an integrated whole. It does not mean that thinking stops entirely upon stabilizing the center of awareness - a certain amount of thinking is a natural part of our global functioning. However, when our me becomes centralized in the essence beyond the mind, the arising of thoughts is in harmony with our existence, the exalted consciousness of silence and presence. Thinking that takes place in an unbroken space of awareness is an exercise in clear intelligence, a positive expression of our

meditative consciousness. While in the initial stages of practice we are engaged in a horizontal struggle between becoming lost in the mind and returning to presence, as our practice matures, the movement of thoughts no longer occurs outside of our essence, but is contained in pure awareness.

### **Prior to the Presence and Absence of Thought**

To uncover the true nature of awareness demands a great deal of precision and sensitivity. For a beginner fully identified with the mind, a momentary gap in thinking is the closest thing to a feeling of peace, so he translates it as a meditative experience. However, to dwell in the suspension of thought is to cling to a false experience of emptiness that is not grounded in pure subjectivity. To meditate is not to grasp at the absence of thoughts but to abide prior to their presence and absence in the domain of being and non-perceptual consciousness

Try as he might, the observer cannot unveil the inner essence, because our true self cannot be grasped through mental exertion. Though he may contemplate the interval between thoughts in the futile hope of discovering the nature of thoughtlessness, the observer does nothing but objectify the absence of thought as the seen. He watches the non-existence of thoughts and perceives it as a vacancy opening up in front of him instead of becoming vacant himself by watching nothing. To watch no-thing is awareness, wakefulness without a reference point.

The observer cannot capture consciousness unless he stops seeking it outside of his own existence. He must renounce his mental exertion and 'stand still' in awareness to discover his true nature. He must surrender to the very awareness from which he arises in order to obtain the supreme insight into his true self. Empty awareness is not found between thoughts, but prior to them; it is not found within the mind, for it is the background of both the thought and the thinker. Awareness cannot be grasped by perception and reflection - to know it is to become it.

### **The Multilayered Mind in Meditation**

Meditators are often confused about the relationship between the arising of thoughts, the role of the observer and their meditative state. We can reach clarity in this matter only by understanding the multilayered nature of our consciousness and how it coexists with the ground of I am. Before we can reach a balanced understanding of the relationship between thoughts and the inner state, we must become conscious of the various ways the mind can operate during our meditation practice.

The mind is a living organism of intelligence that must maintain a complex relationship with the whole of our consciousness for the sake of our basic sanity. The capacity of the conscious mind to assist in our meditation directly corresponds to the depth of our spiritual awakening. If we are totally lost in the mind, it cannot possibly

serve our evolution into the state of meditation. To empower the intelligence of the mind so it can become a transformative force in our consciousness, we must first realize our spiritual essence. By 'essence' we mean at this point primarily the state of pure awareness, but if a meditator has reached a deeper awakening, the essence would actually signify the whole of the inner state, and ultimately the soul. The relationship between the essence of I am and intelligence is reciprocal: in our initial effort to enter the state of meditation, intelligence supports the growth of our consciousness and the awakening of the essence; through the actualized essence, intelligence gains the necessary power to integrate the whole of the mind with the inner state.

Since it is the conscious mind that bridges our unconscious self with our conscious abidance in the inner state, its role is of paramount importance in the process of awakening. It is the mind, when aware of itself, that engenders the conscious sense of me, the observer, so fundamental to our inner growth into being and understanding. Without activating the function of the observer, we cannot transcend our subconscious reality and enter the state of meditation. Only when this function has been fulfilled, and our abidance in the inner realm fully realized, can we begin to surrender and merge the observer with universal consciousness.

To help us better understand the complex nature of the mind and its evolving role in our meditation practice, we will now describe the various ways the conscious mind can behave in its relationship to both our essence and subconscious reality as experienced by all meditators in the process of awakening. It must be noted that up to the fourth stage, the meditator is still unawakened to his essence.

1. *The conscious mind lost in the subconscious, or the subconscious alone:* The basic condition of forgetfulness - attention is absent and one is lost in thought.
2. *The conscious mind coexisting with the subconscious:* One experiences a degree of presence within the mechanical activity of the mind - thinking is divided into conscious and subconscious.
3. *The conscious mind aware of the subconscious:* One becomes mindful of mechanical thinking, and the observer develops a sense of distance from the mind. However, unless one has awakened the center of awareness, and consciousness has been largely transformed, awareness of the subconscious does not put a stop to the momentum of the thinking mind. In spite of being aware of arising thoughts at times, a beginner is bound to think constantly. Only when awareness has fully matured does the act of becoming conscious of the subconscious lead to the instantaneous cessation of thinking.
4. *The conscious mind alone:* One is fully present within the thinking process, yet not aware of the essence.

5. *The conscious mind aware of the essence coexisting with conscious thinking:* Awareness of the essence and conscious thinking occurs simultaneously.

6. *The conscious mind aware of the essence coexisting with subconscious thinking :* Though the observer is connected to the awareness of his essence, unfocussed semi-conscious thinking takes place on the periphery of consciousness.

7. *The conscious mind aware of the essence becomes aware of the subconscious:* Parallel to the third mode, but here the meditator already abides in awareness, so there is more power to drop thinking and surrender the mind.

8. *The conscious mind, aware of the essence and consciously thinking, fully surrenders to the essence:* While consciously thinking, one renounces all thinking and surrenders to the essence.

9. *The conscious mind aware of the essence alone:* One's intelligence abides in pure awareness and the mind stops. This state can occur on two levels: in the lower level, the observer is still separated from his essence and the ego remains the primal experiencer; in the higher level, the observer is merged with the inner state and his consciousness of I am becomes universal.

A meditator can be said to have reached the mature state of meditation when he experiences any of the last five modes of consciousness. Although to be lost in the subconscious is a relatively negative experience, minimal subconscious movement is a natural part of the functioning of the human mind, and therefore acceptable as long as one abides firmly in the inner state and is able to instantly return to conscious presence and surrender the mind. This should not be used, however, as an excuse to indulge in thinking during meditation. When our mind surrenders and integrates with the inner state, thinking is minimal and occurs in slow motion, opening space between thoughts where silence prevails. Even during the occurrence of thoughts, one should continue to dwell in unbroken unity with the state prior to thought.

### **Remembrance and Surrender**

The two main hindrances in meditation are forgetfulness and lack of absorption. A great deal of patience and dedication are required to undo the objectifying tendencies of the mind. To transform our fragmented state, we must cultivate both the unbroken remembrance of our essence and surrender to the now. Remembrance and surrender are two complementary aspects of meditation practice; without remembrance we remain lost in the mind; without surrender we cannot access the depths of the now. To awaken the permanent state of meditation, attention has to be continually locked onto the essence of awareness, and awareness dropped into the vertical plane of being.

## **The Two-fold Internalization**

Because our essence leaks into the state of forgetfulness due to the externalization of the mind, the withdrawal of consciousness is an absolute requirement to enter the state of meditation. There are two orientations of this withdrawal, horizontal and vertical. In the horizontal withdrawal, consciousness turns back to its non-dual presence of self-luminous I am; in the vertical withdrawal, the upwards movement of our mind and life-force are rerouted downwards to the state of being. The horizontal internalization is a function of self-attention, the vertical internalization, of our surrender to the inner state. Unless one reaches this two-fold withdrawal of consciousness, one cannot attain absorption in the self.

To surrender one must be present. In order to enter reality, it is insufficient to be present only in the mind by developing concentration or paying attention to being. Only the soul can enter the inner dimension, and without the stability of I am, one has no soul. Awakening to awareness through the horizontal withdrawal of the mind is the point of entry into the depth of the now. If one practices vertical surrender without having obtained his true presence, the mind remains fundamentally fragmented, lacking any continuity of intelligence and consciousness within the experience of being. The unity of horizontal and vertical internalization enables us to enter the inner reality and realize the wholeness of the soul.

## **Boredom and Meditation**

Boredom is an interesting state of mind. It inspires our motivation for action, but never allows us to rest in contentment. We get bored when there is nothing to do or when we lose interest in what we are doing. The deepest meaning of boredom, however, is dissatisfaction with being. Due to its shallow experience of reality, to 'just be' is a tedious and dull experience for a human personality. It is not the soul that is bored with being, but the mind, for the mind lives only through movement and action, and is unable to rest in the now. The moment the mind stops being occupied or entertained, it gets restless and irritated. The monotony of being is simply intolerable. The repetitiveness of each moment devoid of activity creates a feeling of stuckness that sends an immediate signal that it is time to 'do' something. This very unconscious mechanism is at the root of our fundamental resistance to being.

Some claim they never get bored, even if there is nothing to do. In truth, they simply do not register their ever-present sense of boredom. In most cases, they do not feel bored because they are either too lethargic or constantly lost in the mind; their mind either spaces out or fills up the space of each moment with incessant thinking, dreaming and fantasizing. On the other hand, some meditators believe that they do not get bored in meditation because they are having 'such a great time'. In reality, they have not yet started to meditate. Unless one had passed through the experience of deep, existential boredom, one has not entered true meditation.

Boredom cannot be by-passed; it must be fully experienced and digested before one can move beyond it. Meditation can be said to have two sides: boredom and bliss. To which degree we experience boredom and to which bliss, reflects the depth of our absorption in reality.

The existence of boredom points to the fact that we are so dependent on receiving constant stimuli from the world or our own mind, that in their absence we instantly lose all sense of meaning and purpose - we feel deflated by the non-happening of the now. Boredom, in essence, is the pure suffering of existing as a separate consciousness. We confront the most acute sense of separateness when faced with inactivity, because action serves as the basic distraction to our claustrophobic self-consciousness. Although boredom is in actuality the basic background of our human existence, we face it directly only in meditation, for here we are called to suspend our phenomenal involvement and renounce all reference points except for being. In the space of just being, we are naked and alone, forced to confront our basic aimlessness.

The only nourishing way out of boredom is to recognize the profound value of being. However, as we cannot appreciate what we do not experience, an unconscious person who lacks any real experience of being has no way to relate to the positive essence of boredom. What an average individual translates as 'being' is but the frail touch of each moment, a vague reverberation of the now. He does not abide in being, but is exteriorized from the depth of reality, stuck on its surface. He has no inner space within which to connect to something deeper than his personality, and link himself with the meaningfulness of existence beyond boredom. To move out of the boredom inherent to separate consciousness, we must enter the realm of meditation and being. In sitting meditation, we channel the energy of the mind through the portal of inactivity into our abidance in the inner state. When we reach a significant level of absorption and our mind surrenders, we begin to dissolve our boredom in the bliss of being.

To transcend boredom does not mean that one never gets bored anymore. Boredom is an indivisible part of meditation as long as one has not fully merged with the inner realm. To transform boredom is to awaken a profound sense of endurance within the experience of each now. In each now, as boredom arises, one surrenders within it. One has to accept boredom and befriend it before it can be transmuted and absorbed by its very source, the impersonal void of the now. Our experience of boredom evolves as we come ever closer to our original absence, and realize the emptiness of self. As we deepen our abidance in reality, the sense of boredom becomes increasingly relaxed and transparent. It no longer creates restless energies and agitation, but reflects the absolute patience of existence.

It is a common experience that the moment we reach a new layer of depth within the inner state, the sense of boredom is temporarily suspended, for our observer feels a very tangible bliss and appreciation coming from the shift beyond his previous state.

However, as time goes by, the novelty of the experience wears off, and boredom arises once again. The relative solution for this predicament is to stimulate the observer by reaching an even deeper state, an even deeper bliss. But no matter what depth he reaches, his initial fascination and excitement inevitably wane, and he becomes bored all over again. To go beyond boredom through the medium of the spiritual path is not to seek after new states, but to resolve its primal cause, our separateness. As we contemplate the problem of boredom more deeply, we realize that it cannot be solved by intensifying our inner experience, because it lies not in the depth of our state, but our inability to merge with the inner realm.

The observer is the victim of boredom as well as its very cause. Only when he begins to surrender and become one with the inner realm can boredom be dissolved. To go fully beyond boredom we must arrive at the state of transcendence and samadhi. Ultimately, it is our own disappearance into reality that takes us beyond boredom, for it liberates us from the very one who is subjected to both boredom and its absence.

### **The Science of Transformation**

Meditation is an exact science of inner transformation and awakening based on clear laws governing the mind and human consciousness. It is the science of self-knowledge, the science of awareness, the science of surrender, the science of the inner states, the science of oneness. In the practice of meditation, we gradually awaken different aspects of the inner state, coming ever closer to the natural state, pure meditation. To awaken this natural state of being, the mind and energy must be transformed and aligned with the light of I am.

The average mind cannot enter meditation, because of its perpetual state of chaos and unconsciousness, and lack of any presence or connection to its essence. Such a mind must be tamed and transmuted in order for it to open to the dimension of pure subjectivity. Through the practice of meditation, we develop concentration and mindfulness, and prepare the ground for an opening to the inner state. We pacify restless energy and emotions, and align the subtle bodies. An unconscious and fragmented individual cannot experience true peace, stillness and clarity, just as a house with its blinds drawn does not receive the light of the sun. Opening to the beyond demands a total change of the past self and a profound activation of our spiritual potential. No transformation of this magnitude is possible without the practice of meditation.

### **Meditation: The Means and the Goal**

Meditation is a gradual path based on sudden awakening. Each moment of meditation points to reality, but the complete realization of that reality is the outcome of a gradual process. This seeming paradox needs to be grasped in order to



comprehend the true meaning of a practice that itself transcends the duality of path and goal, effort and effortlessness, doing and being. Meditation is both the means and the goal, for though it has its roots in the perfection of pure being, it must unfold in time before it can reflect this perfection in our actual experience.

If we see meditation only as a means to an end, our meditation is no longer pure, because we are using it to achieve goals that are external to the immediate; the very spirit of meditation is based on surrender to the now. However, if we perceive sitting meditation solely as an end in itself, we lose our connection to the whole process of transformation and inner evolution.

Meditation is the goal in and of itself, for its very nature is abidance in the now; meditation is also the means to reach that which, though of the now, is far beyond our initial realization of the now. Although the now is the ground of pure subjectivity upon which we abide, our relative ability to access it does not guarantee that we have reached its true depth - our *present* experience of the now may be shallow. To fully realize the dimension of the now we must go through the process of expansion and awakening until we can merge with the realm of pure subjectivity. Meditation is a practice in which the goal and the means are completely intertwined. As the goal, meditation reflects our fundamental union with the reality of the now; as the means, it signifies the process of reaching its fathomless depths.

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## The Gateless Gate

Meditation is the ground of existence, and nothing is more profound and inspiring than moving into its depths to discover our true self. Although meditation is the inner gate out of illusion, from the viewpoint of higher truth there is no gate to pass through and nowhere to go. Meditation is the natural state of our abidance in the universal now, our true existence merged with supreme being. However, as long as we live in forgetfulness of our real nature, we must pass through the invisible gate of meditation in order to actualize our original state. Because the truth of being is concealed from those who are unconscious and lost in the mind, they must strive to enter reality and move beyond illusion. It is only by awakening to pure subjectivity that we can finally return to the roots of our creation, the inner realm of the universal I am. To penetrate the dimension of meditation is to realize the mystery of the gateless gate, the open doorway within the now to the great beyond.

### Being and Understanding

Being is beyond understanding, but without understanding we cannot transcend the plane of becoming. Despite the basic simplicity of meditation, we must deeply contemplate this dimension to realize it fully and comprehend its most intangible nature. No matter how gratifying our experience in meditation is, there are some important questions to ask: How can we penetrate the unseen depth of the inner realm? As we enter this new territory, how are we to grasp the intricate and subtle reality beyond the mind? What is the true state of meditation and how can we differentiate it from the maze of meditative experiences we pass through? Is the inner state the same as the one who experiences it? Is the knower of the inner realm external to the place in which he abides? Who am I and where am I within the state of meditation? What is it this great void of the cosmic beyond upon which we dwell when submerged in meditation? What are the levels of the inner depth we can permeate with our consciousness in our progression towards surrender? How can we actualize the complete state of meditation, and how can we merge with the universal self? We can unravel many questions about the multifaceted reality of meditation, but not through the mind. The answers lie in pure being and non-

conceptual understanding.

### **Self-knowledge and Meditation**

Meditation is an act of being, whereas self-knowledge is an act of knowing. Two mutually supporting aspects of the inner path, meditation and self-knowledge are indivisible from one another. Self-knowledge is required in order to penetrate to the essence of meditation, and meditation brings stability and depth to the realization of our true self. Meditation without self-knowledge is bound to be utterly impotent, dull and mechanical; self-knowledge without meditation remains shallow and disconnected from the beyond. Without self-knowledge one cannot enter the core of meditation, and conversely, without meditation, self-knowledge remains trapped on the exterior of the inner state.

The secret of self-knowledge lies in the existential leap from objectivity to subjectivity - from living on the periphery of the mind to realizing the center of I am. Awakening of self-knowledge is the centering act of consciousness; it is the internalization of self. Meditation is the practice of staying in the presence of self-knowledge. As we dwell upon the knowledge of I am, by the law of spiritual gravity, the vertical pull of the now reveals an ever increasing depth in the experience of the self. This depth itself is beyond self-knowledge, for it points to the very source of both self and knowledge.

It is quite common that seekers who follow the path of self-enquiry repudiate the practice of meditation. Even if their enquiry does yield positive results, they frequently become stagnated on the path. This is due to their inability to both stabilize and deepen that which they have awakened. Then there are seekers who do practice meditation, but do not apply self-enquiry, or even refuse to believe in the existence of self. Because of their lack of conscious intention to gain self-knowledge, their practice is ignorant, powerless to yield true awakening.

Unfortunately, in some traditions, due to the misperception that 'no-self' is the opposite of self, the belief in no-self is frequently used as an excuse to reject the practice of self-enquiry. By following this concept in a dogmatic way, we make the intellectual error of confusing the individual and universal dimensions of the self. The term no-self, in its correct definition, does not signify negation of the individual self, but rather denotes the non-abiding and empty nature of the universal self. Because it is a tool used primarily to awaken the essence of the soul, the universal self is not realized through the practice of self-enquiry, but through our surrender and absorption in the beyond. To negate our individual self is unwise, for without its presence, neither self nor no-self can be realized. Here we can see how a simple concept, employed without imagination, can sabotage the positive movement towards pure subjectivity.

Traditionally, self-enquiry is applied in an attempt either to expose the illusory nature

of the ego or to realize the universal self. Though this approach may be fruitful in the sense of opening one to the inner realm, it actually misses the point: it leads to fundamentally false conclusions, for it bypasses the essence of the enquirer himself. Self-enquiry, practiced correctly, points beyond seeing through our false individuality or our identification with universality to the personal essence of the soul's consciousness, the knowledge I am.

As essential as it is, no amount of self-knowledge can bring us to the kind of depth that is reached through meditation and takes place on a much deeper plane than consciousness of awareness. Meditation is a condition of pure surrender through which our sense of I am merges with the universal state of oneness.

### **The Two levels of Pure Subjectivity**

The realm of pure subjectivity is the only gateway to reality, the gateless gate. It is multi-dimensional, possessing infinite depth and countless planes within itself. We can never fathom the bottomless ocean of pure being, for the deeper we go, the further its limits recede. To enter the inner realm is to be submerged in the heart of creation, the living depth of the eternal whole.

In our explanation of the inner realm, we draw a clear distinction between two strata of pure subjectivity: the first is the subjectivity of the soul, the knower and witness of the inner state; the second is not an entity, a personal essence or an individual knower, but the dimension of being, the unmanifested ground of existence. The *one* who abides in the state of meditation is the pure subjectivity of the individual soul, and the dimension in which the soul abides is the pure subjectivity of the universal I am. Over the course of our inner evolution, this distinction becomes more and more transparent, because these two levels of subjectivity progressively merge into one, undivided reality.

### **Absolute Objectivity**

In the collective psyche, the term 'subjective experience' has somewhat negative associations, as it is understood to denote an experience relative in nature, and therefore cannot be objectively described or confirmed. In contrast, the term 'objective experience' commonly signifies an occurrence that is factually evident, independent from our individual experiences or opinions. The connotations of both terms have been greatly influenced by the language of science, which is generally inclined to identify the 'subjective observer' as an impediment to empirical analysis. The science of spirituality, however, unlike the science of phenomenal reality, is primarily dedicated to the exploration of our subjective existence. The subjective essence we refer to here lies far deeper than the relative subjectivity of the mind and personality. Our true subjectivity is in fact absolutely 'objective', because it reflects the eternal light of universal I am.

Despite the fact that in the language of meditation and consciousness the term 'objective' usually signifies something external to pure subjectivity, and therefore belongs to the realm of forgetfulness, we should not assume that the reality of objects and appearances is in existential opposition to pure subjectivity. This is true only in the case of an unconscious person in whom the light of subjectivity is lost in ignorant identification with phenomenal existence. When pure subjectivity is fully realized, it transcends the polarity of inner and outer - containing them both in the space of all-pervasive oneness. Ultimately, there is only one reality - nothing exists outside of all-that-is.

### **Attention and Letting go**

There are two fundamental aspects of meditation: centering and absorption. In meditation we must maintain the correct balance between alertness and calm, concentration and letting go. Through centering we gain a stable sense of self and presence; through absorption we move into the depth of being. We cannot reach a state of true absorption prior to centering our consciousness. By establishing ourselves in pure awareness, we move beyond the gross level of the fragmented mind, giving birth to our real center from which we can begin our surrender.

In our meditation practice we must first establish the necessary level of concentration, and then solidify our attention. The work with concentration and attention is the only antidote to our amnesia and internal chaos. Although the term concentration implies gathering energies towards our center, in practice concentration is an exertion more outwardly oriented than attention. Attention is closer to the essence of awareness than concentration - in its purest form it is self-attentive. Concentration is the ability to focus the mind and energy, attention is one-pointed awareness; concentration enables us to temporarily put the mechanical mind on hold, attention allows us to go beyond it. Through concentration we drop our forgetfulness, through attention we abide in remembrance; concentration brings us to the present, attention bridges us with our essence.

The work with awareness can be approached either directly or indirectly. Indirect work takes place outside of the essence - it is mindfulness of an object instead of the subject itself. Here, the mind is trained to focus through the use of externally oriented concentration. As we have mentioned, one of the more natural and gentle techniques that uses an external object to anchor the mind is awareness of the breath. This technique is beneficial on many levels, because it assists us in developing alertness, balancing energy and opening to the realm of being. Other indirect meditative techniques include mantra repetition, visualization and observation of the mind. These practices of concentration on objects generate the energy of attentiveness that acts as an opposing force to the mechanical mind, but their utility is limited. Due to their reliance on external stimuli, they cannot uncover the inner essence, and therefore cannot result in awakening.

In contrast, direct work with awareness is based on self-knowledge and the complementary practice of self-remembrance. Direct work with attention is rooted in the cultivation of the state of self-awareness, and eventually leads to a permanent presence beyond the mind. We will elaborate on a deeper and more holistic work with awareness when discussing integral consciousness.

In our effort to enter the state of meditation, attention in itself is insufficient. Although attention enables us to abide in the present and links us with pure awareness, it cannot enter the dimension of the now. Attention dwells only on the surface of meditation. The real depth of meditation is reached through absorption, which we access through letting go of attention. Letting go is the surrender to the depth of the now that opens the soul to the gravitational force of the beyond.

The condition of not-letting-go is the unconscious exercise of self-control through which we sustain our separate existence. Because as humans we live in a perpetual state of tension and self-holding, we need to spend a long time in meditation before we are able to master the art of surrender. Letting go is a movement into the state of oneness. To let go is to drop into an existential state of ease and become absorbed in the simplicity of being.

In meditation, we need to maintain a precise equilibrium between attention and letting go. If we do not generate enough attention, any attempt to let go will lead to daydreaming and sleep. If too alert, we create strain and become overly self-conscious. Excessive concentration and self-control, and their opposites, inattentiveness and lethargy, are the most common impediments to the practice of meditation.

The ability to preserve the proper balance between awareness and surrender in our practice reflects our relative effort and cooperation in activating the natural state of meditation. In the natural state, no effort is needed, because one abides beyond the polarity of attention and letting go. The natural state is a state beyond the fluctuating energies of the mind, in which attention and letting go both become immersed into the void of pure being.

### **Meditation: the Passage to the Beyond**

Superficially, meditation is a time of peace and quiet during which the mind is put at rest. True meditation, however, is far beyond any experience of calm or psychological relaxation. There is nothing wrong with feeling blissful or enjoying inner peace, but meditation is much more than that. To recognize the sacredness of meditation, we have to meet the metaphysical depths of the inner dimension. The purest motivation to mediate transcends seeking personal satisfaction, pleasure, or even peace; it is to enter our original home and move from illusion to reality. To enter the inner realm and dwell in the pure subjectivity of being is to regain our true life,

rooted in the source of creation.

In the initial stages of our meditation practice we come face-to-face with the unconscious mind and our disjointed state of being. Since during this period we are moving out of suffering and forgetfulness, we can consider it a 'negative' phase in our evolution. But when we become more integrated within and gain entry into the inner realm, we begin the 'positive' phase of practice that now is based on internal expansion. To support this expansion, we literally 'sit' in the inner realm and, by the divine law, move increasingly deeper into being, merging with the beyond in a process that continues until the state of complete oneness is achieved. But even after reaching this complete state, the movement into the inner realm does not stop, for the beyond is infinite, and thus there is no end to its revelation.

### **The Bottomless Depth of Meditation**

Meditation contains two functions: to enable the expansion into becoming our true self, which is soul-realization, and to enable the expansion into the beyond, which is self-realization. There is no end to either expansion. Even after the soul is realized, she continues to grow into an increasingly higher condition of her eternal identity. Because the nature of existence is movement, nothing can stop - for to stop is to regress, and in a spiritual context, to die. Even after reaching the state of oneness, the expansion into the depth of existence does not cease.

Meditation can never be fully fathomed, for the very simple reason that the inner realm has infinite depth. It is like an ocean into which we can dive deeper and deeper, never tiring of our blissful exploration. Meditation is not merely a means to reach a spiritual goal or an aimless abidance in the now - it is an ever-deepening immersion of consciousness in the magnificence of the divine beyond.

Until the transcendental state is fully realized and our individuality merged in samadhi, a meditator journeys through different layers of pure being, each containing enough depth and bliss to bestow an unconditional sense of gratification. Although settling down our existence into the state of absolute rest is not an easy task, as we grow within the inner realm there is increasingly more of this pure contentment. Only when we have gone through the whole process of expansion, however, can we experience the ultimate contentment, the infinite bliss of absence.

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## The Art of Non-doing

If we look carefully, we can see that everything in existence is in motion, besotted with the will to become. This is particularly true for human consciousness. The human mind has become a reflection, even a caricature, of universal movement. While to be endowed with active intelligence is natural and positive, when we become subjugated by the compulsive arising of thoughts, we lose our connection to the basic goodness of being and to the silence essential to our spiritual sanity.

We cannot experience reality outside of the individual consciousness that constitutes our unique angle of perception. Our mind is the only tool we have to recognize existence, but at the same time, it has become the very veil that separates us from reality as it is. The mind blocks our direct perception of reality because its agitated activity obscures objective existence. The mind, rooted in interpretation rather than direct perception, creates a virtual world of its own that is alienated from the whole of reality as it is. To apperceive existence in its true form, we must transcend our unconscious tendency to ceaselessly think, label and interpret all that appears in our field of cognition. Only a still mind can see and reflect reality from the place of non-modified lucidity.

The foundation of meditation is the condition of non-doing, the complete stillness of our consciousness within the state of being. Non-doing cannot be accessed unless pure awareness is first established and then submerged into the depth of the now. To arrive at the state of surrender and immersion, we must let go of our own existence and allow the gravity of the inner realm to pull us down to the ground of universal repose.

### Divine Passivity

The state of non-doing is the most profound experience for a human being, for it can occur only in the context of oneness with existence. It is an experience of unity, freedom and bliss. This extraordinary unity of consciousness and inactivity is not



inertia, but supreme repose in the divine. It is 'divine passivity', the ultimate state of being rooted in the source and mystery of creation. To arrive at this divine inaction, the will of our individuality has to merge in loving union with the will of the beloved.

### **Dynamics of Non-doing**

Non-doing represents a tremendously vibrant and dynamic condition of being. It is a state of continuously letting go into the mystery of the now in which the presence and absence of the soul merge into an indescribable amalgam of pure existence; personal and impersonal meet and unite in the non-conceptual realm beyond knowing and not-knowing.

Non-doing is a condition of letting go whereby the will *to be* is surrendered into the abyss of universal emptiness. The heart of non-doing is the realm of being within which we abide, the timeless space of the now. Through our relative surrender, the gravitation of the beyond pulls our soul into the inner ocean of pure rest so that we can move into a place of absolute peace, beyond both effort and effortlessness.

Non-doing by its very nature is beyond activity and inactivity. It is none other than reality itself - the unborn base of all-that-is. Beyond polarities, it embraces both motion and stillness, containing all manifested existence within its transcendent non-abidance. When the soul merges with the primordial essence of non-activity, her existence is transported into the beyond, into the perfection of being. It is from this dimensionless space of pure being that all of creation is seen as the uncreated, and all change as the unchanged.

What are the practical means of achieving the state of non-doing? From a place of clear presence, one cultivates the art of surrender. The success of this effortless effort does not hinge solely on our intention to let go, but also on the transmutation of our mind and the transformation of our energy. Our awareness and our energy body have to open up and shift into the inner realm, and our sense of existence move beyond the created reality and relative, time-bound consciousness. Since this transformation takes place on the subtle plane, beyond the control of the conscious mind, the only thing we can do is co-operate through the continuous practice of letting go, in the space of patience, endurance and submission to the beyond. Ultimately, however, the complete opening to the realm of pure being is a result of deliverance, coming from the absolute reality into whose depths we surrender.

### **Dropping the Doer**

Ego can do many things, but it is simply unable to meditate. Pure meditation is a condition of being, not a form of doing. To open the space of meditation, the 'doer' must yield to being. Pure meditation is beyond the exercise of any method. The application of any meditative technique reduces the meaning of meditation to a mere



performance of the mind. Because the mind can only operate in the horizontal dimension of space and time, a meditator who relies on any method of meditation cannot cross into the vertical reality of the now, and only lingers on the periphery of the inner state.

We should not, however, attempt to drop the doer prematurely. The relationship between the doer and the state of non-doing is precisely like that of attention and letting go. The activation of attention is the function of the doer, while the spirit of letting go is a function of surrender to the ego-free space of non-doing. Since the fully mature state of pure meditation cannot be achieved until we complete the inner path, the doer must remain to support the process of establishing the condition of non-doing. This may appear illogical, but there is a very simple explanation; individual effort is a task in the domain of the subtle ego, which although an extension of the mind, operates as a conscious link between the subconscious self and the inner state.

The ego assists us on two levels in the practice of meditation: it helps awaken the inner state, and it learns how to surrender itself in order to merge with that state. To comprehend this more clearly, we must recognize that the ego is not an independent entity, but a vehicle of the soul. While the false ego serves the mind and its agenda alone, the mature, conscious ego is an intelligent representation of the soul in her human personality. It is the conscious ego that becomes present in the mind and overrides the subconscious ego lost in daydreaming, the conscious ego that lets go into the inner state. In the process of merging with the inner state, the ego does not disappear entirely, but rather its motives and purpose change. Prior to its surrender, the ego performed the role of the subject, believing itself to be the real host. As awakening grows roots within our existence, the ego gradually loses its central position and moves to the periphery of our identity where it lingers as a merely functional expression of the soul. The ego continues to support the deepening of the inner state, but its presence grows increasingly transparent and silent. It ceases to control the process of meditation and instead begins humbly to assist it. Our aspiration is not to eliminate the ego, but to transform it into an instrument of inner awakening. In the complete absence of ego, there cannot be any meditation, because the soul must employ its energy and intelligence to open the inner state. Only when it has served its purpose can the ego be fully surrendered to the silence of pure being.

Another function of the doer is to check the quality of meditation and gently direct the energy of the inner state. After recognizing an absence of mindfulness, the 'checker' makes the decision to concentrate. Or, having verified that there is a sufficient amount of presence, the checker introduces the intention of letting go into being. The wisdom of meditation calls for a precise balance between utilizing the ego and dropping it - they should in fact be a simultaneous occurrence. The movement of intelligence, whether checking, intensifying attention or inducing relaxation, should be absolutely intertwined with surrender into the now. The final act of the ego within

each now is to let go, having nothing left to do but remove its interfering attendance from the immaculacy of being. As we can see, the ego, which initially represents the primary obstacle to reaching inner stillness, can learn how to support intelligently our entry into reality.

By letting go, the ego drops itself, and an immediate opening into the state of pure meditation occurs. As time goes by, however, the ego reappears, assessing the state or wandering off into daydreams; hence in the next instant, the ego has to repeat the act of activating attention or surrender. This dance of checking, becoming present and letting go takes place in the space of an effortless and natural flow of intelligence. As our awakening deepens, the interplay between the checker and the inner state gradually merges into one movement, a movement of the now. In due time, the ego dissolves into the inner dimension to such an extent that it ceases to possess the power to assert its separate existence. Naturally, the functions of checking and cognizing still operate at times, but without the presence of an individual agent. From this point forward, the power of recognition and intelligence is owned by *no one* - intelligence moves in the space of pure reality, the impersonal awareness of that which is.

### **Attaining Pure Rest**

The heart of inner rest is the state of just being. In meditation, we explore the mystery of just being again and again; we simply return, moment to moment, to its silent joy. In this unremitting act of surrender from doing to being, from mind to no-mind, from presence to absence, we enter ever-deeper the inner realm, gradually merging with reality.

To meditate is to rest within. The dimension of pure rest is always present as the ground to reality, but because of our ignorance, we have become estranged from it, rent from the heart of stillness. The degree to which we can rest in the beyond directly reflects the extent of our awakening and inner expansion. Only through the practice of meditation, and self-actualization, can we return to the primordial dimension of being, our original abode and final destination.

### **The State of Effortlessness**

The state of effortlessness is the natural condition of being, the ego-free dimension of pure meditation. If effort is not eventually dropped on the path, it is an indication that either we have not awakened to our true self or are unable to merge with the depth of reality. We can only rise above effort through our union with the inner realm. The evolution into effortlessness is a natural progression based on the gradual fusion of the individual with the universal.

Although there are many levels of effortlessness, the essence of the natural state is

always the fundamental experience of just being. Hence, as long as we recognize the core of I am and being, we have relative access to the effortless state of pure meditation even at the initial stage of our practice. As our practice gradually deepens and our state becomes more integrated, the natural state of being dissolves the need for any exertion. We can finally rest, free from our relative self, in the fullness and emptiness of primordial consciousness.

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## Beyond Meditation

We use meditation to heal the disease of ignorance. When its function as remedy has been fulfilled, both the disease and the remedy should be forgotten. To 'practice' meditation past the point of our recovery from ignorance defeats its entire purpose - to be.

One should not become addicted to the practice of meditation, forever dependent on it as a means to reach further expansions. Unless we go beyond meditation and become one with the inner realm, there will always be a split between the act of meditation and our abidance in the now. Only through the power of surrender to the now can we transcend the dichotomy of doing and being, and rise above the view of meditation as existing apart from reality as it is.

In the collective mind, the practice of meditation is an expression of earthly consciousness bound by the principle of ignorance. Although meditation points directly to the heart of the now, the *practice* of meditation beclouds the perfection of being. The very need for exertion that practice implies re-confirms our split from the whole. For our completion, we need to arrive at the point in our evolution where all effort can be dropped and absorbed by reality. To go beyond meditation is to dissolve practice in the extolled realization of the natural state.

### Beyond Practice

Although meditation is the means and the goal, meditation as a 'practice' represents only the means. Correct practice does carry the seed of the essence, but the full realization of the essence eliminates any need for practice. Hence, dropping practice is a natural result of completing the inner path.

There are two extreme views regarding the subject of practice. One claims that there is no need for practice at all, as one can reach self-realization directly. The other, that not only is practice necessary, but that there can be no end to it, for even after

enlightenment one still needs to meditate in order to perfect the inner state. Neither of these views reflects the whole truth. It may be true that one can experience awakening without meditation, but one can never arrive at complete self-realization in this way. As for the belief in the need for never-ending cultivation, it is a false conviction based on confusion over the difference between partial awakening and complete realization. Partial awakening does indeed demand the continuation of practice for the sake of the stabilization, deepening and integrating of the states to which one has awakened. Complete enlightenment, however, by definition, eliminates the need for any kind of additional practice. The state beyond practice does exist, and represents the essence of freedom.

In some cases, the decision to drop practice reflects one's inner potential and the desire of the soul; in others, resistance from the mind. Unfortunately, meditators generally lack sufficient knowledge of the inner realm to sense the difference. They either give up their practice prematurely or insist on continuing with it when it is no longer relevant: For instance, one should not stop cultivating self-remembrance prior to stabilization of awareness, or insist on practice with being when the absolute state is already established and integrated. Prior to reaching complete enlightenment, the decision to drop the specific practice should be made based on a clear view of our potential and the expansiveness of our spiritual aspirations. As we progress, we pass through many different levels of the relative states beyond practice. At these signposts of inner expansion, we can simply relax, enjoying what we have attained. As time goes by, however, we consciously dive into the adventure of the inner work, responding to the call for further evolution once again. A true seeker never gives up the work of evolution before becoming unconditionally free. This is when he is truly beyond practice.

### **Sudden and Gradual Enlightenment**

As long as the science of enlightenment has existed, there has been disagreement between different traditions as to whether self-realization is the outcome of a sudden awakening or a gradual process. There is no confusion, though, if we are able to see this issue from a higher perspective. Awakening is always sudden, for it is a breakthrough in our experience of reality. Complete enlightenment, however, cannot happen suddenly - the chasm between ignorance and self-realization is simply too wide to cross in a single instant. A gigantic leap of this sort would defy the laws of nature, consciousness and energy.

We need to understand that enlightenment is not a mere shift in perception and consciousness. It is an existential metamorphosis on all levels that radically transforms the frequency of our energy system and the delicate balance of various elements in our brain and subtle bodies. A sudden and complete enlightenment that bypassed all intermediate stages undoubtedly would result in a mental and emotional breakdown, or even physical death. Such a radical transfiguration as enlightenment requires adequate time for the body and mind to adjust to the dramatic change in our

energy and sense of identity.

The generally accepted models of sudden and gradual enlightenment are based on the false assumption that ignorance and enlightenment are strict opposites, having no intermediate reality. However, the matter is much more complex and fluid, for there are many transitional stages between forgetfulness and awakening; one can be more or less ignorant, just as one can be more or less awakened. Awakening is sudden by nature, but rarely instantaneously complete. A post-awakening period of cultivation of the state that has been awakened is almost always necessary for the sake of its stabilization and integration. Only when a particular awakening has matured into relative completion can one then initiate the process that leads to the subsequent awakening. In this way, one journeys step-by-step towards becoming increasingly more whole and complete. The concept of gradual enlightenment is valid, provided we accept that it is a gradual process composed of sudden awakenings. It is gradual in the sense that one's inner state progressively expands as one awakening follows another, in tandem with the cultivation of the inner state as a whole.

Cultivation involves both the polishing and perfecting of an already awakened state, and preparation for the awakening that will follow. Though necessary to assure the ensuing awakening, cultivation is never its direct cause. The correlation between cultivation and awakening is in fact extremely subtle: awakening is never the direct result of our effort, yet without our effort, no awakening can take place. Through the practice of cultivation, we prepare our existence for the influence of the higher intelligence that alone can shift our consciousness to an increasingly elevated state of light.

Awakening, in its essence, is always based on grace. Grace does not denote anything supernatural or magical in the simplistic sense of these terms. It is intrinsic to the natural evolution of the soul and the realization of her destiny, an immanent characteristic of her blueprint, re-awakening each aspect of her eternal identity when the time is right. It springs from within the soul herself. However, in the dimension of forgetfulness, we need also a higher transformative power that is transcendent to the soul, in the sense that it descends from the beyond. This type of grace represents the eternal support emanating from the over-soul and the divine, and the timing of its appearance reflects the soul's karma, maturity and destiny.

In the earthly dimension, it is most often a human guide who initiates the inner awakening of a seeker. This initiation takes the form of an energetic transmission of the states beyond the mind, and requires the medium of a self-realized being who embodies the awakened reality. To make himself ready and as receptive as possible, the seeker has to prepare for the initiation through practice. He must bring his energy and consciousness as close as possible to the verge of the state that is to be awakened so that he can be reached by the transmission. A transmission of this type is not the simple transfer of a state. It is the planting of a seed of higher

consciousness that in order to result in complete awakening must be nurtured through its cultivation into maturity. Whether awakening happens spontaneously or is initiated by grace, the principle of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation applies.

### **The Natural State**

The natural state of meditation is the true goal of all meditators. Beyond the polarities of inner and outer, activity and non-activity, thinking and non-thinking, doing and being, the natural state is an unaffected, unconditional immersion in reality. Through the realization of this state, we move completely into the dimension of pure subjectivity, the domain of the self. We continue to exist *in* the world, but are no longer *of* the world; our essence is rooted in the beyond. By the power of our expansion into the realm of pure being, we return to our original state while still maintaining a life on earth. This secret domain of immaculate peace is the abiding place of all beings on this planet, and in other dimensions, who have yielded their existence to the eternal light of I am.

### **Non-being**

Non-being is the deepest experience of meditation. It is not the opposite of being, but rather signifies the absence of the checker within the state of pure being. That which we perceive as 'being' in fact exists only in reference to an experiencer. In the absence of a knower, there is no one to relate to being as something to dwell upon, no one to be. When the knower merges with being, he is no longer external to where he abides; he disappears in existence.

Non-being is the state in which the division between the inner state and the observer is dissolved into one reality. It is an experience without an experiencer, knowing without a knower - freedom without anyone being free. This supreme experience-non-experience of reality can be revealed only to *no one*. In the absence of oneself, the universal self is all-that-is.

### **The State of Bliss**

It is a common error to cling to superficially blissful experiences in meditation. Most so-called meditative experiences are extraneous to our real nature; they come and go and possess no existential value. Lacking true depth, the mind becomes dependent on stimulating experiences and strives desperately to repeat them again. However, because these experiences exist outside of I am and are not anchored in the essence of pure subjectivity, the experiencer is separated from the experienced. The illusive bliss that a beginner sporadically accesses is accidental in nature, and can never become permanent. These experiences of false bliss or semi-meditative states are still confined to the mind. A meditator must guard himself against the addiction to blissful experiences for they can easily divert his attention from the real

work of diving into the trans-experiential dimension of being.

There is an unspoken law of meditation that before one can enter the state of real bliss one has to pass the gate of neutrality, absorbing and integrating the essence of unqualified emptiness: disidentification from experiencing, non-evaluation of experiences, non-doing of being, non-dwelling upon phenomena and non-abidance upon the beyond. To enter reality, a meditator has to establish himself in a state beyond pleasant and unpleasant, blissful or boring. He has to become unconcerned with his experiencing to truly become one with the experience. He has to disappear in the experience. Only then is he permitted to become immersed in the impersonal bliss of existence.

A neutral taste experienced in meditation shows that one abides in reality, for one has moved beyond the mind, yet it also indicates that the experiencer is still separated from the space of his abidance. Neutrality can be said to be the closest experience to reality for a separate experiencer; beyond it the experiencer is no more. The moment the gap between the experiencer and the inner realm is bridged by his immersion, the true nature of reality divulges itself as pure bliss. It is not the kind of bliss that one can relate to, or get used to and become bored, for it is experienced not through our presence but our absence. In the absence of a meditator, the hidden depth of meditation opens as the homogeneous consciousness of divine absorption. Once we have crossed over the neutral dimension of meditation, we begin to disappear into reality and merge with the supreme bliss of the self. The bliss of meditation is innate to the divine realm of the source - it is uncaused, unoriginated, unbecome - it is. To taste through the consciousness of the soul the timeless bliss of being is to merge with the unborn heart of the beloved.

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## Realm of the Inner State

The inner state is a reality in and of itself - a landscape of consciousness and being, the space of our inner abidance in the now, the existential bridge between the soul and the plane of the universal I am. We can see the inner state as the gateway to the beyond, but also as the natural condition of being, known as the state of meditation. To meditate is to dwell within the inner state, and to abide in the inner state is to be in the state of meditation. The depth, stability, richness, expansiveness and strength of our inner state determine our ultimate relationship with the absolute reality.

There are three aspects of the inner state - awareness, being and heart. Through the complete realization of each and all of these aspects, we create a solid ground of unbroken abidance beyond the mind wherein and whereby we can awaken our soul and transcend the dimension of illusion. Each aspect of the inner state represents a different mode of expansion in our journey towards wholeness. To enter the plane beyond the mind with wisdom and a higher purpose, we must understand the multifaceted nature of the inner state and the interlinked practices of awakening, cultivation, stabilization and integration.

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## The State of Presence

Consciousness is the brilliance of the supreme self illuminating the whole of existence with the radiance of knowing from within and beyond all forms of life. It is the mysterious power of cognition that constitutes the essence of creation, the very substance that makes the evolution of intelligence possible. Awareness is the light of recognition, without which, reality would vanish into naught.

Although consciousness is the foundation of creation, within the context of ignorance it relates only to the objective reality external to the self. 'Worldly' consciousness, unaware of its fundamental nature, is actually a dream-like state of forgetfulness. The pseudo-awareness of an unconscious person is impossible to differentiate from its external expression, the mind. His minimal presence is only sufficient to fuel phenomenal consciousness and ego, not to solidify a true sense of identity. A sense of me based on the mind cannot create stability of self. The tragedy of the human is that he is not a *being* at all, but a chaotic flux of subconsciousness. Only by giving birth to pure awareness can one awaken from this painful and fragmented state and enter the stream of conscious evolution, the journey to the soul.

### The Awakening of Awareness

The average human being, regardless of his intellectual capacity, is far from conscious. It is not mental acuity or the ability to solve complex problems that makes us conscious, but the light of I am. Artificial intelligence can perform highly intelligent functions, yet itself has no consciousness. A mind that is not grounded in clear presence only perpetuates unconsciousness, for it lacks any true center to which it could refer its thinking processes. Unless we realize the unchanging background of all thoughts, we cannot meet our own existence, the inborn presence beyond thinking. The awakening to the state of presence is beyond any relative experience of becoming more and more aware; it is a profound existential shift to objectless awareness.

The light of attention is the foundation of each act of perception and cognition, and can either be dispersed in the semi-conscious activities of the mind, or focused in a one-pointed way upon itself. Ordinarily, we center our attention either through objects external to the mind, or within the activity of the mind, like in conscious thinking. In order to channel our awareness in the service of self-knowledge, we must shift our attention from object to subject. When attention becomes aware of itself, it gives rise to the state of self-attention, or pure-attention. To be *just attentive* without any kind of object is awareness. Awakening to this pristine consciousness, we experience the miracle of regaining our true center, the dignity of our presence.

### **Location of the State of Presence**

The assertion that the location of pure awareness can be pinpointed is commonly refuted by the argument that consciousness is 'everywhere': if consciousness is all-pervasive, it cannot have any bodily point of reference. However, this reasoning is flawed, for it confuses the universality of consciousness with the individuation of its expression. The state of pure awareness that we experience in our human form is an individualized expression of universal consciousness and does indeed have a dwelling place within the human body. Psychosomatic awareness runs throughout the whole body, but conscious attention is generated exclusively in the brain. Thus, the state of presence is awakened and experienced in the headspace.

The actual center of awareness is located in the middle of the brain, but the expansiveness and distribution of its energy is determined by one's level of awakening. In the initial stages of practice, the state of presence is usually recognized towards the back of the head when the eyes are open, and in the whole space of the head when the eyes are closed. One feels awareness more at the back of the head when the eyes are open due to the polarization of attention - awareness of the outer versus awareness of awareness. This is sometimes referred to as the 'double arrow' phenomenon, in which attention points out and in simultaneously, causing an intensified withdrawal of energy inwards. In the process of stabilization and integration, the state of presence matures and expands until it is gradually felt more as an expansive space of awareness both inside and outside the head. The fully awakened state of presence transcends the dichotomy between the remembrance of our essence and the recognition of our surroundings, encompassing both our pure subjectivity and the outer field of perception as one reality.

Many seekers confuse awareness with the heart or with being aspect of the inner state. Because the states of heart and being are naturally cognized by awareness, they can be easily misidentified as that which makes their recognition possible. We can feel the heart and being through awareness, but awareness as such flows from a different place. It is not unlike the reflection of the moon in the lake being mistaken for the moon itself, or the sun warming the earth while itself existing elsewhere. The light of awareness can be cognized through variety of different energetic

experiences, or even as a general sense of body consciousness; but to feel pure awareness, we need to direct our attention to the area from which it originates - the headspace.

### **Energetic Experience of the State of Presence**

The experience of consciousness, unlike all other relative energy experiences, is inimitable, for the experience is none other than the experiencer himself. The state of presence appears to be an 'object' of experience, since it can be verified by the checking intelligence, but in fact it constitutes the identity of the experiencing subject. In all other types of energy experiences the subject is external to the object of experience. Only in the realm of I am does the subject not precede the object of experience in the flow of cognition, for here, the subject *is* the experience. Thus the state of awareness can be called 'self-experience' - it is how I am knows that it is I am. Consciousness does not need an intermediary to know that it exists and is conscious. It illuminates itself with the light of pure knowing intrinsic to consciousness in its original form.

The process of giving birth to the state of pure awareness is rooted in the practice of centering the mechanical mind into a single area of self-attention. The state of self-attention, however, is not the final goal, but a transitional phase between forgetfulness and pure awareness. The experience of self-attention has a more horizontal nature than the state of pure awareness - the result of attention being pulled back upon itself. Pure awareness manifests when attention incorporates an element of being and begins to abide in the vertical reality. This natural state of awareness has no center of attention; it is a spacious field of open luminosity. Our task, after having solidified attention to the point of constant presence, is to diffuse that presence by means of surrender. The cultivation of presence moves beyond self-remembrance into a practice of de-centralizing awareness through which the state of self-attention is transformed into a condition of expansive restfulness and non-focalized abidance within the space of pure subjectivity.

The quality of the energetic experience of the state of presence depends on the level of its maturation and expansion. Initially, due to the need for internal focus and self-remembrance, the energy of awareness is more concentrated, and if practice is unskillful, it can even be uncomfortable and tense at times. In the cultivation of awareness, we do need to crystallize attention in order to transcend the mind, but we must very carefully balance concentration with relaxation to avoid *over-* crystallizing it, which would hinder our ability to achieve the natural state of presence.

Objectless awareness is the meeting place between the horizontal and vertical planes of existence - the here and the now. Through its natural evolution and integration, the state of presence eventually develops the qualities of clarity and bright vividness with respect to the horizontal dimension, and serene, effortless

absorption with respect to the vertical. It is still experienced in and around the head, but in a transparent way, merged with the infinite vastness of reality.

Some souls experience the state of presence as bliss, while others experience it in a more neutral, ordinary way. However, it is critical that we realize the essence of awareness not merely as an energetic state, but as the awakened consciousness of the soul. The living core of pure awareness is the sense of I am through which we meet the original light of our subjective existence.

### **The Essence of Individual Consciousness**

The fact that our awareness is awakened does not mean that we automatically realize it as the essence of the soul's consciousness. Too immature to meet their true self, most seekers recognize only the energetic aspect of the state of presence, missing its deeper significance. They still do not know who they are. To recognize only the energetic dimension of awareness is a limited realization - not a real awakening - for the heart of awakening is the meeting with our pure subjectivity. Practice with awareness that is not based on the knowledge of I am is merely mechanical, and cannot be considered true self-remembrance, for one is only recollecting an energetic state, not the essence to which it points - self.

Although the essence of awareness represents the center of our identity in the mind, the state of presence is often understood and experienced as impersonal. This is due to the fact that when one shifts from the habitual sense of me in the mind to the state of pure awareness, one moves from a personal to a comparatively impersonal experience of oneself. Additionally, because seekers are often strongly influenced by notions of the impersonality of consciousness, they tend to interpret their experience of awareness through the lens of this conditioning. The correct interpretation of pure awareness is not based on a philosophy or belief, but on an existential shift of identity. It is true that the state of presence is impersonal from the standpoint of our personality, since its existence is not derived from thoughts, subconscious impressions, memories or self-image. But it is very personal from the viewpoint of the soul, because it constitutes the core of her identity in awareness. It is personal in a superior sense, because it embodies the light of pure subjectivity.

It must be clearly understood that pure awareness is made of the impersonal light of universal consciousness, while the state of presence is an individualization of that impersonal energy. It is similar to the space inside our home: though belonging to the vast universe, it temporarily becomes personalized by the unique flavor we give it. It is only because we are so identified with the ego-sense of self that we tend to translate the experience of I am in an impersonal way. Unless we are able to meet the light of I am within our deep silence, we will never be able to truly understand the secret of awakening.

## **To Embody the Light of I Am**

There are three possible errors in how we relate to pure awareness. The first is to objectify it as external to our sense of me; we experience awareness either as the 'background' of our existence, or the internal space in which we abide. The second is to perceive only its impersonal aspect; we feel as if there is nobody experiencing awareness, or that awareness itself is 'nobody'. The third is to over-personalize it by identifying I am with me; we experience awareness not as am-ness, but rather as I-ness - the state becomes tainted with excessive self-consciousness. Here we experience awareness as personal, but because we are on the wrong 'side', so to speak - it is personal from the standpoint of me, not the soul.

To correctly relate to the state of presence is in fact to stop relating to it at all - it is to become it. Ultimately, the ability to embody the light of I am is a function of our ongoing evolution into transcendence and soul-realization. By gradually merging our existence with pure awareness we become that ancient light of I am, the natural state of impersonal individuality - free from objectification, self-denial, and self-reference. Then and only then can our true subjectivity be realized as who and what we are in our timeless purity.

## **The Witness and Witnessing**

In some traditions the essence of awareness is referred to as the 'witness' or witnessing consciousness. Witness, however, is not the most appropriate term, as it has dualistic connotations, implying an act of witnessing that is horizontally separate from that which is witnessed. However, inasmuch as it already has been assimilated in the language of spirituality, we would like to explain the correct meaning that 'witness' is intended to convey.

To begin with, it is essential not to confuse the witness with the observer. The witness is of the soul and the observer is of the mind. The observer can emulate witnessing, acting as a detached intelligence by observing without getting involved. The false sense of witnessing here is not based on our real presence - it merely reflects how the ego 'feels' itself as it attempts to remain disidentified. Such pseudo-witnessing is an experience entirely confined to the mind.

With awareness unawakened and not present as the base-consciousness, the observer can only 'witness' from its sense of me. The center of true witnessing is not me but I am. Pure awareness witnesses by virtue of being naturally distinct and uninvolved, not because it is disidentified. The true witness does not observe. Awareness needs relative consciousness, mind and ego, in order to observe that which is first witnessed from a much deeper place - our essence. Observing is active, witnessing is passive. Observation is continuously recreated through the will of the mind, witnessing is a steady stream of unchanging consciousness. To be in

the state of witnessing is to exist behind everything arising in the field of cognition - perceptions, thoughts and feelings - as an immobile background of unconditional presence.

### **Cultivation of the State of Presence**

What we gain through recognizing our essence for the first time is a new insight into the nature of awareness, not the state of awareness itself. Although a beginner can access the state, the unconscious tendencies of the mechanical mind prevent him from abiding in his awareness at all times. Hence the need to cultivate the state of presence with the sole objective of stabilization.

Cultivation is a time of concentrated effort dedicated to the further awakening, strengthening and stabilization of awareness. During the cultivation period, the main difficulties in holding onto the state of presence, apart from general forgetfulness, are energetic in nature. The state is feeble and unstable, and one is unable to maintain steady inner focus. The uncultivated brain simply cannot contain the high frequency of pure awareness with any clarity, strength and consistency. As a result, one quickly becomes tired or agitated during practice. These struggles are natural in the work with awareness. One simply needs to be patient as different aspects of our existence and consciousness realign themselves so that the dimensional leap into a constant state of presence can occur.

As we have made clear, the state of presence is cultivated through the horizontal pulling back of attention from object to subject, from seen to seer. The consciousness of an ignorant person is exteriorized from the headspace, leaking its light through the eyes and other sensory gates into the outer reality. Mental consciousness still operates in the head, but it has no energetic presence or stable sense of identity, for the illusive subject is fully identified with material and psychological objects. For this reason, to gain inner stability and internalize one's consciousness, one must practice self-remembrance and merge attention with its source. Through this practice, the state of pure attention matures, steadily growing in strength and continuity until a clear state of presence is established.

The entire process of cultivation is based on the very natural effort of returning to oneself through the practice of self-remembrance in both meditation and activity. As one progresses, abiding in the state of presence becomes increasingly spontaneous and natural. There is still a need for effort, but it gradually loses its rigid quality, becoming more subtle and transparent. This type of natural engagement with presence characterizes the most developed stage of cultivation prior to stabilization.

### **Unskillful Self-remembrance**

The main hindrance in the cultivation of the state of presence is unskillful self-



remembrance, which most often results from not having clearly met the essence of awareness. A seeker ignorantly chooses a point of focus within the headspace that bears no relation to the essence of consciousness. Rather than cultivating mindfulness of his true subjectivity, he objectifies the space inside his head, or specific areas within this space, in order to have something to which he can affix his concentration. This kind of artificial practice has nothing in common with real self-remembrance. Due to its unnatural character, it is not only spiritually useless, but can have harmful consequences, creating tension and strain within the headspace.

Another common error in the practice of self-remembrance is to confuse one's sense of me for the sense of I am. This is a point that is not sufficiently clarified on the classical path of self-enquiry, which does not differentiate between the sense of me and the essence of consciousness. The sense of me is the axle of our conscious mind and ego-structure, not the center of consciousness. The center of consciousness is I am, not me. To distinguish between the experience of me and I am, we must be able to differentiate between our fundamental consciousness and our secondary sense of individuality.

Me exists between I am and the mind as the mediating sense of identity between the soul and the human. When engaged in thinking, it is not I am, but me, that enters the mind to become the thinker. Me is the sense of I am reflected in intelligence, the consciousness of oneself. I am is the consciousness of awareness prior to and underneath our sense of me. I am is impersonal in the sense that it is beyond self-referral, while me is personal, for its very essence is self-reference. Me becomes more impersonal by surrendering to I am, I am becomes more personal by becoming illuminated through me.

For me to assist the awakening of awareness, it must realize its own essence independent from the mind. However, me cannot reach solidity if I am has not been awakened, for its existence has no stable ground beyond the mind upon which to base its continuance. Our pure me is founded upon I am and, as such, precedes the self-image created by the ego-me - it is direct, instantaneous and independent from thought. The evolution of I am and me are mutually supporting: I am awakens through me, and pure me awakens through the birth of I am.

In experiential terms, me and I am also differ in their energetic and spatial character. Though close to each other in the headspace, the conscious me is experienced in the frontal lobe of the brain, pure awareness in the brain's central area. If a practitioner focuses his concentration in the front of the head, it indicates that he mistakenly cultivates a stable sense of me, not pure awareness. This kind of practice is not only incorrect, but pointless. In order to abide in I am, one must internalize one's concentration and withdraw attention to a deeper space within the head.

### **Stabilization of the State of Presence**



It is our observation that many seekers on the spiritual scene lack any concept of stabilization. We frequently come across those who cannot understand why, in spite of having temporarily moved to a deeper state of consciousness, they have entirely lost their awakened state. Most often their bewilderment is due to the fact that they cling to a simplistic paradigm of sudden enlightenment. They perceive enlightenment to be an instantaneous and total transformation from the state of ignorance to self-realization when, in truth, complete enlightenment is the result of a long and arduous inner journey.

To stabilize the state of presence is to permanently establish one's previously fluctuating awareness. Prior to stabilization, the state of presence is activated and maintained through the practice of self-remembrance. In more advanced stages of cultivation, it increasingly manifests of its own accord and maintains itself independent from me. With stabilization, the practice of self-remembrance can be dropped, for the state is permanently and unconditionally present. It can no longer be lost, for it has become an indivisible part of our true identity.

Although stabilization is the fruit of cultivation, cultivation is not its direct cause. Stabilization is ultimately an occurrence based on grace. Grace, the force that can stabilize any state, awaits its materialization in the plan of each soul's blueprint. The role of the practitioner during cultivation is to bring himself to the highest possible level of inner maturity so that grace can enter and the relatively unpredictable event of stabilization can take place. The stabilization of the state of presence denotes a major breakthrough in our evolution, because now we can begin our true journey into the inner state from a place of awakened consciousness and integral identity.

### **Integration of the State of Presence**

The integration of the state of presence is the post-stabilization process that involves the ripening, refinement and final expansion of its energy into a natural condition of pure awareness. It is a critical step in our inner journey towards the attainment of the state of pure subjectivity as our natural state.

Integration is not the result of personal effort, but the consequence of an organic maturation within the already stabilized state. Cultivation of awareness does not necessarily enhance integration; in fact, inept cultivation can actually impede the integration process. Unless the personal will relaxes within the state of presence, a practitioner will habitually maintain an unnecessary level of concentration, preventing awareness from reaching its natural condition of spacious luminosity.

To support the integration process, we should simply rest in conscious abidance within awareness. Sitting meditation is one of the most effective means to support the integration of awareness, as well as other states, for it is here that the natural deepening and alignment of energy takes place. The process of integration requires

a certain amount of time and patience, but has to be completed before one aspires to undertake the next step along the path.

### **Stabilization of Recognition**

In most cases, stabilization, and even energetic integration, of the state of presence does not result in a complete continuity of conscious abidance in awareness. Although it may be energetically established, our sense of I am remains unintegrated with the consciousness and intelligence recognizing it. Until we stabilize the *recognition* of presence, our state remains fractured, and cannot serve as a vehicle for the transformation of the mind.

That which forgets and remembers the state of presence is not merely our intelligence, but its very subject, me. When me is integrated with I am, it is able to participate in both presence and thinking, being and doing. Because it cannot completely renounce its involvement in the mind, me has to learn how to maintain conscious recognition of awareness while intelligence is actively engaged. It must unite with the center of awareness so that unbroken continuity of recognition can manifest.

After the initial awakening of the state of presence, me had the incentive of stabilization to inspire its self-remembrance; but having completed this task, it must strive for constant recognition of awareness through a higher form of self-remembrance, the merging of me with I am. Every time that me remembers the state of presence, it not only arrests the subconscious flow of the mind, but also intensifies the quality of awareness itself. The state of presence is magnified by the very fact that me is recognizing it; two forces of consciousness meet to engender one holistic experience of self. Though I am is independent from me, true awareness must encompass me in order to reach its highest transformative potential and become whole.

### **Integration of Intelligence**

No constant recognition of awareness can be reached unless our intelligence has been profoundly transformed. Instead of being lost in mental reality, intelligence must channel its power of cognition to illuminate constantly the integral silence of I am. As we have now stressed repeatedly, the energetic stabilization of awareness generally occurs long before the awakening of the soul. If our intelligence has not been aligned with I am, it is the mind, not the soul, that is the experiencer of presence, since awareness has not yet become the actual subject. Intelligence, the cognizing link between me and I am, is therefore unable to fully register the existential shift of identity from ego to pure presence, and remains wholly identified with the psychological self. In order to transcend our subconscious self and integrate me with presence through the stabilization of recognition, self-remembrance must continue,

but now on the level of consciousness and intelligence.

For intelligence to support the stabilization of recognition, true understanding must be born within the mind. The mind must see through its own illusory nature and deeply appreciate the tremendous value of pure presence. Only once we have matured into the profound understanding that we are in fact the consciousness of awareness, are we able to renounce the subconscious, awaken true earnestness, and surrender to what is real. Each moment that we are lost in thinking, we are lost to the light of awareness, the foundation of our integrity and spiritual sanity. This is simply unacceptable for one who honors the truth of silence and consciousness. An integrated intelligence is characterized by maximal silence and minimal thinking. The moment silence begins to rule the internal space of the mind, intelligence can be said to have integrated with pure awareness.

### **Living the State of Presence**

The awakening of awareness is not only a great blessing, but also a great responsibility. Because very few seekers are able to see the profound value of realizing the state of presence, their interest in the state usually wanes after an initial period of fascination. This spiritual insipidness results from the inability to recognize the state of presence as our true essence; the mind, still rooted in the ego, continues to claim the central position in our subjective reality.

There is always a possibility that after a seeker has been initiated into the state of presence by a spiritual teacher, he may remain unawakened on the level of consciousness. Although he has access to a state beyond the mind, his experience is purely an energetic phenomenon external to his true subjectivity. It is the existential awakening that signifies real illumination, for it transforms the very consciousness of the soul, allowing her center of perception to shift into the realm of pure subjectivity so she can meet her own light of presence as I am.

Living the state of presence reflects the integrity of our consciousness and the dignity of our intelligence. From our true presence we derive inner stability, strength and natural contentment. We no longer allow ourselves to be lost in the dull state of unconsciousness and the misery of forgetfulness. By the power of continuous abidance in pure awareness we surrender the mechanical mind and serve, with our very existence, the light of I am.

### **Awareness and Ego**

We awaken the state of presence to transcend our superficial personality but, unfortunately, there is a danger that awakening awareness can actually reinforce our ego-consciousness. Awareness frees us from unconsciousness, but also empowers the ego sense of identity by giving it the center of presence. Even though the state of

presence is our essence beyond the mind, when the awakening of awareness is not linked with a simultaneous awakening of the soul, the ego automatically claims the state as its center of self-reference.

An ignorant ego may try to exploit the energy of awareness for selfish purposes rather than channel it towards its own spiritual awakening and transformation. We can take as an example a martial arts adept who cultivates a high concentration of awareness with the sole intention of defeating his opponents. In more extreme cases, concentrated awareness can even be directed to exercise mind control over others. This is obviously a case of spiritual idiocy - still, we need to be aware that such phenomena exist.

If impure, the ego automatically links itself to our lower nature and subconscious tendencies. An ego that is insensitive, arrogant and greedy does not see the spiritual path as a bridge to oneness, love and transcendence, only an arena in which it can expand its sense of self-importance. Unless we reach an essential level of purity, our ego will be tempted to abuse the power it gains through spiritual expansion.

After awareness is awakened, it is crucial that we surrender into being and the heart, and in so doing, dissolve the mind's tendency towards excessive self-consciousness. A seeker has to have the wisdom and humility to understand, deep in his heart, that the only legitimate reason to awaken pure awareness is to create a stable connection to I am in the mind to which the false me based on self-image can be surrendered. We must clearly understand that the one who walks the spiritual path is not the ego, but the soul - the ego's higher being and governing I am. All the ego can do to serve the soul's awakening is align itself with her evolution and surrender its existence to her higher light.

Unfortunately, we cannot avoid the crystallization of the ego in our work with awareness, for only a solidified sense of me can counteract the constant activity of the mechanical mind. The mechanical mind is actually a subconscious aspect of the ego that has no real center or ability to focus attention. In order to gather its dispersed and restless energies for the sake of becoming conscious, the me must become fully focused by developing one-pointedness and self-attention. Though there is some risk involved, the crystallization of the ego does not bring harmful results if one has a competent teacher and enough sincerity and purity of intention.

Until we reach complete understanding and become purified, the darkness of unconsciousness can easily manipulate our evolution. The crystallization of our personal self through the awakening of awareness is hazardous only when we unconsciously choose to serve our lower tendencies. It poses no real threat if we are true to our evolution and higher purpose. The solidification of our sense of me is merely a tool we use to gather and penetrate our separate existence so we can further merge it with awareness and being.

## Awareness of Consciousness

Although we use the terms awareness and consciousness interchangeably, they are not the same. The word 'aware' comes from 'wary', a condition of being cautious, as in 'beware'. The word 'conscious' comes from 'conscire', to know. We can understand from the etymology of these words that to be aware is more relative in nature than to be conscious, which refers to a state of pure knowing. One may lose awareness and remain conscious, but one cannot remain aware after losing consciousness. Mindfulness is an expression of awareness, not consciousness. To pay attention, to be vigilant or watchful – these are functions of awareness. To be conscious primarily means that one is awake, that one knows one exists. It is only because we are conscious that we can be aware.

Although the more subtle distinctions between the meanings of 'aware' and 'conscious' have largely been lost in common language, these words still have very different connotations. For example, to say, 'I am aware of you', is very different than to say, 'I am conscious of you', which implies some kind of empathetic connection. We also convey two very different meanings if we reverse 'aware' and 'conscious' in the statement: 'I am aware that my behaviour is intolerable because I am not conscious enough'.

Not to be aware generally indicates some kind of distractedness or carelessness, whereas not being conscious points to a low level of evolution. Ultimately, to be conscious is simply a deeper experience than that of being aware, because it points more directly to the level of our intelligence and sense of our subjective existence. To be aware of is more functional – it is connected to the clarity and discipline of recognition. To be conscious indicates that intelligence and sensitivity of self are also engaged in the act of perception.

An ordinary person is only conscious by the virtue of having a sense of me linked to the waking state. To be conscious one requires at least *some* presence, otherwise consciousness simply melts down into subconsciousness. However, as we evolve and awaken to our deeper identity, the meaning of being conscious is elevated, and expands to include the realization of our essential I-amness. To be truly conscious is to embody the light of the soul, the heart of our primordial consciousness.

Similar to the way in which our concept of being conscious evolves, so does our understanding of what it means to be aware. Awareness can be said to be an expression of consciousness. It is the luminosity of I am being channelled through me to illuminate creation with recognition. In the state of forgetfulness, the faculty of awareness is limited to the mind, disconnected from the essence of I am – awareness is unaware of consciousness. Only upon awakening can awareness recollect its very source, the light of the soul.

Consciousness is of the soul, awareness is of me. In the human dimension, consciousness needs awareness in order to awaken. Awareness is like a mirror in which consciousness reflects and recognizes its own essential nature. Consciousness without awareness is like an embryo in a womb: its sense of self is steeped in not-knowing. It is like a flower in dark room that exudes a scent (the sense of amness), but cannot be seen (beheld as I am). Awareness is the radiance of consciousness, and consciousness is the substance of awareness. Consciousness realizes itself by being brought to light through awareness, and awareness awakens by becoming stabilized in the essence of consciousness. For awareness to actualize its pristine nature of spacious clarity, it must surrender to consciousness so that consciousness itself will fill it up with the primordial knowledge of I am.

### **Awareness and Being**

In order to solidify awareness in a natural way, it is essential to incorporate an element of being even prior to the stabilization of the state of presence. The energy of being is first added by relaxing the awareness in the head and vertically dwelling within that space. Gradually, as awareness grows increasingly stable, we allow our energy to drop below the head into an over-all experience of being. To prevent losing our awareness in the headspace, however, we must maintain a gentle level of concentration and self-remembrance. At this stage, attention should be divided horizontally between outer involvement and inner self-remembrance while in activity, and vertically between resting in being and experiencing presence in the head in the non-activity of sitting meditation.

As we incorporate the energy of being in our work with awareness, we must be very careful not to allow the state of presence to become depleted. A seeker who deeply relaxes into being, but whose soul is not awakened, may lose his 'enlightened' relationship with awareness, ceasing to consciously abide in it. When we put too much emphasis on surrender in our practice before the state of presence is fully mature, awareness actually gets 'lost' in being. Not only does our existential connection to the state of presence degenerate, its energetic aspect atrophies as well. For this reason, it is essential that the proper balance between awareness and being be maintained.

Ultimately, one must embrace the simultaneous recognition of awareness and being as a unified space of awareness-being reality. Once awareness is fully established and integrated with being, we move beyond self-remembrance - awareness and being merge into one self-cognizing state of pure subjectivity.

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# The Teaching of Enlightenment

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## The State of Being

Now we shall speak about the foundation of all - being. All creation is contained within the dimensionless sphere of primordial absence, the original void that constitutes the ground of being. Being is indeed the secret of existence and the unseen source of creation.

Although not an active principle, in the absence of being, not even the slightest movement in existence can take place. Without being, nothing can be and nothing can become. This infinite space of immobile reality upon which all universes dwell cannot be fathomed by the mind or the senses, yet it is the very womb of creation, the bottomless depth of the universal I am.

### To Be

What does it truly mean to be? Although 'being' is one of the most commonly used and seemingly uncomplicated terms in the language of spirituality, very few truly understand its profound significance. It is far more than non-involvement or passive abidance in the moment. It is the timeless beyond itself, the inmost sphere of pure existence that contains the totality of creation.

Being is found beneath the flow of time; it is the very source of *this* moment. It exists beyond the three-dimensional world of perception, beyond mind and consciousness. It is the black hole of existence through which creation manifests, the primordial emptiness from which consciousness arises in the instantaneousness of each now. It is only through the grace of being that we can transcend our separate self and realize oneness.

To experience being, one has to surrender vertically into the inner plane of rest and absorption. Unlike ordinary relaxation, which is experienced by the mind and body, being is felt through another apparatus, the inner body of the soul. If the energy body



of being is not awakened, one is at most capable of experiencing a weak and insignificant connection to the now, and only in rare moments of complete restfulness and ease. But when one is open to the gravity of the now, being links the soul with the unmanifested reality of the source.

Through awareness we become present beyond the mind, but we cannot merge. It is being that enables us to achieve true absorption in reality. To *be* is to dwell within the now - and the now is the portal leading to the dimension of pure being, the place within time through which we are transported into the timeless.

### **Where am I?**

The question, 'where am I?', though generally overlooked, is no less important than the primal question, 'who am I?' To get clarity on where we actually are, we need to enter the dimension of our abidance in the non-perceptual ground of all-that-is. The question 'who am I?' points to the soul; the question 'where am I?', to being, the primordial source from which the soul manifests. The vastness of the unfathomable depths within which we are who we are can only be discovered through existential surrender into the void of the beyond.

### **The Secret Dimension of the Now**

Being is the very essence of the vertical dimension of the now. But when and where is the now? The abode of the now bears no relation to phenomenal existence; it lies beyond spatial and temporal points of reference. Though here is now, the now is not *here*; it cannot be found in space, time or consciousness. It can only be discovered by diving into the inner realm, the source of creation. To enter the now is not a matter of mental contemplation or enquiry, but a function of meditation and surrender.

What we commonly call the present moment is not of the now, but of the past - it is the now ever-receding from the observer. Ordinary consciousness can only relate to the now through the observer's recognition of the immediate past; the checking intelligence requires temporal distance from any experience in order to register it. We call this passing now the present moment, yet it is already behind us. An unawakened human cannot actually experience the immediate. His highest expression of mindfulness is awareness of the immediate past. He does not know the now.

To enter the dimension of the now, and to experience the now in the now, we need to move beyond the inherent duality of experiencer and experience. Our consciousness has to enter the vertical dimension of the source to become one with the now as it manifests from beyond the now, as the now, in each now of creation. The experiencer of time must merge with the root of time in order to establish himself in the state prior to time so that he can witness the now before it becomes the

present moment.

Being is the connective space between consciousness and the now through which consciousness surrenders to, and progressively fuses with the source. In the natural state of being, consciousness is inseparable from both the now and its source. The ultimate observer of the now knows the now through his own absence within the presence of the unmanifested.

That which enters the domain of the now is our very soul, in the heart of which lies the inborn knowledge of the timeless. To know the now is to dwell within the now, to purely experience the taste of being that arises from our unity with the universal source. To embody the now, our existence has to be absorbed into the vertical plane of reality - the supreme depth of being.

### **The Vertical Reality**

How can we know the vertical reality while locked in the world of appearances? Until we awaken our pure subjectivity and enter the realm of objectless existence we simply cannot. Since it is through consciousness that we recognize the phenomenal world, to know prior to the known, we first need to turn consciousness back upon itself - we need to withdraw our sense of identity from the horizontal plane of time, space and mind by awakening pure awareness. The moment consciousness becomes self-conscious, the original knowledge, I am, is recollected, and we meet the primordial point of reality through which we can discover our abiding place within the vertical reality of the now.

From whence does the sense of I am originate? Upon what does consciousness dwell? It is often assumed that because consciousness is the original source of all creation, it does not require a dwelling place within existence. However, even though consciousness is the source of creation, it is not the source of itself; consciousness manifests out of the original now, which is prior to it.

Unless we gain a degree of mastery over the art of letting go, we will never access the source of consciousness. To let go is to release our whole existence into the vertical dimension and descend with the pull of gravity into the secret space of the bottomless now. Though unseen and intangible, only by the grace of the vertical reality does creation have a place within which to abide.

### **Surrender into Being**

Being exists beyond polarities, but if we relate it to the time-dimension, we could say that its opposite is becoming. In fact, it is only from the viewpoint of our human reality that being and becoming are seen as opposites, for we are unable to integrate them into our existence as one. Becoming occurs within the reality of space, time and

consciousness, whereas being is the fundamental ground of pure isness upon which the movement of creation takes place. Because the soul participates in both of these dimensions, she is subject to both being and becoming, and bridges them through her own existence. In the natural state, there is a precise equilibrium between her essence, which abides in being, and her human aspect, which is constantly becoming. However, when attention is fully identified with objects, the soul gets lost in becoming and surfaces out of being. Excessive involvement in the outer world exteriorizes our consciousness from the now, disconnecting us from our ancient abidance in the source.

Most creatures are naturally, though unconsciously, connected to being. But humans have become uprooted from this sacred ground. The very make-up of the horizontally inclined mind and its mission to serve the personal will are in conflict with the nature of surrender. When the movement of the mind overpowers our internal calm and stillness, we lose our intrinsic connection to the inner plane and are pulled away from the now; we defy the gravitational pull of being by fueling the outward movement of our energy and consciousness. The only way to reactivate our lost quality of being is through the conscious practice of surrender and meditation. In meditation, we open to reality by pacifying the activity of the mind, maintaining our presence and continuously letting go. In the very simple act of sitting in the now, the natural opening and deepening of being takes place, allowing us to return to the state of inner rest. Meditation is none other than the timeless act of sitting in being.

Our experience of being is deepened in meditation, but it is not by any active effort on our part. In meditation, therefore, we do not *do* anything in order to reach being, but rather *undo* all that opposes the non-activity of the absolute. It is the natural pull from the gravity of the now, not our relative exertion, which makes absorption into being possible.

Although our intention to surrender can be seen as the deepest expression of our free will, the state of surrender cannot be reached through any act of will. In truth we can do nothing but get out of the way. The more we try to do anything, the more we disturb the natural process of surrender. Initially, we do not sit in surrender itself, but sit in being with the intention to surrender, as all elements contrary to surrender - energetic resistance, the inability to reach absorption, mechanical thinking and excessive self-consciousness - gradually loosen their grip. In time, the power of the now pulls us into the condition of pure rest so we can embody the state of surrender. By yielding to the emptiness of the being, the soul moves into the dimension of repose and stillness.

As we have mentioned, being should not be confused with common relaxation. Relaxation points to *who* is abiding, whereas being points to *where* we abide. The experience of being is far beyond any ordinary experience of restfulness - it is an entirely new dimension of abidance in reality. Being is the absolute unconditional repose of existence as it is. One cannot truly relax within the confines of oneself,

since the separate self by nature exists in a condition of primal tension. For a human being to reach supreme relaxation, he must merge with the beyond.

### **The Body of Being**

Although an ontological dimension beyond our individuality, being is still reached through the soul. As she grows into the now, an infinitesimal portion of universal being is transferred to her existence, awakening her identity so that she can actualize her complete energy body. Through her inner expansion, the soul develops a new body, the body of being.

On the macro-scale, the self has the absolute as its body of being, but on the micro-scale, the soul, who is the microcosm of the self, must be endowed with the body of being in order to experience her wholeness. The expansion of the soul into the beyond can occur only through the being aspect of the inner state, for it constitutes the root of her very identity and the space of her abidance in the now.

When the soul is unawakened, the experience of being is translated primarily as a state of rest in the beyond. When the soul is realized, the state of being is integrated with a sense of being oneself - we no longer differentiate between who we are and where we abide. Although being is ever beyond our individual self, we merge with it in the transparent meeting space where the body of the soul and the ocean of the now intersect. Only here, where the individual and the universal are dissolved into one indistinguishable whole, can the realization of oneness take place.

### **The Energetic Experience of Being**

The state of being transcends ordinary 'experience' because it cannot be objectified. It does not exist apart from the experiencing subject. However, even though the dimension of being is beyond human experience, it may still be experienced by the soul in the mystery of her surrender. The soul experiences being not through thought, emotion or perception, but through the merging of her own existence with the pure subjectivity of the now.

Due to the fact that being is an energetic dimension, the experience of being naturally takes place on the energy level. The state of being is characterized by tranquility, calmness, stillness, relaxation, ease, peace and a blissful sense of inner repose. Since to be is to rest within the non-abiding void of the now, the flavor of rest is predominant. Though beyond us, being lets us anchor our sense of I am in its absolute stillness. To experience the bliss of being is to be received by the beyond.

### **The Mind and Being**

It is not that the mind experiences rest through being, but that rest is experienced

*beneath* the mind as a foundation of our existence prior to the arising of awareness and thought. The state of being does not in fact require the complete surrender of the mind for its actualization, because it is independent from consciousness. The full realization of being entails only partial surrender of consciousness, but total surrender *under* consciousness.

We can say that the state of being is at once dependent on, and independent of, the mind's attitude. It is initially through the surrender of the mind that we become able to relax into being, but when it is fully established, being reaches complete autonomy from the mind. Ultimately, through the evolution into transcendence that takes place beyond our awakening of the inner state, consciousness and the mind surrender totally so that the soul herself can merge with being and reach absorption in the beyond.

### **The Body and Being**

Although the nature of being is non-abidance, through her surrender, a human soul can actually abide in that non-abidance and realize being as her original abode. It is true that the universal dimension of being has no point of reference in the manifested reality; still, this unseen realm is experienced as individualized in relation to our physical reality and personal angle of perception. It is not that the dimension of being itself has a spatial location, but how we experience it in our human form. Although the experience of being points to the intangible beyond in which our body abides, its energy naturally penetrates the body. The feeling can be likened to the experience of being submerged in a warm ocean with closed eyes; what one feels is not the whole ocean, but the point of contact between the body and the water, which spreads and radiates the sensation of the ocean's presence beyond the skin, around the body.

We can speak about being in practical terms because we experience it in a very specific way within the frame of our physical and subtle bodies. Though its exact location cannot be pinpointed, being is not felt 'everywhere'. Due to the fact that the energy center of the body, the hara, is located in the lower belly, the energy of being is initially registered in and around the lower part of the torso as a descending sense of gravity and a feeling of heaviness from the weight of inertia. When we surrender into being, energy naturally gravitates towards this area, centering our vital force and anchoring our body in stillness. However, the experiential location does vary depending on the level and character of one's inner awakening. For instance, a person who has activated the heart center will experience the energy of being not only around the belly, but also around the chest; the experience may even begin in the heart, since energy will naturally be drawn there. Or, if awareness is awakened and integrated with being, the experience of being will also include the headspace. The more the three aspects of the inner state are amalgamated, the more any distinction between them dissolves into one homogenous field of being.

Those at the beginning of their work with being are generally unable to connect to the being of the beyond, and feel its energy exclusively in the body. For those who live in the mind, bodily awareness is often the only channel through which a connection to the now can be made. Still, although the experience of being is reflected in the body, we should not mistake the physical sensations it generates for the state of being itself. The descent of energy we experience points far beyond any bodily reference. The dimension of being is non-physical, and due to its transcendental nature, an extraordinary maturity is required to realize it as the inner home of the soul.

Although vertical absorption brings about a certain horizontal expansion of the field of being, we should not focus on the horizontal experience, for it can distract us from our vertical surrender into the beyond. We do not verify our experience of being by checking the quality of energy states around the body, as they may or may not be related to being; it is only by examining our vertical expansion that we can truly gauge its depth. We may feel a horizontal expansion of energy beyond the body, or an auric field surrounding us, but we must not be concerned with these types of relative energies - they are only by-products of meditation. Rather, we should focus on how profoundly we dwell vertically within the now.

### **Cultivation of Being**

Since the work with awareness takes place on the horizontal plane, it can be easily completed in activity. To reach the necessary depth and stability of being, however, we must cultivate it in sitting meditation. Unless we sit still, the energy of being has no chance to fully drop into the depth of the now.

The work with being initially requires the temporary suspension of one's horizontal involvement. As time goes by, we introduce our practice with being into everyday life as well; but until a significant depth of being has been established through sitting meditation, practice in activity is no more than a conscious effort to relax and cannot take root. To cultivate being, we patiently sit in the now, perfecting the art of letting go. Sitting and letting go - letting go of everything that is not of pure rest. In due time, as our energy becomes increasingly absorbed in the dimension of the now, we experience the unconditional, natural state of being.

### **The Depth of Being**

That which prevents the merging of the soul with the ground of being is the seductive pull of the vital force. Because the energy of the vital force naturally emanates outwards towards creation, it is inherently resistant to the gravity of the now. When we sit in meditation, we are situated between these two opposing forces - one pulling us towards creation, the other towards the uncreated. To merge with being, we must surrender in order to counteract the outward movement of energy and

consciousness. Letting go to the gravity of the now, we gradually transcend the fluctuations of the mind and energy, and become increasingly rooted in inner stillness.

The process of growing into the depth of being naturally takes time and requires a great deal of patience, for we must completely transform our relationship with existence by allowing our consciousness to surrender to the source. How deeply we can submerge ourselves in being directly reflects the energetic purity and restfulness of our state, as well as the existential quality of our inner absorption. The more we move beyond our relative energies, the more we experience the unchanging, immaculate quality of being. When we reach the final depth of being, we embody the inner solidity and unbroken stillness of the beyond.

### **The Absolute State**

The ultimate experience of being is the absolute state, in which the soul fully transcends the fluctuations of her abidance in the now and enters the unoriginated, unbecome, unmanifested ground of reality - the absolute. The absolute is the primordial void that contains totality, the foundation of the never-ending expansion of creation, the living depth of absence. Everything dwells upon the absolute; all manifests from it at the beginning of creation, and all returns to it at the end of time. The absolute state is not the absolute itself but the meeting between the soul and the absolute.

To be clear on how the absolute state can be distinguished from a deep experience of being, we must understand that they represent entirely different dimensions of realization. Their difference cannot be measured by degrees of depth. The absolute state actually signifies a quantum leap in the deepening of being, beyond depth itself. Prior to reaching the absolute state, being is experienced on the side of creation; after, on the side of the uncreated. The significance of this statement needs to be contemplated deeply.

Let us imagine an intermediate space that lies between the original void and the reality of creation. One does indeed exist, for there must be a bridge between the radically opposed dimensions of absence and presence. This mysterious 'in-between' space can either be approached from the source or from manifested existence: the absolute pulls the soul from within, the soul surrenders to it from without. When the soul surrenders to the gravity of the original void, she steps onto this threshold, and is absorbed into being from the side of creation. Still, she has not yet moved to the abode of the absolute. To cross the invisible border that separates the dimension of presence from the dimension of absence is to experience death while living. Those who have crossed over to the abode of the unborn have the rare privilege of becoming immersed in that which is beyond life and death - the supreme source.



In the absolute state, all relative instability of energy within the experience of being is transcended, and we attain the ultimate experience of pure rest. Though empty and immobile, the absolute state has the extraordinary strength and power of the absolute itself. As pure awareness is the zero point of consciousness, and the now is the zero point of pure awareness, so the absolute is the zero point of the now - the primordial ground from which the now originates. The absolute is the ancient ground of creation that has no attributes but one - it *is*. The original isness of the absolute, steeped in the unknown, is the sacred container of all existence.

### **Entering the Absolute**

How does one enter the absolute? How is it possible to move beyond all relative experiences of being and pass through the gate of unconditional stillness? Only when we have expanded the frontiers of our surrender to its final limits can we dive into the inner ocean of the now and relinquish the pull of the vital force, letting go of everything that holds us to the will of self.

To move our sense of I am beneath consciousness and the life-force is ultimately not a function of effort. Our willingness to let go is an essential element of our passage into the absolute, but the final shift is a function of grace. We make ourselves available to the pull of the absolute by very precisely tuning our existence to the supreme stillness of pure rest, and the absolute itself opens the door for the soul to enter. Through the practice of dropping our will, we fall with the force of gravity to the place where presence touches the realm of absence, and upon reaching this final limit of letting go, a power from the beyond receives us into the domain of immaculate rest.

In the practice of letting go into the absolute we can use the device of surrendering with the exhalation, falling with the out-breath into the gap of pure being, which opens up for a short moment at the end of the exhalation, then resting in that space before inhaling. In this gap lies the secret passage to the other side of the now. It is precisely here that our energy can momentarily return to the condition of pure rest. Prior to opening to the absolute, our consciousness cannot stay in this gap for more than an instant, for it immediately feels suffocated by its own inactivity. Consciousness cannot free itself from its inherent will to act until it becomes absorbed into the dimension of absence. When the inner gate to pure rest opens up, we catch a second breath - a breath of eternity not taken by the lungs, but by the consciousness of pure freedom. The shift to the absolute state is an implosion of energy that sucks our being into the supreme repose of absence that awaits us beyond the now.

### **Stabilization in the Absolute**

As with the state of presence, the principle of stabilization also applies to the



absolute state. The shift to the absolute indicates that we can access the state, but only when our energy is properly aligned. Due to our inability to constantly rest in the beyond, we can consider the unstabilized state as still belonging to the coming and going of experiences, a phenomenon not inherent to our true nature. Before stabilization, the absolute state is not yet the real foundation of our existence.

Stabilization in the absolute is a flowering of our continuous dedication to surrender and unbroken abidance within the state of pure rest. We have to become inert like a stone. Maximum vertical inertia combined with the drawing-down of gravity from the source intensifies the inner pull to its limit so that our energy can gradually settle down into the bottom of being. When our being reaches the necessary degree of maturation and inner expansion and fully merges with the absolute, the state finally stabilizes and becomes the natural base of our existence. At all times we are contained within the pure perfection of the groundless ground of total life.

### **Integration of the Absolute State**

Before the absolute state is fully refined, there are still subtle energetic oscillations within the quality of our inner abidance. The integration of the state involves polishing the condition of pure rest until maximal transparency is attained and the state is thereby rendered natural and complete. It is an organic process that we support with the practice of deep breathing in sitting meditation, and by consciously surrendering to the state at all times.

Once integrated, the absolute state reflects the perfection of our abidance in the supreme absence of the beyond. Although not the final goal of our evolution, the integration of the absolute state lays a tremendously significant foundation for our future attainment of wholeness, representing the solid ground of reality from which the soul draws the power she needs for her expansion into universal intelligence.

How deeply the absolute state is ultimately realized is determined by the strength of awareness and being with which the soul enters the beyond. If awareness and being are fully empowered, the soul has the necessary force to penetrate the innermost core of absence; otherwise, the absolute will be experienced in a more shallow way, as a plane of emptiness or tranquility. We call the highest realization of the absolute the 'diamond mountain,' since it embodies the qualities of infinite strength, solidity, clarity and depth.



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## The State of Heart

The heart is the sun of creation - the ultimate magnificence, compassion and love of the god state. The heart reveals divine beauty, tenderness, prayer and devotion to us. Truly, without the heart there is no reason to live, for in the heart resides the light of our original divinity, our ultimate link with the love and grace of the creator. It is only in the heart that we can find the true meaning of our existence.

The heart holds the timeless memory of our transcendental origin and the knowledge of our final destiny. Through the heart we meet the essence of our soul, and through the heart we return to the abode of the beloved. It is the heart that makes our humanity sacred and bridges us with eternity. To open the heart - our existential center - is the key to our psychological sanity in the human dimension and our spiritual awakening as the soul.

### The Heart

Although we naturally feel the heart to be the most personal facet of our existence, its multilayered reality includes an impersonal aspect as well; it is both the core of the soul's identity and the energetic realm of her abidance in the divine. As a 'state', the heart is similar to awareness in that it represents both a dimension within the impersonal energy of the inner state as well as the essence of I am. However, there is a difference between the sense of I am in the heart and the sense of I am in awareness: I am in the heart is even *more* personal, more primordial, for it signifies the original light of our identity, whereas I am in awareness is an expression arising out of that light. Through I am in awareness, the soul expands her self-identity from the heart to the mind - she awakens her center within the dimension of thought. But it is within the heart that the fundamental nature of the soul's existence dwells.

### Awakening of the Heart

Sometimes we speak about awakening *to* the heart, and sometimes about the awakening *of* the heart. There is a difference. In speaking about awakening to the heart, we point to the realization of the absolute heart of existence and the eternal heart of the soul; the awakening of the heart signifies the opening of the human heart. Because the human heart connects the mind with the soul, its awakening is one of the most important steps in our evolution. In awakening our heart, we gain access to the ancient knowledge of our true self and enter the realm of the creator, the beloved parent of our soul.

Most humans try to protect their emotional vulnerability by building walls of insensitivity around their hearts. These shields may shelter them from hurt, but they also separate them from their inner beauty, tenderness and capacity to love. We cannot begin the journey into the heart unless we first dissolve the armor of resistance and self-protection encasing it that we ourselves have constructed.

Even though the spiritual heart lies beyond personality, the first stage of its opening is emotional in nature. We need to bring the forgotten heart of the child that we were once upon a time, and still are deep inside, into the present - we need to surrender to our inner sensitivity and open to the heart's purity. Only by humbly returning to our innocence in prayerful devotion to our divine essence can we truly reconnect to the truth of the heart.

Surrendering to the heart we open up the dam of our sadness. We must fully experience the inner pain that we have never stopped pushing away, and embrace it with love and forgiveness, allowing tears of grief and longing to flow from the hidden recesses of our being. These tears cleanse our heart, purify our mind and open us up to a loving communion with the divine.

### **The Energetic Experience of the Heart**

The energetic opening of the heart is not in itself a complete awakening, but rather represents a shift into the heart that brings profound change to the quality of our existence. Energy moves to the heart center, inundating it with gentleness and sensitivity that gradually dissolves inner wounds and blocked energies born of fear, pain and the very knot of separate self.

The spiritual heart, located in the center of the chest, is where we find the energetic portal to the dimension of the soul and the divine. Initially, when working with the heart, one may feel an expansive warmth and tenderness in the middle of the chest. The more it opens, the more the heart's energy radiates both inwards, towards its own center, and outwards, circulating around the chest. One increasingly experiences the heart as a field of pure feeling, softness and love.

After the energetic shift to the heart is complete, the state of the heart is rendered

permanent and can be considered stabilized. However, we do not put much emphasis on the idea of stabilization in the work with the heart because the journey into the heart never ends - it is an everlasting unfoldment. Upon stabilization, the heart simply opens to a new, more universal evolution and expansion into the divine.

A seeker who has shifted into the heart but not yet stabilized the state often experiences a contraction of the heart when identified with negative thought patterns and emotions. In someone already established in the state, the heart will never lose its energetic openness; thoughts and emotions of a lower nature may close the human and existential dimensions of the heart, but never the energetic one. Psychological confusion and mental agitation affect the emotional aspect of the heart, as the mind and the heart are interconnected, but they cannot touch its spiritual depth.

In those who are unconscious and lack the presence of awareness, the mind continuously eclipses the reality of the heart. Even if sensitive and compassionate, they cannot experience the heart at all times due to their fragmented consciousness. In fact, the heart of a loving but unconscious person is almost always closed, for to be unconscious is to have no soul. There can be no real love if there is no clarity of awareness and continuity of presence. Only a conscious person can surrender his mind-based intelligence to the silent depths of the heart.

As an energetic state, the heart shares the qualities of impersonality with the other aspects of the inner state, and along with them, constitutes the environment of our internal abidance in reality. The energetic awakening of the heart creates the ground for further inner expansion, but the actual conversion of our existence into a higher state of light and love requires a much deeper awakening and further purification.

### **Enlightenment of the Heart**

Far more profound than the energetic opening of the heart center, the enlightenment of the heart enables us to contact its living depth and realize our pure subjectivity, the intrinsic knowledge of I am. The enlightenment of the heart is comprised of two aspects: the awakening of the soul and the purification of intention. Because we elaborate on the awakening of the soul in great detail further on, we shall confine our discussion here to the purification of intention.

To undergo inner transformation it is not enough merely to be 'in touch' with the heart; the purification of intention requires that the mind submit to the heart. The negativity of the mind can only be purified when the core of its identity yields to the truth of the soul. If the mind is not aligned with the soul, it can endanger the awakening of our higher self, for its subconscious tendencies are not based on the principle of light. It is conditioned to serve our lower nature and perpetuate our false self. Only when the mind's intelligence awakens to the higher purpose of our

existence and gives up its egotistical self-infatuation can it finally surrender to the soul.

The purification of intention is the coming together of our human intelligence with the truth of the heart, a process that takes place deep within the soul's consciousness. It does not bring about the complete transformation of the mind, but it is a significant turning point. The triumph of our higher nature over our subconscious tendencies ushers in a new era of our evolution - the mind finally begins to serve the heart. Prior to the purification of intention, the mind and heart pulled in opposite directions, but the enlightenment of the heart liberates us to honor that which is in harmony with the truth of higher wisdom.

### **The Layers of the Heart**

The outermost layer of the heart is directly tied to the human personality through the emotional body. For this reason, the first essential step in our human expansion into the heart is to shift from living fully identified with thoughts to living through feelings. Feelings are simply closer to reality than thoughts, because they touch that part of us which is existentially more real and more intimate with the soul.

Most humans experience the heart only when a deep feeling provoked by the external reality is channeled through the emotional body. Outer impressions are digested by the mind, and once assimilated, reside there as memories, creating a virtual reality through which our emotions are filtered when we think about our relationship to the world. When we are moved through an intense encounter, we are not experiencing the heart itself, but its response to emotional stimuli. We may feel joy in our heart when we are in love, or compassion when we encounter deep suffering, but these feelings are external to the reality of the heart itself. As long as it is lost in the phenomenal, the heart cannot recognize its own subjectivity.

To be connected to one's feelings is in itself very meaningful, but when our consciousness is ruled by lower intelligence, our feelings can easily be channeled in the wrong direction. We can take as an example those who are brainwashed to feel their hearts when experiencing patriotism or religious fervor. They might even be ready to die for an imaginary idea that deeply affects their emotions. This type of heart opening has no connection to the wisdom of the soul. Unfortunately, the deep emotions of most humans are usually no more than unconscious impulses triggered by unintelligent messages generated by the collective mind.

The next level of depth within the heart, though still linked to the emotional body, is where we experience the heart itself. We may feel a deep sense of sadness or happiness in the heart, unrelated to anything in particular. The emotions are still engaged, but they are flowing towards the heart center, identified more with the heart's essence than any psychological content. Previously, all of our emotions were

directed outward; now they begin to move inwards towards our pure subjectivity.

A tragedy, such as the death of someone we truly love, can take us back to the lonely reality of the heart in which we experience the pure quality of existential suffering. If we can access only the first layer of the heart, we will identify solely with the event that touched it. But if we are able to connect to the heart in a more profound way, we will experience it in its subjective purity. Significant moments like these can push us deep into the personal dimension of the heart. The more we are in touch with our heart at these times, the more we may question our relationship with the world, and disillusioned with our reality, dwell in existential emptiness. Times like these when we are able to feel and experience our existence in the primal space of aloneness are actually precious opportunities to realize the mystery of being oneself and encounter the light of pure subjectivity.

And so, layer by layer, we move from thought to feeling, and from a place of deep feeling become conscious of our primal bond to the heart. In due course we come to a pristine experience of the heart - we move beyond our dependence on external influences to help us feel. At last we can meet our subjective presence in the heart, the knower behind all feelings - our very soul. The soul exists between the emotional body of the human and the inner dominion of the beloved. She either travels a trajectory outwards towards the world through human emotions, or inwards through the heart and her own existence to the divine. The divine dimension is the final depth of the heart - the eternal source of all hearts, the absolute love from which the heart of me emerges.

### **The Essence of Love**

The word 'love' is grossly misused and misinterpreted by adolescent and sentimental human psychology. It is a term not only worn-out and commercialized in society, but in religion and spirituality as well. What does it mean to love? What is love?

The essence of love is the heart as it is. Love does not have wants, for it reflects the pure perfection of divine wholeness. It is not a commodity, nor a means to satisfy our inexhaustible emotional needs. Love is a limitless space that contains all-that-is beyond any subject-object relationship. Unless we realize the state of oneness and dissolve the illusory separation between ourselves and existence, there is no way that we can know true love. As love is the nature of the self, only through unity with the self can we merge with the natural state of love.

### **The Center of Feeling**

Despite the excessive development of the mind that makes most humans so abysmally out of touch with their feelings, the fact remains that it is *how we feel* that matters to us the most. It is not by chance that, when greeting our neighbor, the first

thing we ask is: 'How are you?' How we feel determines the very meaningfulness of our existence. The heart is the center of feeling, and in fact the center of our perception. Whether we are conscious of it or not, all that we experience is registered and interpreted in the heart. Most people simply do not feel what their heart feels; they feel what their mind 'feels'. Their actions and responses are not rooted in the knowing of the heart, for their connection to the heart is blocked. To go beyond our superficial psychology and contact the truth of the soul, we must consciously open to our deepest feelings so that how we experience reality reflects the living wisdom of the heart.

### **The Wisdom of the Heart**

Because the heart's deep wisdom originates from the soul, our higher being, it operates in a different way from the intelligence of the mind. The wisdom of the heart is not based on methodical reasoning or the analysis of events, but on the direct discernment of right from wrong. The decision-making process within the heart relies on intuition, feeling and pure knowing.

We should not, however, make impulsive decisions based on overpowering feelings in the name of listening to the heart. Spontaneous emotional reactions do not necessarily have anything to do with the wisdom of the heart. Unless we are awakened and purified, our instinctive emotional responses are most likely tied to our lower nature and disconnected from our spiritual heart.

Higher wisdom is born from the integration of the intelligence of the mind and the sensitivity of the heart. To access the heart's inherent wisdom, we must see its clear reflection in the mirror of the mind's intelligence. The mind has to tune into and decode the inner voice of the soul, and with discrimination and understanding, articulate the heart's guidance.

### **The Gate to the Divine**

Although the spiritual heart is felt in the body, its unmanifested essence resides in the inner realm. One side of the heart points to creation where human reality reigns, the other, to the unborn side of the heart where the creator resides. In order to enter the divine realm, we need to melt the boundaries between our individual heart and the universal heart. Only by becoming drunk with the divine, and in that intoxication forgetting oneself, can one merge with the beloved.

No one who is locked in the prison of self can bask in the glow of the inner sun of creation. Through our surrender into the final depth of our individual heart, we become submerged in the ocean of the universal heart, where our eternal parent awaits us. Finally we realize that the true heart is not contained within our individuality - it is the totality of existence, the divine realm itself.

## The Horizontal Expansion of the Heart

Through being we experience non-separation; through the heart we realize oneness. If the pull of being overrides the energy of the heart, the soul is alienated from the reality of creation. Hence, the pull towards the source must be balanced with a horizontal expansion of the heart. The unity of being and the heart enables us to experience a perfect equilibrium between the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

If the heart is not awakened, the gravity of the now pulls the soul into the beyond through the gate of being, bypassing the heart. But if the heart is open, the gravity of being does not draw any energy away from the heart center; being and heart are experienced as one. The balanced combination of their energies gives rise to a double, yet unified, expansion into the beyond. Being actually becomes the vehicle that transports the soul into the divine realm. The fruit of this dual expansion is the directionless state of all-embracing presence - the realization of everythingness. It is only due to our ignorance that we need to awaken each aspect of the inner state separately in order to realize them as one reality. From a higher perspective, the absolute and the divine are indivisible.

## Abiding in the Heart

The most meaningful experience of the heart is natural absorption within its depth. To be absorbed in the heart is to merge with the heart. When we merely *feel* the heart, our separate self is still too distinct - our very presence makes absorption impossible. Only through conscious surrender can we reach the necessary degree of absence to become one with the divine. By the simple act of sitting and letting go into the unity of being and the heart we grow roots into the divine dimension. The heart absorbs our separate self into the presence of the soul and her absence in the supreme beyond. We disappear into the heart and reappear in the state of wholeness.

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## The Inner State Awakened

In the fully actualized inner state, awareness, being and heart create one holistic experience of our abidance in reality. Giving birth to the complete inner state within our existence is the basis for our evolution towards wholeness. From this foundation we go beyond the mind and enter the realm of the soul.

Without the vital knowledge of the integral reality of the inner dimension, it is virtually impossible to understand the awakening process. Seekers who do not possess a holistic vision of the inner state cannot progress in a clear way, for even if they do experience a certain level of awakening, they cannot identify what they still lack inside for their completion. How can one attempt to reach completion if one does not know what it means to become whole? Before we can fully awaken to the dimension beyond the mind, we must understand how its structural components interconnect. This clarity liberates us, opening the door to our true evolution.

### Not Soul, Not Self

An essential point that requires demystification is whether the inner state represents the universal self or the individual soul. In truth, it is neither the soul nor the self, but the dimension within which they meet. The inner state is the internal environment where the soul abides and awakens as well as her portal to transcendence; it is the soul's existential extension into the realm of the self. However, until the state of transcendence is realized, the inner state functions less as an entryway and more as a connective space between the soul and the beyond. Only when the dimension of absence is reached in its final depth does the inner state become a wide open gate to the supreme self.

The inner state transports us to the beyond, but it is not the beyond itself. When the soul awakens, the inner state becomes one with her individual subjectivity, but continues to serve as her portal to universal subjectivity. However, as the soul

progressively merges with the realm of absence, the boundaries between the inner state and the beyond become more and more transparent until they finally dissolve into the ultimate reality.

### **The Union of Identity and Abidance**

The experience of the inner state has both a personal and impersonal quality. The sense of I am inherent to the states of presence and the heart is of the soul, and the impersonal void of being is of the self. If the soul is unawakened, the inner state serves only as the place of her abidance in the universal reality - it is not filled with the presence of her individual essence. When she awakens, however, the soul transmutes the energy of the inner state into the light of her true identity. Through the integration and unification of her I amness and her beingness, the soul at once awakens and transcends herself in the realization of oneness with the beyond.

### **A Unique Vision of Completion**

Everyone needs the complete inner state in order to become whole, but the extent to which each aspect is awakened depends upon the make-up of the soul and her unique potential. Not everyone is destined to achieve exactly the same state. Our spiritual potential, level of consciousness, and blueprint are the determinants of the quality of the final state we need to realize. For example, not everybody has the capacity to reach the absolute state - in fact, it is neither required nor desired by all souls. To arrive at a clear vision of our own completion, we need to receive guidance from a competent teacher, or to intuitively recognize the singular flavor of our inner evolution.

### **Integration of the Inner State**

The energetic quality of the inner state reflects the dynamics between its three constituent aspects, awareness, being and heart. Depending on their past evolution and spiritual constitution, seekers will have a natural predisposition towards one of these aspects, but greater difficulty awakening others. Some are more open to the dimension of being, others to awareness, and there are those who are drawn to experience reality primarily through the heart. That one experiences problems awakening one aspect of the inner state over the others is certainly no excuse to remain incomplete; it is simply a positive indicator of the areas that need to be given more attention in order to awaken the inner state as a whole. Once each aspect of the inner state is completely awakened, we are ready to enter the phase of integration.

The integration of the inner state refers to the post-awakening unification of awareness, being and heart. Just as each aspect has to integrate within itself, it is also necessary that they integrate with each other. Prior to integration there can still

be friction within the inner state; one may have excessively crystallized awareness and find it hard to surrender into being, or if one's energy is pulled strongly yet disproportionately into being, difficulties may arise in merging being with heart or awareness. There are many possible scenarios of discord between the three aspects. In all cases, they need to be brought into balance with each other so that they can be transformed into a single organism of I am. The more they are integrated, the less there is any division between their energies. Through the process of integration, awareness, being and heart gradually dissolve and expand into each other, giving rise to one field of pure transparency - the natural state.

### **Abiding in the Inner State**

Through the birth of the inner state we gain tremendous stability inside; we reach a permanent ground of awareness-being-heart that cannot be touched by the ever-changing reality of the world. Besides opening us to the inner realm, the establishment of this state readies the soul for the essential processes of purification and healing that were impossible to fully engage in before she dwelled stably beyond the mind. When we are totally identified with our psychosomatic existence, there is simply no space within which real transformation can occur.

The inner state is more than just the static foundation of our inner peace and comfort; it is a dynamic reality of continuous growth towards the soul's transcendence of earthly consciousness. No longer ruled by lower intelligence, having awakened the inner state we can finally begin our true life guided by the intrinsic wisdom and purpose of the inner realm.

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## The Realm of the Soul

The soul is another name for our true self, the heart of our individual existence. Unlike the personality, the soul exists independently from the mind, by nature free of the incessant fluctuation of our mental and emotional states. The soul is made from the radiance of consciousness and pure intelligence; in her essence she is in a timeless state of unity with universal being and love. She exists to serve the never-ending evolution of light and understanding as she expands towards the fathomless depth and mystery of the god state. Although individual and unique, the soul remains eternally one with the impersonal movement of universal intelligence, an angle of perception through which the beloved beholds the consciousness of creation.

The awakening of the soul is the supreme purpose of our human existence, the most significant step in our evolution towards the realization of oneness, wholeness and completion. Prior to her awakening, the soul finds herself imprisoned in the plane of lower intelligence and exists merely as her personality. She is limited to her ego, locked in the subconscious reality of the mind. The light of her presence has been lost in the shadow cast by her human self. To awaken her true nature, the soul must transcend her forgetfulness and realize her essence of I am. Through the vehicle of me, she gives birth to her ancient identity of pure subjectivity and actualizes her divine individuality at last.

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## From Ego to Soul

We are not who we seem to be, we appear to be who we are not. As human beings we are not individuals, but endless copies of the collective mind. Immersed in total illusion we live like sleepwalkers, oblivious of our true self. We have sacrificed our original beauty, strength and freedom for the undignified existence created by the mind.

The term 'ego' denotes the self-limiting aspect of the soul's identity that prior to her awakening functions exclusively through personality. The ego needs to be seen, however, not only as an aspect of ignorance, but also as a positive stage in our evolution in which consciousness becomes self-aware for the first time by reflecting on itself. The essence of ego is its sense of me, the foundation of the conscious mind. In forgetfulness, this sense of me is fully identified with mental reality, but in awakening, it bridges our unconscious self with the consciousness of the soul.

One of the most dramatic occurrences in human evolution is the shift of identity from ego to pure me, in which the soul moves out from complete self-forgetfulness towards increasingly higher states of self-remembrance. What culminates this inner journey of remembrance is the event of becoming oneself, so ordinary yet so profound. To be an individual is to be who one is in the ultimate sense of the term, to awaken the light of our soul-identity whose seed lies dormant within our most secret existence.

### The Evolution of Consciousness

What makes us human is the ability to know that we exist and are in fact this very me endowed with the faculty to self-cognize. Our mind is aware of its own activities and constructs a subjective sense of I to whom, more or less, all its acts refer. The development of self-consciousness in humans is a positive evolutionary step that raises our awareness above that of all the other species inhabiting our planet. Yet this step from the unconsciousness of the animal kingdom to the consciousness of

human kind, despite its significance, does not arrive at the culmination of our evolution, because it does not signify an awakened condition. Human beings are still more unconscious than conscious - they are in fact only semi-conscious, for their consciousness is limited to the mind and alienated from the self. Although the mind manifests from the self, the self cannot be recognized by the mind.

### **Imprisoned in the Mind**

The sense of subjective identity based on the mind is extremely fragmented, the reason why human beings are fundamentally neurotic. At humanity's present stage of development, individuals have no stable existence or sustained center within. Their identity remains exclusively based on ego, which in order to sustain its existence, has to recreate itself continuously through compulsive self-referral. As the ego has no self apart from thought, it is no wonder that most seekers, initially no more than egos, cannot answer the simple question, 'who am I?' The ego has sufficient sense of self to ask this question, but not enough to answer it. A seeker will only find the answer to this question if he gives birth to his true presence beyond the mind.

The sense of me created by the mind, which constitutes the core of the ego-identity, is only a shadow of the real me. The stage of evolution in which we recognize the sense of me constitutes only the first step in coming to know our true self. Many more steps need to be taken before we finally become who we really are. Who we are in our timeless identity is founded upon our immortal essence, not the mind. A human being lost in the mind, unable to affirm his existence as 'I am therefore I am', is not at all conscious, but lives in a pitiable and unacceptable condition.

### **From the Mind to Oneself**

The path from the mind to oneself is both easy and difficult. Easy, because it points to one's most natural sense of self, but also extremely difficult, for to establish the state of pure subjectivity requires a tremendous transformation. The fundamental challenge of a seeker is to cross the chasm between his forgetfulness and remembrance. That which initiates the movement of awakening from the mind to the soul is our arrival at an existential crisis within our lower self. The soul, locked in the self-consciousness of ego and confined to the claustrophobic space of the mind, finally recognizes the deep suffering and emptiness inherent to ignorance. It is this deep sense of depression that compels us to transform our consciousness into the light of the soul.

### **The Ego**

The human ego is a mental agent that possesses a sense of me resulting from self-reference. Although all creatures share the sense of me, a significant difference

remains between the me of a highly evolved animal, such as a cat, and that of a human being. A cat does indeed have a sense of me, and its whole organism serves the 'love to be' of that particular me. However, the cat's sense of me does not have the clarity and strength of the human ego. It has an unfocussed, dreamlike quality, an instinctive existence, more automatic, reactive and mechanical; it is actually a subconscious me. The sense of me of a human ego is far more sophisticated and complex, having the capacity for a higher level of concentration and abstraction; it can maintain a continuity of focus during thinking, and even think about itself. The self-reflective faculty of the human ego utilizes not only thoughts, but a wide spectrum of emotions in order to project its image: out, to the world to gain approval or manipulate its environment, and in, towards itself to maintain its psychological integrity and positive opinion of itself. But no matter how sophisticated it is, and how strong its sense of individuality, the irony of ego is that it remains fundamentally unconscious, oblivious of its own essence.

The mind and the ego represent two sides of one consciousness: the mind the flow of thoughts, and ego the mechanism of self-reference within this flow. The ego has no existence apart from this self-reference, devoid of any factual identity based on I am. It has a sense of me, but no sense of I am. Its existence lacks continuity, and therefore must be re-created moment-to-moment. For an unconscious person, a gap in self-referral is experienced as a moment of blankness, of being 'spaced-out'. Without the mind to fill this gap, he has no means to confirm his own existence.

When entrenched in its pseudo-identity, the ego merely serves as a shallow substitute for the soul. By compulsively dwelling upon self-image, it deceives itself into being real. It seeks love and acceptance just to feel that it exists. Yet in spite of its desperate efforts to escape its own emptiness, the ego will never reach true solidity unless it transcends itself by awakening to the light of the soul.

### **The Shadow of the Soul**

In ignorance, the ego exists as the false I created by the mind claiming to be our true self. It masks the soul, concealing her real essence, and uses the light of I am to generate its own sense of me. Although linked to the dimension of pure subjectivity, it remains but a pale reflection of our real self. Lost in the mind, the ego's sense of me retains no connection to the soul. Until the soul is awakened, she cannot own her me and liberate it from the mind.

The relationship between the ego and the soul can be likened to that of a minister and a king. The minister, our ego, serves the king, our soul, but the king owns the kingdom, our existence. The minister becomes dangerous the moment he begins to behave as if he were the rightful ruler. This usually happens when the king, still a child, cannot yet declare his inherited power. In due time, however, the king becomes ready to claim his supremacy and puts the minister in his proper,

subservient place. The situation with the soul is similar, because initially she is too immature to rule the ego. In most humans the soul resembles a baby unaware of itself. For the sake of our spiritual sanity, it is imperative that the soul awaken to her own existence and gain the maturity to assume the governing position within our consciousness.

### **The Role of Ego**

The majority of spiritual traditions make the error of denying the ego any positive role, reducing it to a mere barrier to freedom and liberation, or going as far as negating its reality entirely. However, to negate the ego represents no more than self-denial, for the ego itself is doing the negation. An ego that thinks it does not exist is either confused or hypocritical.

A simplistic negation of the ego is spiritually dangerous, and any teaching that fails to perceive the ego as essential to understanding and consciousness remains out of touch with reality. The ego cannot be simply negated; it needs to be embraced and redirected. Its energies and thought forms must be transformed into fuel for our awakening. Although true that, at a certain point of evolution, the ego must be transcended and merged with the soul, it still has a purpose to serve in our evolution and self-realization. It is not the ego itself that is false, but its ignorance, unconsciousness, and illusory separation from the soul.

The function of the ego is to bridge our subconscious self with our awakened consciousness. Even though the cause of our anguish, initially it is the ego that enters the spiritual path. In fact, without ego no spiritual path would exist for a human being. In the absence of ego, there may be no ignorance, but also no self-realization. By internalizing the energies of consciousness, the ego begins to support the awakening of the soul to the realm of pure subjectivity. Having recognized the higher purpose of evolution and enlightenment, it now serves its own transformation. An intelligent and spiritually mature ego directs its energy towards positive enquiry into the nature of self. It questions its own existence and seeks transmutation into a higher me, the me of the soul. It is when the ego reaches its highest power of attention, intelligence and sensitivity that the realization of I am takes place.

Apart from being the initial agent of our spiritual evolution, the role of the ego is to protect our relatively separate existence. The human being, regardless of his spiritual awakening, still remains bound by the laws of empirical reality. Even a self-realized being needs to have a 'minimum ego' to survive on the physical plane. The minimum, or *natural* ego, operates not as an expression of ignorance, but as an extension of the enlightened reality, a function of intelligence that serves the soul, free of self-image or any sense of separation.

A human cannot merge his ego with the soul before he reaches the more advanced



stages of evolution. It is foolish to attempt to transcend the ego prematurely, because it is simply impossible. Such an untimely struggle against its perfectly natural presence only leads to self-denial, guilt and a sense of unworthiness. Before we can dissolve (not eliminate) the ego, we must accept its presence and submit it to our higher wisdom. We need to deal intelligently with its inherent negative qualities such as arrogance, greed, stupidity, insensitivity, pride, conceit, self-pity or inferiority complex. For someone who has just entered the inner path, the elimination of the ego is not the proper aspiration. Instead, one should bring more acceptance, wisdom, understanding and purity into how the ego functions in the mind so as to align it with the will and light of the soul.

### **The Multidimensional Self**

To comprehend the interconnection between the soul and the ego, we must take into account our multidimensional existence. Our sense of identity is composed of many layers that express themselves simultaneously on multiple levels: body and mind, thought and emotion, intuition and intelligence, ego and soul. The ego and the soul are the two main dimensions of our subjective reality necessary for our complete human experience. The ego is certainly not our original self, but on the human plane it does represent an extension of the soul's subjectivity. The human is the vehicle of the soul, the ego is the self-consciousness of the human. The ego is the functional I that arises out of our interaction with the external reality, a by-product of the subject-object relationship. In the hierarchy of subjective reality, the ego simply has a much lower position than the soul, serving as only her link to phenomenal reality. The ego, unlike the soul, is not a part of eternity, but belongs to the plane of forgetfulness.

### **The Ego and Self-enquiry**

Self-enquiry can be described as our ego's existential effort to investigate our true nature, an effort to reveal our eternal self hidden beneath the layers of our human personality. Self-enquiry, the awakening question of our true identity, links the seeking intelligence with the birth of the awakened answer, the soul herself. Because it points beyond the mind, in order to bring illumination, self-enquiry must transcend mental effort in the direct experience of our essential self.

We must see both the positive function and the limitations of ego in the task of self-enquiry. The ego helps us to realize our true self, but it cannot actualize this realization alone. Although the ego supports our awakening by redirecting our intention, awareness and intelligence towards the essence of our being, awakening itself is not the result of any effort performed within the structure of our ego-identity.

The main point of confusion on the path of self-enquiry relates to the false assumption that through the power of enquiry we can instantaneously access the ever-present self that remains unrealized only due to ignorance. The reality is that

our true self cannot be recognized prior to first being awakened and actualized. Self-enquiry is not limited to seeking and seeing who we are in the present now; it opens the space of intelligence and being within which the soul can finally remember and awaken her timeless essence.

### **The Ego Seeking the Soul**

How can the ego assist in the awakening of I am if the soul is not yet consciously present? The ego cannot manifest the soul, nor can it perform the act of awakening. Its function is to align the mind with the quest of the soul so that she can realize her innate potential and awaken. On the conscious level, the ego initiates the inner search, but in reality the spiritual quest is the command of the soul. Even before she is awakened, the soul instinctively begins to search for her true identity by enquiring into the essence of pure subjectivity through the medium of her ego's intelligence. Although stimulated by the ego, awakening itself takes place beyond its bounds, a radical movement of perception and being from the mind to pure subjectivity. True awakening happens within the soul's consciousness.

Despite its positive contribution to the awakening process, there lurks a danger that after the birth of our pure subjectivity, the ego will claim 'I am' as an experience it itself is having; it will see I am as an object and itself as the subject, thus thwarting the realization of the soul. Hence after awakening, the ego must submit itself to I am so that the soul can become our real center. Only if our identity has shifted from ego to I am can the soul embody our true subjectivity as the host of our existence.

### **The Soul Becomes I am**

When the ego finally forfeits its false sovereignty so that the soul can fully awaken to her subjectivity, the soul becomes I am. A seed dies by initiating the birth of a tree, yet in a mysterious way, it becomes that tree's future life. Similarly, the mind's sense of me serves the awakening of the soul only to sacrifice itself for the arising of a real I. Its energy is not nullified, but transformed into the life of the soul. Although the ego begins the journey, it is the soul that completes it. Once the ego has fulfilled its role in facilitating our awakening, it returns its borrowed sense of me to the soul, relinquishing its central position. The seeker becomes the sought.



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## The Heart of Me

While existing in the earthly dimension, our task is to give birth to our essential self, this very I am that we have been since before time began. Unless we awaken the heart of our pure subjectivity, we will never be able to enter the realm of the soul.

The soul remains a great mystery - she manifests out of a meeting between individuality and universality, the consciousness of oneself and the consciousness of all-that-is. One with universal consciousness, she shines as the light of being that contains the pure wisdom of creation. In the plane of unconsciousness - caught between forgetfulness and awakening - her deepest purpose is to fulfill the ancient plan that she rediscover her eternal essence.

### Who Am I?

Self-enquiry is the internalization of consciousness through the medium of the mind. Properly applied, self-enquiry can bring us to the threshold of pure subjectivity, but it lacks the power to awaken the whole experience of the soul. Through self-enquiry we may recognize our essence, but to become our complete self, we must evolve and expand within this essence beyond enquiry.

The traditional aim of self-enquiry is not to awaken the soul, but rather to realize her absence, either through identification with the all-pervasive self-of-all or the negation of the personal self. Such a misuse of self-enquiry is pure ignorance. As we attempt to transcend our personality through self-enquiry we should take care not to negate our soul as well, throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Our aspiration to merge with totality should not lead us into self-denial. If our self-enquiry results in identification with the universal self, it becomes a case of mistaken identity; we have confused our relative subject with the absolute subjectivity.

For self-enquiry to reveal our true identity, we must be free of both an ego-based perception of reality as well as the influence of strictly impersonal interpretations of

enlightenment. We must neither dwell in a void of negative absence derived from the negation of our personal self, nor an illusion of omnipresence derived from identification with the universal I am. True self-enquiry points beyond both disidentification with the false personality and identification with the universal self to the essence of our individual existence, the heart of me.

The soul is not the universal self, and never will be, because her very creation implies a level of individuation. The realization of the self should not be confused with becoming the self, or suddenly realizing that one has always been *that*. To realize the self requires reaching unity with the supreme reality and not becoming that reality. The state of unity is a plane rich in diversity that contains infinite individual angles of perception, all existing within the unified whole.

### **The Light of I Am**

To truly enquire into the truth of our existence is to investigate the very fabric from which consciousness is made - the light of I am. How do we know that we exist? How do we experience the sense of being alive as distinct from our psychosomatic reality? Isn't it through the innate knowledge of I am, the essence of creation? I am is indeed the radiance of the heart of the beloved, through which all beings can become conscious of their existence. The whole spiritual path points to the task of regaining this primordial knowledge of pure subjectivity. To seek our true self is to yield to the luminosity of the heart, in which the silent confirmation of our existence is eternally present as - I am that I am.

### **The Essence of Me**

A tremendous maturity is needed to meet the essence of me within oneself. This maturity cannot be gained from the world, because the world has always conspired against the truth of me by fostering our addiction to the reality of objects for the sole purpose of disconnecting us from our true self. Unconsciousness strives to maintain itself as the status quo in the plane of ignorance. Sadly, our beautiful planet has become a haven for low intelligence. It is not by chance that so few individuals desire awakening, and even fewer who actually reach illumination. To awaken, we must first break through the deplorable state of collective amnesia.

An extraordinary spiritual sensitivity is needed to awaken the yearning for the self. Many seekers pursue the path to enlightenment, but most lack this sensitivity and grasp at goals that have no connection to the essence of me. Rare are those who can experience bliss just by being alone and savoring the taste of I am. Those who seek the essence of me are fond of solitude and silence, for in those spaces they can feel their me more deeply. One has to have a natural inclination towards deep intimacy with one's innermost existence. Awakening to the essence of me is a deeply personal realization, a true love affair with self. Only those who can feel the miracle

of being me may drink the nectar of I am in the cave of their heart.

### **Awakening to Me**

The axis around which our individual consciousness revolves is our innate sense of me. We could not function within our human identity without the inborn knowledge of me present behind all our experiences and psychological states. Who is the observer within us so intrinsic to our existence and understanding? Beyond his observational role, the observer possesses a sense of identity unrelated to any functions performed in the mind. The observer observes from his sense of me, not in itself an observer, watcher or thinker, but a pure reflection of the soul's being in the mirror of human consciousness. However, when we are unconscious, our me, although partially present, has no stability within the chaotic flux of the mind. The complete presence and solidity of our sense of me can only come through the awakening of awareness. An awakened me has a clear identity distinct from the movement of thought. Because it dwells in awareness, it gains a natural constancy of subjective presence. In our higher consciousness, awareness and me are one: awareness the amness of me, and me the I-ness of awareness, no longer separate in the soul who is integrated and whole.

Because me represents the individual awareness of the soul, awakening to me is a prerequisite for the awakening of the soul. Before the soul can awaken as the soul, she must awaken as me. Without me, the soul cannot be conscious of herself as the soul. Although me and the soul both represent our true identity, the soul is closer to the source, and me to creation. The soul is our original I am, and me her personal expression. To be realized, me must unite with the soul, who in turn must awaken through me.

Me is a more active principle than the soul, bringing the element of luminosity into her consciousness without which she could not realize herself. Even though existentially more primordial, without me, the soul lies eternally dormant in her unmanifested essence. I am is the original state, the samadhi of reality, and me the radiance of clarity and intelligence. I am is the absorbing consciousness and me the awakening consciousness. When me finally merges with I am, and awareness becomes absorbed in consciousness, the original awakened-absorbed-consciousness is met as the timeless ground of creation.

### **The Evolution of Me**

A complex journey lies ahead of me from the state of forgetfulness to complete realization. Me begins this journey by enquiring into the essence of consciousness and supporting the awakening of awareness; afterwards, it assists the stabilization of awareness through the practice of self-remembrance. Me then reaches its own stability by its conscious abidance in and relative merging with I am.

As we evolve, me supports the realization of all the other states of awakening in different ways, often by either solidifying its essence or dissolving into the inner realm. From within the soul's existence, me expands to realize itself in a holistic manner as transparent me. Me supports our process of surrender and the realization of the transcendental state by identifying with the vertical absorption of awareness. Finally, me realizes itself fully through the samadhi of me and merges with the consciousness of the soul in the realm of absence.

### **The Dimensions of Me**

Me is the living core of our individual consciousness, the stable ground of our personal angle of perception. From the awakened perspective, our existence can be likened to a tree rooted in the inner realm: the roots are the soul, the trunk pure me, the branches the conscious ego, and the leaves the arising thoughts. In our evolution towards becoming whole, we must fully embrace our multilayered identity. While an ignorant me remains only a by-product of thoughts, the pure me is self-evident, existing on a deeper plane than thinking. A self-effulgent presence, me knows itself directly by the grace of its abidance upon the consciousness of the soul, its existential foundation.

Out of the creator, manifests the soul. Out of the soul, manifests me. Out of me, manifests the observer, or conscious ego, the thinking center of the mind. Being a function of the mind, the observer does not have a constant presence, but only arises occasionally to serve as a conscious link between the pure me and the arising of thoughts. Although the observer has more continuity of attention than the subconscious me, only our pure me has real continuity and substance, for it is unconditionally present. Through the awakening of me, we transcend our fluctuating personality and solidify our fragmented self into our true identity. Me is in its essence divine, the face of the soul in creation. The supreme cause wills that it manifest as the luminous consciousness of sacred individuality, our very me.

### **The Seat of the Soul**

Prior to her awakening, the essence of the soul resides deep in the heart. We can meet our me through awareness, being or intelligence, but in the heart we encounter the deepest, most direct and intimate core of who we truly are. Until the soul is met in the depth of heart, the essence of our true self cannot be actualized. For a human being lost in unconsciousness, the only remaining trace of light is preserved in the heart. The heart's essence is the seed of our future self. It can lie dormant for countless lifetimes, but at last it must awaken to fulfill its ultimate purpose and destiny.

### **Meeting Oneself**

What could be more simple than being oneself? In our confused reality, the very simplest task of all is in fact the most challenging. Our mind has succumbed to such complexity, restlessness and chaos, that we are disconnected from the natural silence, serenity and well-being of our true nature. We are so identified with the mental and emotional impressions made upon us by external reality that we have actually become these impressions. Totally exteriorized from the abode of the self, we no longer know what it means to be who we are. We have invested too much energy in the mind and too little in the wisdom that lies beyond it.

We do not need to reach far for what we seek. It is so immediate and direct - the nearest - the self-evident knowledge of being self. One has to embrace the mind, becoming calm and clear, and in the purity of that silent presence, relax deeply into that very self. This is the only way out of despair, the only way to leave the unacceptable reality of the lost soul. Nothing is more urgent than meeting oneself - it must happen right now.

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## Soul-realization

The realization of the soul is the ultimate goal of our evolution. Although natural in its essence, to realize the soul is most challenging due to our identification with the personality. It is not the discovery of truth that makes it so difficult, but liberation from the false.

Prior to entering the path, we are totally submerged in the dimension of ignorance, drowning in forgetfulness. Our evolutionary mission is to transform the tiny spark of purity and longing in our heart into awakening. But because our capacity to realize the soul is fundamentally limited, our efforts have to be supported by the grace of the beyond. Since the realization of the soul is a part of the divine plan, anyone who serves it will receive assistance from the whole of existence.

### The Body of the Soul: Union of the Personal and Impersonal

We can portray the dimension beyond the mind either as a state we are in or our subjective existence; it can be seen either from the viewpoint of the soul or the inner state. The soul is the I am of the inner state, and the inner state is the internal space within which I am dwells. In other words, we can relate to our inner condition either as our identity or as our internal environment. However, without the consciousness of I am to illuminate it, the inner state is no more than an empty shell.

The evolutionary level of intelligence that inhabits the inner state determines whether its experience is translated as individual or impersonal. A seeker who is in touch with the light of pure subjectivity will recognize the sense of I am inherent to the inner state, but one unawakened to the soul will experience the state beyond the mind only as an external, objectified space of abidance.

We can look at each aspect of the inner state and see how the factors of maturity and conditioning influence the interpretation of our experience. A translation of the state of presence as purely impersonal indicates that we are still identified with the



observing intelligence, and not the light of I am. An interpretation of awareness as personal indicates that we have the ability to embody it as our pure subjectivity, but are unable to dissolve in it our self-consciousness. Ultimately, the state of awareness experienced in its fullness by a mature soul reflects both the personal quality of I am and the impersonal quality of the inner state.

In a same way, the heart can be felt as the essence of the soul, or as an energy field. Similar to awareness, the heart, depending on our perspective, contains both the essence of I am and an aspect of the inner state. For those who subscribe to traditions that deny the existence of the soul, even though they may address the heart in some respect, the experience of the heart will naturally be impersonal. On the other hand, those on the path of devotion who do not walk the path of the inner state, will feel the heart as purely personal. The complete experience of the heart bridges the personal and the impersonal by uniting the essence of I am with its abidance in the beyond.

The situation with the being quality of the inner state is somewhat different. Being, by its very nature does not constitute the soul's identity. Although the soul actualizes herself within being, being is essentially beyond any individualized energy. Being is the I am of the supreme reality, not the I am of the soul. However, as the soul merges into being, she integrates it with her sense of I am and transmutes it into her body of pure subjectivity. Being is by nature impersonal and beyond any individual consciousness, but in our process of becoming whole, a portion of its energy is incorporated into the I am of the soul.

When we speak about the need to embody the inner state as a personal experience, we mean that it is personal to the soul, not the ego. If the experience of the inner state is personalized by the ego, the soul is over-identified with the sense of me and cannot realize herself or merge with the beyond; one remains stuck in self-consciousness. On the other hand, if the experience is too impersonal, the soul is bypassed, her essence either absent or unintegrated. A perfect balance should exist between the personal and impersonal aspects of the inner state, by the power of which both the soul is realized and our false individuality absorbed.

We draw a distinction between the inner state and the soul only for the sake of clarity, not to indicate any inner split. As our path unfolds towards its true purpose and we become more whole and integrated inside, the division between the inner state and I am gradually dissolves. At the end of the awakening process, the inner state becomes the very body of the soul, no longer distinct from her essence. Upon completion, the impersonal and the personal, the inner state and the sense of I am, are realized as one.

### **Levels of Soul-awakening**

To be human does not necessarily mean that we have a soul-identity, and to have awakened our soul-identity does not necessarily mean that our soul is realized. Although endowed with human nature from birth, a child needs to grow up in order to become a mature human being. Similarly, even though we all have a soul identity from the beginning of our creation, we need to reach a certain level of evolution before we can recognize and realize it completely. The awakening of the soul is a slow and gradual process; although it differs for each individual, it always involves a long inner journey.

Although the awakening of the soul requires the inner state as its foundation, the presence of the inner state does not guarantee soul-realization. Soul awakening arises from a far more subtle and personal level of our existence, the primordial essence of I am. Ultimately, this awakening occurs on both energetic and existential levels. The energetic awakening is experienced as an inner expansion of our soul-body, the existential awakening as the illumination of our consciousness. It is the existential illumination that gives soul-realization its true meaning and profundity.

The first step in the process of soul awakening is the recognition of the essence of I am in the mind. Through this awakening, the mind begins to relate not only to its own content and ego, but to the soul as well. However, because awareness represents only a part of the soul's identity, the full realization of the soul requires further evolution. In our journey into the soul, we must expand beyond the realization of I am in awareness to its realization in the heart, for the heart constitutes the innermost core of our subjective identity. Like awareness, the heart does not include the complete soul, but it is closer to the essence of our divine subjectivity. For the soul to awaken yet further, I am in the mind and I am in the heart must merge and become one. This unification enables us to experience the soul in a much more holistic and complete way, and becomes the foundation for the realization of her future wholeness.

### **Transparent Me**

The awakening of the inner state can be viewed as the energetic preparation for the crossing of the threshold to soul-realization. The first stage of soul-realization, transparent me, signifies the integration of the soul with the inner state and her circular expansion within herself. Through this holistic expansion, our me fully illuminates itself from within its essence and imbues the inner state with its complete presence. The soul transforms the energy of the inner state into the consciousness of her own existence - she begins to own the inner state as her very body of I am. The attainment of transparent me can be seen as the primary step in transcending the division between the inner state and the soul. No longer does me only dwell in the inner state, it becomes its embodying consciousness.

Due to its holistic nature, transparent me has the seed of wholeness within itself.

However, a large gap exists between one's initial entry into the dimension of transparent me and its complete realization. Frequently, a seeker may shift into the state of transparent me, yet remain unable to grasp its true essence. As with the awakening of awareness or the heart, transparent me can be realized either purely on the energetic level, or in combination with an existential awakening. A purely energetic experience of transparent me is the evolutionary equivalent of the state of no-mind or the state of oneness, not the state of pure subjectivity. When lacking the maturity and sensitivity to meet transparent me as I am, one simply has to grow further into this profound realization in order to fully embody their soul.

Transparent me manifests from the uniting of oneself with the environment of the inner state. It is a state of existence in which all the centers of me and the inner state merge into an all-embracing field of I am, grounded in who we are yet simultaneously fused with the beyond. In this state, the circulation of energy is directionless and the soul abides in the all-pervasive space of universal existence. This particular realization points directly to our pure subjectivity in its uncrystallized and non-self-referential condition of non-abidance. It is called 'transparent' because there is no longer any center of me as such; one's energy has reached the purest condition of translucency.

Transparent me describes a state of relative equilibrium between horizontal and vertical expansion. Because it has not reached the final depth of vertical absorption, it is not a condition of complete surrender - not rooted in the dimension of absence. Transparent me can be said to exist *between* relative consciousness and the absolute reality. Only when the soul crosses over into the realm of absence does she finally move beyond self-consciousness into the realm of samadhi to actualize her eternal self.

### **Transcendental Me**

Although the soul represents a unique, individualized angle of perception, she is impersonal and universal in her essence. However, before the link with personality is severed, the pure existence of the soul is always intertwined with the ego self-consciousness. When she reaches the state of transcendence and samadhi of me, the soul retains her identity, but her ego-essence of self-reference is dissolved. In this new state of being, the experiencer merges universally with reality and *no one* remains at the center of experiencing. There is no one, yet this no one is none other than one's true self.

Transcendental me is rooted in the dimension of the eternal whole, beyond earthly and human existence. In this state of identity, one moves fully into the realm of non-being to become one with the universal I am. In the space of transcendence, the soul meets herself in a completely new way; she no longer knows herself through her presence, but her absence.

The soul cannot be fully realized prior to transcendence, for her me is still bound by the consciousness of the earth. As she moves through layers of increasing transparency and oneness, shedding her human personality and dissolving into the realm of absence, she becomes more and more free to expand into her ultimate self. Upon transcendence, the gravitational movement of the soul's surrender ceases, and its pure power is harnessed to finally awaken her complete presence.

### **To Become a Divine Being**

To fully realize the soul is to reclaim our essential self, to become a divine being once again. Although a divine being retains a level of individuality and maintains a unique existence, he is free of both self-consciousness and a relative sense of me. He has dissolved into existence, but continues to exist as an inimitable manifestation of the undivided whole. A divine being is one with universal evolution; endowed with the soul's body of pure light and consciousness, he serves the never-ending expansion of truth, love and understanding.

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## The Blueprint of the Soul

Our destiny, revealed by an evolutionary blueprint, reflects the purpose of our existence and the plan for our completion. Our soul exists to fulfill her destiny in time. What happens on earth impacts the whole cosmos, and what happens in the cosmos impacts the ecological system of universal evolution. How the whole of existence expands into the mystery of the supreme reality is determined by the thoughts, choices and actions of all beings existing within its space. Although our blueprint predetermines destiny, by exercising our free will, we either can accelerate or postpone the realization of our evolutionary goal. Each of us remains responsible for the direction of our intention towards truth and enlightenment. The noblest way we can serve the universal light is by yielding to our own evolution. This is our highest duty, and anyone who is conscious must honor it.

### The Unique Destiny of Each Soul

Each soul is unique, but as long as she identifies with the collective mind, she has no true individuality. Most humans are actually no more than replicas of the collective unconscious. Individuality has to be awakened; it cannot be created by the mind. As hard as the ego may try, it simply cannot succeed in being original. Consumed with an obsessive need to sustain the illusion of its self-image, it exists in fact as the most unoriginal pseudo-entity on the planet. Nothing is more unoriginal than two egos competing for originality. The essence of the ego is arrogance, a deformed substitute for uniqueness.

The soul is unique because she is herself, not because she tries to become something or someone else. She has the inimitable flavor of pure subjectivity and a distinct place within the totality of existence. There is certainly a general correspondence between the destinies of all souls: the global blueprint. However, within this universal destiny, innumerable variants reflect the individual make-up and characteristics of each soul.

Every soul needs to awaken and realize the state of oneness, but the path to awakening will differ between one soul and another. The blueprint of one soul may reveal that she can reach completion solely through the heart; that of another may indicate the need to reach the final depth of the absolute. For some, living in the world is necessary to reach completion; for others, renunciation is the only way. There is not just one, uniform enlightenment for all individuals. Each soul needs to expand the frontiers of her illumination in accordance with her unique spiritual destiny.

The destiny of each soul essentially expresses itself in two ways - through the vision of our final completion and the nature of our evolutionary path. The vision of the soul's completion is determined by our distinctive blueprint, our evolutionary potential, which reveals what elements we require in order to become whole. The nature of our evolutionary path is the particular manner in which the soul reaches that completion. The diversity of blueprints points to the truth that each soul has an exclusive place in the ecological system of universal evolution and wholeness.

It is the omniscient universal intelligence, the consciousness of the supreme reality that has created our ultimate destiny. Our blueprint holds the plan of our evolution and the predestined vision of our completion that reveals how our countless cycles of incarnations will end. It is an existential representation of who we are in our ultimate potential, our unfolded future now.

### **Remembering our Future Self**

We may perceive the model of existence as descending from the highest reality to the over-soul, then to the soul, pure me, conscious me, subconscious me, down to the unconscious. However, in the plane of forgetfulness, the truth of creation is just the reverse: although the unconscious matrix of the phenomenal reality is an expression of the universal I am, our awakening process is actually based on the principle of ascension.

In this dimension, the evolution of intelligence moves from unconsciousness to subconsciousness, from subconsciousness to consciousness, from consciousness to the soul and from the soul to the universal source. Unless awakened, a human being has no soul but only a sense of me. To become our soul is the true purpose of our creation and existence in time.

It is a common misconception to assume that to remember our original self is to bring into the present who we have always been, our primordial past identity. A seeker who unimaginatively follows the idea of self-remembrance may in fact falsely believe that he has already existed, prior to this cycle of time, as the perfect soul and only by some inexplicable misfortune became lost in forgetfulness. In reality, however, prior to becoming lost in the dimension of ignorance, we did not exist at all. Indeed,

forgetfulness is our very beginning. The task of the great remembrance is to give birth to our soul for the first time. What we remember is our destiny, the exalted realization of our divine potential. The soul is not our forgotten past, but our ultimate future, in the supreme now remembered.

### **The Soul - Lost, Dormant or Active**

The soul is our essence, but prior to her awakening she lies latent as the seed-potential of our true self. The soul of most humans remains dormant. Although secretly present beneath our personal self, she exists in a condition of existential coma, unable to link with our human reality in any way. He whose soul lies dormant functions as a robotic pseudo-individual who exists only through the mind and unconscious emotions. His identity is fully confined to personality. Lacking any substantial essence, his self is not individualized, but of the collective. He has no reality, no I am, no identity distinct from his psychological fluctuations.

The dormant soul can remain inactive for many lifetimes before finally ready to awaken. Only in rare cases of evolutionary deformity does the soul never awaken. When the soul becomes permanently stagnated in her evolution or begins to serve the lower intelligence of darkness, over the course of many lifetimes an irreversible corruption of intelligence can occur that results in her total annihilation. She becomes extinct - lost forever. Like a seed failing to germinate after many seasons, she finally disintegrates.

Because the soul cannot remain dormant interminably, at some point she exhausts the force-potential to awaken bestowed upon her at her creation. Each soul has only a limited number of lifetimes in which to become activated before she withers away and dies. When the soul is lost like this, one's individuality is erased and its essence of I am dissolves back into the source of creation. It is not a punishment; it is as if one never existed. Unless our sense of me solidifies through the birth of I am, our continuance within the whole can never be absolutely guaranteed; if we perpetually resist the realization of our evolutionary purpose and blueprint, we may eventually cease to exist.

The soul can enter our conscious reality only when activated. That she is 'active' does not signify that she is awakened, but that she exists in an intermediate condition. She has not yet become herself, but has moved out of her dormancy and now can develop a living relationship with the personality. Present on a subtle level beneath our ordinary sense of me as the inner call, she begins to communicate with our ego identity in order to align our superficial consciousness with the truth of I am. The soul guides our personal intelligence towards awakening through the media of intuition, feeling and inner knowing.

### **The Wisdom of the Soul**

The wisdom of the soul is not of the mind, founded on her evolutionary instincts and spiritual sensitivity. Spiritual intuition resides beyond the conscious mind, deep in the recesses of our inner being. It is through this faculty of higher knowing that the soul can access the knowledge of her evolutionary blueprint encrypted in the memory of her timeless essence.

How can the soul unfold her destiny prior to her awakening? As we have already mentioned, an aspect of the soul never becomes a part of ignorance, but timelessly abides in the place of her origin. Endowed with the intrinsic knowledge of our blueprint, our essence bridges the un-awakened soul with her future realization. However, only when this knowledge is remembered and reflected in her human intelligence, and her spiritual intention and commitment to her evolution awakened, can the soul begin her inner journey in a conscious way.

Although the inability to clearly see one's destiny can be confusing, its very opacity can support the evolution of our intelligence by stimulating our quest for clarity. Those seekers unwilling to face this confusion often try to avoid the challenge of seeking their inimitable destiny by identifying with traditional visions of enlightenment. They blindly believe that the general blueprint of evolution outlined by their tradition of choice directly corresponds to their own unique destiny. Sometimes this identification is beneficial and in harmony with their soul's blueprint, but if they follow a path of evolution not well-aligned with their destiny, they can become disillusioned and stagnated; they risk their chance to realize their unique completion. However, if the seeker is sincere, the soul's wisdom will sooner or later steer her in the right direction. This wisdom will create the necessary circumstances in our lives to trigger our awakening, such as encounters with important books, teachings or masters. Seeing our life from the perspective of many cycles of incarnations, the wisdom of the soul always directs us towards the inevitable fulfillment of our evolutionary blueprint. The soul is like a river that sooner or later must reach the ocean. Such is the divine law.

### **To Have a Soul or to Be the Soul**

To be inspired and led by the soul's wisdom does not mean that one *is* the soul. Unless one becomes the soul and the soul becomes oneself, our conscious intelligence remains existentially split from our fundamental identity. When the soul is active, one can be said to have a soul, but only when the soul is awakened does one become the soul. To have a soul means that although our sense of me is still based on the mind, our higher being communicates its presence through the layers of our personality. To be the soul means that we have actualized our higher identity and our conscious mind has become the intelligence of our eternal self.

In the plane of ignorance, the soul is not an actual entity, but merely the blueprint of our potential, the embryo of our ultimate self. Until realized, the soul cannot become



our conscious reality. Only through her awakening does the soul become whole and replace our artificial sense of me with the higher consciousness of I am.

### **Karma and Blueprint**

'Blueprint' should not be confused with fate, or karma. In the truth of our blueprint there always exists room for free will and the creativity of our intelligence; our destiny is not as fixed as we might think. In fact, it must be actualized through our conscious cooperation and effort. Karma and blueprint are related, but not the same. Blueprint is the plan of the soul's destiny; karma is the relative material that the soul uses for the realization of her blueprint.

Karma connotes the law of cause and effect that rules the dimension of time. It is created by our thoughts and actions, tied to external circumstances and the influence of the collective karma. Karma can be positive, negative or neutral - it supports, impedes or has no significant effect on our evolution. As part of the time-space dimension, its influence cannot be bypassed until the soul reaches liberation. After transcendence, the law of karma still affects the human, but no longer binds the soul.

If we have a positive karmic connection to a particular tradition of enlightenment or a specific spiritual guide, the soul will apply this association to her growth. But if we continue to be pulled by a karmic connection no longer beneficial - for instance by an attraction to a teacher who cannot help us - it is a case of negative karma. Positive karma aligns us with the blueprint of our evolution and helps us reach our evolutionary goals without having to face unnecessary obstacles. Positive karma can be understood as a force of purpose that links our existence on earth with the evolutionary intent of our blueprint. Negative karma ties us to all the tendencies generated by our past actions that pull us down towards our lower nature and unconsciousness.

Karma is not a fixed law of justice and causality that determines the course of our life or governs our future in an absolute sense. Its effect depends largely on the level of our consciousness. The more unconscious we are, the more we are conditioned by the karmic construct of our internal and external realities. As we grow more conscious, purify our intention and awaken our soul, an ever-widening space is created for our intelligence to operate within our karmic reality - we can gradually transform the negative karma that blocks our expansion into the light. The matrix of karma does not exist as external to self: it is the intrinsic make-up of our subconscious reality that conditions our desires, perception and level of intelligence. Thus, to positively alter our karmic reality, we must transform and purify our own mind.

### **The Goal of Wholeness**

The presence of existential suffering and discontent naturally indicate the incompleteness of the soul - it is this sense of deep lack and dissatisfaction that motivates us to grow and evolve. For the soul, a lack of wholeness *is* suffering. Suffering can be viewed as a condition of existential insufficiency that reflects the magnitude of the gap between our ignorant and awakened self.

Each soul is destined to become whole in her own unique way. However, although the final character of wholeness varies from one soul to another, it is nonetheless founded on the same universal qualities: human completion, abidance beyond the mind, soul-realization, transcendence and unity with the divine. To become whole is to reach complete autonomy from the external reality and be a light unto oneself - it is to be one with the divine excellence of being and love. To embody the goal of wholeness is to be an immaculate microcosm of universal perfection.

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## Realm of the Human

Although most human beings experience their consciousness as a distinct and autonomous reality, from a higher standpoint, it is only a relative and temporary expression of the soul on the earth plane. Depending on the level of our spiritual evolution, our human identity either affirms the shadow of its false sense of independence or supports the realization of its ultimate purpose, its surrender to the soul. However, before the human can initiate the process of its own awakening and dissolution, he must reach a level of completion within his earthly existence. Only from a place of relative completion and maturity can we realize that our human life is not an abiding reality, but a transitory stage in our eternal growth towards higher consciousness and transcendence from the earth.

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## The Human Personality

The drama of our evolution begins when the soul enters the plane of time, takes the human form, and forgets her eternal essence. The soul does need the medium of the human in order to enter physical reality, but the moment she becomes limited to her human consciousness, she is sucked down into the dimension of ignorance. The equivocal nature of the human is that he both obscures the soul's essence and serves as the apparatus through which she awakens.

The human self cannot be separated from the complex structure of its personality and mind; it has no stable identity in itself. Although the human is an expression of the soul and the vehicle through which she evolves on earth, prior to her awakening she lies dormant. In his ignorance and alienation from the soul, the human remains alone, as if abandoned to live exclusively in the realm of ego. Before the soul can awaken, the human must awaken. Only by realizing the true purpose behind our creation from within our human existence can we return to the root of the soul.

Human life has two aims: completion within the personal dimension and the awakening of the soul. The need for personal completion is complementary to the soul's blueprint - it is necessary to fulfill her earthly destiny. The soul's evolution begins within the framework of her human personality and runs parallel to her human awakening. Through human longing, the soul awakens; through human completion the soul is freed; through human surrender, the soul transcends the earth.

### The Structure of the Personal Self

Our human nature is very complex, because it reflects the complexity of the world around us and the mind that perceives it. Bound by a compulsive need for physical and psychological security, and threatened by a fear of our own extinction, we are forced into incessant interaction with the external environment in order to ensure our survival. We are programmed by an overpowering desire to prolong our own

existence, at any cost. We experience the seemingly external world through our sensory gates, feelings and thoughts. Living in the realm of separation, we only can categorize our experiences in terms of polarities - positive and negative, attraction and repulsion, pleasure and pain, calm and agitation, love and hate. Because it is our human nature to instinctively pursue happiness and contentment, we desire experiences that our body-mind organism translates as positive and feel aversion to all that is disturbing and negative.

The physical, mental and emotional bodies are the outer shells of the soul, and represent the human personality. While we remain in an ignorant state, these bodies have a relatively autonomous existence, as they operate without any conscious connection to the soul. The human personality is actually a microcosm of the collective mind channeled through an individual stream of experience and memory. The psyche of a human contains the sum total of countless impressions, tendencies, associations and memories, a hologram of personal identity. Since he does not possess I am, the human borrows his sense of identity from the soul to create a unified sense of self from this scattered flow of psychological elements. This reflection of I am in the mind we translate as our sense of me, or ego. Although the human's existence is devoid of any real substance as long as he is unawakened to the soul, there is still a definite wisdom, continuity and purposefulness in his psychological existence. Our countless incarnations are linked together by the thread of evolutionary continuance.

### **Living in the World**

The primary orientations of personality are the search for security and exploration of the outer world. The three bodies of personality - physical, emotional and mental - are conditioned to seek satisfaction through their interaction with the world. The physical body seeks pleasure, comfort and fulfillment through the medium of the senses. The emotional body seeks gratification through affection, love, attention, acceptance, and recognition. The mental body derives pleasure through the accumulation of knowledge and understanding, and by growing in intelligence. These three bodies are fully intertwined, each affecting the performance of the other. Beautiful music or stunning scenery experienced through the sensory gates of the physical body, create excitement and pleasure in the emotional body, and register as a thought in the mental body. The mind and emotions can never be fully separated; what we feel and what we think are always interconnected. Some humans live more through their emotions; others, more through the mind - but all of them feel what they think and think what they feel.

That which fuels our actions in the world is the force of desire. We live because we desire to live. We have been drawn to the earth because this is where we hope to fulfill our countless desires. The inability to reach satisfaction in this reality is caused by the illusory nature of these desires, which promise so much, yet rarely bring fulfillment. Some desires are perfectly natural, and in accordance with our growth,

but most are generated by the greed of the mind and its perpetual state of dissatisfaction. The force of desire should not rule us blindly, for what we desire, we shall become. To live intelligently, we need to understand the nature of our desires and their possible outcomes. A human being should channel the energy of desire with discrimination, and in harmony with the deeper wisdom and purpose of evolution.

### **The Complexity of the Human Being**

Human beings are too conscious to live in silence and too unconscious to transcend the mind. The human race is not able to handle the amount of self-consciousness originally allotted to it by evolution. Most species on earth have only enough consciousness to serve their earthly survival, but humans have become unnaturally disconnected from both the wisdom of the earth and the higher purpose of their evolution. Our spirit simply cannot catch up with the disproportionate development of our brain. By developing the mind, but remaining disconnected from our spiritual essence, we are at great risk of misusing our mental power, for selfish and exploitive purposes, and destroying our environment and ourselves in the process. Our intelligence is a gift that allows us to function efficiently in the world, but with this gift comes great responsibility. The intelligence of the mind has to be transformed so that its power will serve our spiritual evolution, expanding beyond our territorial instincts and primal need for survival.

Our psychological wellbeing is based on a delicate balance between the movement of thinking and the stillness of silence. The moment thinking overrides silence, our consciousness becomes unnaturally agitated and the resulting friction creates various states of neurosis and depression. The overactive mind undermines our basic sanity, the sanity of silence. Humans are too unconscious to intelligently use their consciousness; their mind is too heavy a burden. The human being is the only creature that suffers because of his own mind. No wonder there is so much suffering around us. The only way to transcend this fundamental disturbance is to become more conscious, transform the mind, and gain a deeper spiritual perspective.

### **The Art of Living**

The chief characteristic of human existence is a discord between our natural desire to reach peace, harmony and love and our inability to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of their fulfillment. One of the solutions that various spiritual traditions offer to resolve this discord is the renunciation of the world. Relative renunciation is a valid option, but only for those who are comparatively mature, both in their spiritual and worldly existence. We enter the earth-plane not only to transcend it, but also to experience it fully. Although no true satisfaction can be found in the realm of illusion, to seek happiness is an integral part of our human life. To renounce and withdraw completely from the world is not the way, since we have

chosen to be here and in any case cannot escape. To exist as a human personality is a challenge that we must face from a place of wisdom, clarity, humility and acceptance. If we do not pass through certain experiences and embrace the lessons they teach us, we will never become whole. Living in the world, we need to grow on two levels, psychological and spiritual. To master the art of living we must learn how to participate fully in human life while maintaining a relaxed detachment from the world, and growing inwardly into the realm of the self.

### **Free Will**

Thinkers have long engaged in academic discussions over the question of free will. However, the existence of free will cannot be affirmed through linear logic or philosophical argument. Only by going beyond the mind and getting in touch with the deeper layers of our consciousness can we discover the power of free will inherent to our spirit and intelligence.

Beyond the question of the presence or absence of free will lies the far more important issue of its accessibility. The ability to access free will and its potency are determined by the level of one's evolution. Because most humans remain locked in the subconscious realm, which is completely conditioned and determined, they are cut off from the power of free will. Free will is a characteristic of higher intelligence and cannot operate within the mechanical mind. It requires a level of awakening; it cannot function in the state of forgetfulness. The more we become conscious and free from our false personality, the more our will is freed from the confines of the lower intelligence. As free will can only operate when it refers to pure subjectivity, it cannot fully emerge until the soul awakens. Only when we are in touch with the light of I am and connected to the soul's purpose can we begin to mature into the ability to access a will that is free from the determination of reactive consciousness.

The fact that we can exercise free will does not mean that we are free to do anything we please. It is not the ego that is free, but our consciousness of unity. There is no free will within the bounds of ego-consciousness, because the ego is too primitive to be in touch with real will. The ego merely imagines that it has the freedom to choose, while in truth all of its choices are karmic in origin, pre-determined by basic laws of cause and effect and subconscious tendencies. Our free will is an expression of the soul, our higher being, and operates in absolute consonance with the infinite will of the divine.

Free will signifies our intelligent cooperation with the evolutionary movement and wisdom of the universal whole. Having slept through countless incarnations in a repetitive cycle of unconscious living, we must finally empower the free will of our intelligence and unite it with the higher purpose of our awakening and completion. It is from the place of free will that we begin to serve true wisdom and our highest good and initiate the process of growing into the light of the self.







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## Purification and Healing

The human personality is rooted in the past, a product of the totality of its history. Its unconscious mind is a storehouse of infinite impressions, memories and associations that projects the hologram of the personal self. Just as the soul evolves along a trajectory from the now into the future, the personality flows from the past into the present. However, when the personality is locked in the past, it cannot move into the present - it can only circulate within the prison of its own history. That which blocks the positive movement of personality is the presence of negative impressions, emotional wounds, energetic blocks and psychological dysfunction. For most human beings, it is essential to go through the processes of cleansing and healing in order to come closer to the experience of love, joy and peace. Even without spiritual awakening, the personality has the potential in itself to reach a certain degree of limited balance and harmony.

Awakening represents a positive movement towards a higher state of being and understanding, and purification, the liberating cleansing of the mind. The processes of purification and healing are indivisible from our evolution. They can be initiated either prior to or after our spiritual awakening. For a person who has not yet entered the inner path, purification and healing occur only within the sphere of personality. But for someone who has reached a level of inner awakening, purification and healing take place, although still associated with personality, within the realm of the soul and point to her freedom from the human self. It is essential to understand that even with inner awakening, expansion beyond the mind is not sufficient to reach complete emancipation. Unless the mind has become pure and the heart is healed, the burdens of our past will not allow the soul to achieve true freedom.

### The Weight of the Past

The past manifests in our present as the force that shapes our thoughts, emotions and perceptions. This is perfectly natural, because without the past there can be no present for a human being. The inheritance of the past is a benediction for which we

should be grateful. Though having the identity of our unchanging essence, we are the result of the collective and individual unfoldment of time as dynamic beings who are endlessly engaged in the process of becoming. Though true, the concept of freedom from the past should not be viewed in a simplistic way, for the evolution of intelligence is rooted in all its past stages of progressive understanding. Our present is created not only by our individual past, but by the past of the whole of humanity and all other species inhabiting the planet. We are all interconnected. Thinking that one can and should entirely disconnect from the past is a fallacy in understanding. The past should not be rejected, but outgrown and transcended, so that the power of the now can fully manifest the truth of the present.

Freedom from the past on the personal level refers mainly to those elements of our past that are not aligned with our present - all that pulls us away from the now with the dead weight of its limited ideas, conditioned behaviors, negative emotions and memories. Everyone carries a heavy load from the past that can be neither easily dropped nor transmuted into the present. Only by awakening the soul can one initiate the process of releasing oneself from this heavy yoke, and dissolve all that stands in the way of the creativity, wisdom and freedom of the now.

### **Subconscious Tendencies**

All of our past impressions as well as the information of our past actions, thoughts and emotional responses, are permanently stored beneath the level of the conscious mind - in the unconscious. The subconscious mind is like a computer that processes all the material that enters our consciousness from the unconscious in order to protect our delicate inner balance and sanity. However, the subconscious mind is not able to process all the incoming negative experiences and thought forms to such a full extent that they are transformed and healed. Over time, these countless unresolved thoughts, emotions and impressions form energetic nodes that lock parts of our psyche in the negative past. This is the usual origin of psychological difficulties, neurotic and depressive tendencies, and even mental illness.

There are numerous subconscious tendencies that rule our personal life, mostly by-products of the frustrating struggle for physical and psychological survival in the conflicting circumstances of human life. These tendencies are based either on an imbalance in our relationship with either the world or our own self. Some of the most deep-seated subconscious tendencies are fear, anger, attachment, greed, envy, pride, egoism, self-centeredness, arrogance, self-pity, insecurity, lacking a sense of self-worth, and feeling oneself inferior, a victim or powerless.

Our conscious mind is only a surface of our reality. Before we become conscious of what we think or feel, it has already been processed in the subconscious. Most humans live in the illusion of having free choice, while in fact how they think, feel and behave is only a mechanical outcome of their conditioned past. It is actually not the

conscious mind, but the subconscious mind that makes choices for them. The conscious mind just tries to organize and make sense of what the subconscious has already processed. Usually we do not pay attention to how the subconscious mind manifests in our consciousness, but by using a very sensitive type of mindfulness we can get in touch with this subtle area. We can become aware of various patterns, conditioned responses and habitual tendencies that program our behavior. Since it is the subconscious mind that rules the life of the personality, we must bring more consciousness and understanding into the subconscious in order to understand how it operates and affects us.

For most humans, ego only represents the self-conscious aspect of the mind theoretically. Their 'conscious' mind operates at such a low frequency that it would more accurately to describe it as subconscious. To be truly conscious, we must cultivate a quality of intelligence that can overrule the mechanical mind. Such intelligence functions in a clear space of mindfulness and silence, rooted in an awareness independent from the coming and going of thoughts and mental impressions.

### **Working with the Subconscious Mind**

Work with the subconscious can only begin under the condition that we first become conscious and present to our true self. Prior to the awakening of consciousness, we are in fact impotent to deal constructively with our subconscious reality, for we are locked in the mind without any integral identity upon which we could possibly base the inner work. No space exists in the subconscious reality for intelligence to counteract the automatic and unconscious functioning of the mind.

To be conscious is not just to acquire psychological insight, but to awaken a degree of presence and intelligence of I am. Most therapies are fundamentally unproductive, because they operate solely within a psychological framework; they do not connect to the fundamental power of the soul. The term soul, as generally applied in alternative therapeutic environments, does not even remotely refer to the essence of I am, but is understood to mean a kind of positive and heart-felt ego. The ego certainly can have some understanding about the workings of its mind, but cannot transform it, being itself an expression of subconscious reality.

A human being has countless subconscious inclinations that disturb his peace and ability to function in a positive way. We call those subconscious tendencies negative that are not in accord with the natural criteria of peace, kindness, and harmony essential to our well-being. The moment we experience a negative emotion, we are disturbed - the heartbeat quickens, breathing becomes irregular, and we grow nervous, irritated, apprehensive and tense. On the contrary, positive thoughts and emotions in accord with the soul and our natural state of goodness expand the heart and increase our light.

Any work with the subconscious and mechanical mind must be rooted in meditation and abidance in the inner state. It is otherwise impossible to break through these dense layers. The mind cannot be transformed by the mind, only by the one who exists beyond it. Our aspiration to transform the mind must be founded upon the awakening to the essence of our pure subjectivity.

We can divide the work with the subconscious into three basic stages: first, we must go beyond the mind by awakening pure awareness and the inner state; next, we embrace and transform the mind from the position of the soul; and finally, we surrender the purified mind so it can merge with our higher self.

It is not our intention to delve too deeply into the psychological intricacies of the mind, but rather to portray a general picture of the essential work on the subconscious. The following nine steps represent the basic process we teach of how to relate to and transform the mind. This model as a whole is relevant only for those who have the potential to awaken awareness. For others, practice should initially be limited to the work with mindfulness and non-identification.

1. awakening to I am
2. non-identification with mind
3. awareness of mind
4. awareness of emotions
5. acceptance
6. understanding
7. embracing negativity
8. intention to change
9. surrender

**Awakening to I am:** Since we cannot effectively work with the mind unless we are able to step out of it, we must first awaken to our real center. In order for this awakening to occur, one need not be concerned yet with the transformation or pacification of the mind. Such is the liberating power of self-knowledge and sudden awakening. The mind, with all its countless problems can indeed be bypassed through the internalization of consciousness. Through the awakening to I am, one can move to a place within oneself that is unaffected by the coming and going of thoughts. The I am referred to here primarily relates to pure awareness, although in a larger sense, it connotes the entire inner state and the soul.

**Non-identification with mind:** Although after the awakening of I am one can dwell in a reality beyond the mind, the bonds of our identification with the mind still have to be severed. Due to our inherent tendencies, the mind has many different ways to attract our attention and keep us confined to its territory. This explains the confusion of many seekers who cannot understand why in spite of their initial awakening they remain so strongly identified with their mental self. This situation is natural, however,

because regardless of whether one is awakened or not, the mind is an integral part of our multidimensional reality. The mind does not exist in opposition to our true self. Creating distance from the mind is just a necessary intervention that makes the process of regaining our true autonomy possible. By exercising non-identification with the mind, we learn how to regain control over our compulsive attraction to thoughts. Non-identification allows us to transcend the split between the freedom of I am and our defenselessness against the pull of the subconscious, thus empowering the soul's independence from the mind.

**Awareness of Mind:** Some traditions of enlightenment consider non-identification and the surrender of the mind to be the ultimate means of liberation. But on the path of wholeness, which addresses the transformation of the human personality, the mind is not renounced but embraced and transformed. Although through non-identification we can completely move away from the mind, the negativity of the mind remains unresolved. Therefore, the work that follows non-identification begins the movement of returning back towards the mind in order to face its reality directly. To pretend that the mind does not exist, or has nothing to do with our essence is not an intelligent response to the mind's negativity.

Awareness of mind is a directionless seeing of arising thoughts. We do not judge the mind's content, nor attempt to analyze or understand it. We simply watch the mind with a choiceless yet attentive awareness. This phase of our work is a transition between disidentification and understanding that is essential to bring more consciousness into the mind and develop the quality of detached observation. Through practicing awareness of mind we learn how to maintain distance from thought while gradually beginning to understand the nature of our mental reality.

**Awareness of Emotions:** Many meditators experience that it is much easier to take a distance from one's mind than feelings. This is natural, for every human being is more identified with emotions than thoughts. Thoughts, unless linked with feelings, are emotionally neutral and therefore easier to observe. Since our experience of reality is primarily based on feelings, the emotional body is existentially much closer to us than the mind.

Practicing awareness of emotions is similar to practicing awareness of mind. However, in awareness of emotions one has to be more sensitive, and often more firm, in order to maintain a space of non-identification. What makes the work with emotions more difficult is the fact that to be aware of them does not always make them disappear. A thought cannot sustain itself longer than a moment if we do not fuel it with our attention. But deep emotions, such as sadness, have a continuity independent from our conscious involvement. Emotions are present on the energetic level and, unless shallow, cannot be dissolved through observation; mindfulness of emotions does not eliminate them. In our practice, we should maintain a calm, uninvolved consciousness within the presence of emotions. At times, deep breathing combined with surrender to the inner state can discharge and relax disturbing

emotions. The purpose of this practice is to create a space within which the weight of our being can become much more pronounced than the emotional body, thereby superseding our habitual identification with arising emotions.

**Acceptance:** The next step in our work with the mind is acceptance. In this practice we begin to see the mind as it is without any particular desire to change it. We do not take the mind too seriously, but relate to it with gentleness and a sense of curiosity. We let the mind be as it is, and in this act we relax. The moment we relax, the grip of the mind loosens, because without our involvement it has no one to control.

One of the pitfalls in the work with the mind is aiming for perfection. In a misguided attempt to improve ourselves to the point of attaining a perfect personality, we fall into over-seriousness. Psychological sanity is not based on having a flawless mind, but on being at ease with its imperfections. In truth, the mind can never reach perfection. What it can achieve is harmony, purity and wisdom. In the act of accepting the mind, we actually transform a large portion of its unconscious energy into an open space of well-being. Acceptance is not psychological abnegation or indifference. It is a profound affirmation of the mind as an indivisible part of who we are.

**Embracing Negativity:** The acceptance we apply to deal with negativity is characterized by the absence of struggle, allowing the mind to be just as it is. It is crucial at this point, however, to relate to the negative side of the mind from a more positive place. The mind has to be seen as a part of our existence that needs not only to be accepted, but embraced with love and forgiveness. It is not an enemy, but an aspect of our identity that has been corrupted by the dust of negative impressions gathered along the journey through time. We tend to accept the mind horizontally as something existing in front of the observer, but to embrace the mind is to see it as contained within the soul's body. By embracing the mind with the light of I am one creates an environment of non-violent transformation and healing.

**Understanding:** Having embraced the mind, the next positive movement towards the mind is the attempt to understand it. Understanding the mind is a prerequisite for changing it, because we cannot master what we do not understand. Furthermore, that which we do not understand will naturally rule us. For example, if we do not recognize that the root of our envy is our own sense of deficiency, there is no real way to transform it. The role of understanding is to illuminate the mind with a non-judgmental consciousness that sees through and beyond the causal motives that form our thoughts and subconscious tendencies.

By 'understanding' the mind, we do not suggest an excessive psychological approach. Neither do we advocate being overly self-analytical and introspective. We can easily get even more confused becoming too involved in the complexities of the mind. The mind is like a mire of plants, trees and roots - the further in we go, the

more difficult to find the way out. However, a gentle yet penetrating understanding is essential to gain clarity about the nature of the mind, its mechanisms and the psychological roots of our thoughts and emotions.

**Intention to Change:** The intention to change is the next step in transforming the negative tendencies of the mind. Non-identification and awareness of the mind, accepting and embracing its negativity, and seeking to understand the mind, are all strategies that gradually saturate it with the higher consciousness of the soul. Upon this foundation we can finally begin to align the mind with the soul's intelligence. It is our deep intention to change that is the ground of our real transformation.

Most often we cannot do anything about our disturbing state of mind. When all other relative means prove insufficient, we find our deepest power in the strength of our intention. The intention to change is not merely an honorable wish, but an act by which we can actually alter the past. It is not merely an intellectual gesture we make while moving on with 'the rest of our lives' - it is the continuously reinstated intent of our intelligence. The unyielding intention to change that which no longer serves us clears away the inertia of the past and opens the way to inner freedom.

**Surrender:** Transcendence of the mind does not occur through negation, control or repression, but through transformation and surrender. Only a mind that has reached a high level of maturity, wisdom and purity can be renounced. Surrender of the mind, unlike non-identification, is a vertical release that signifies our true absorption in reality. It is the final stage in the intricate process of moving beyond the mind.

### **Cutting Through the Ego-image**

We often speak about an awakened ego as the illumination of our relative consciousness. Within its limitations, the ego can indeed attain a significant degree of wisdom, humility and light. Regrettably, however, in this plane of unconsciousness, the ego of most humans remains insensitive, unintelligent, arrogant and extremely greedy. It is by its nature insincere because its existence is not founded upon the purity of our higher being. Only an ego that submits itself to the higher wisdom and purpose of the soul can reflect the principle of sincerity. Cutting through the lower tendencies of the ego is an essential part of the spiritual path and a critical step in the process of our purification.

The core of all negative ego tendencies is a compulsive attachment to one's own image based on obsessive self-concern and a total fixation on how one is seen by others. Suffering a permanent inferiority complex, the ego constantly checks itself and fashions its performance for the eyes of other people to try to assure its self-worth. The less it trusts itself, the more it tries to prove its own importance.

As we have already pointed out, the fixation with the ego-image can slink into even



high levels of spiritual realization. An example is a seeker who competes with others on the path to surpass their states of attainment; he feeds his pride and craving for recognition from his spiritual environment rather than nourishing his inner self. The way the ego operates is truly embarrassing. Its exceedingly immature inclinations are so deeply rooted in the human psyche that their removal presents a lifetime challenge.

To appropriately deal with the addiction to one's ego-image, one must apply discriminative wisdom and bring real understanding into the workings of the mind. Without humility, honesty and purity, one cannot drop egomania. Going beyond the ego-image is primarily a function of our spiritual awakening, and indeed a flowering of true understanding.

### **The Purification of the Mind**

Although our lower tendencies are undeniably the cause of our suffering and ignorance, not all negative reactions - for instance, justified anger or fear - are expressions of an impure mind. Many such automatic emotional responses are in fact perfectly natural. One cannot actually function in the complex reality of the earth-plane without 'negative' emotions, for they very often safeguard our survival and reflect the need of the moment. However, negative emotions that originate from our lower nature and express our basic impurity do not serve the necessity of the now, as they are entirely conditioned by our past ignorance. Unless we purify the mind, we will never reach human wholeness or become ready to merge with our higher being. We must be freed from the burdens of the past in order to achieve a new expansion and awaken the soul.

How does the mind become cleansed? Because of its unknown nature, purification is often believed to be a function of grace. This is true, provided we take grace to be a natural law of evolution, rather than a miraculous event. Purification is a natural occurrence - fully in accordance with our evolutionary timing, karma, destiny and blueprint. Grace is eternally present in the heart of the soul, progressively manifesting as we mature to the point of transformation. As the amount of light increases in our being, all that is not of the light gradually dissolves. Darkness is a form of lower intelligence that represents the denial of love and truth. Since darkness is the sheer absence of light, it cannot withstand the luminosity of the self.

The most critical condition for purification is our cooperation, which we have already elaborated upon in the section on the subconscious mind. However, even this cooperative work cannot result in complete purification; it is more a preparation for higher energies and consciousness to enter our being. Purification cannot be achieved through personal effort alone. All efforts to purify oneself come from the conscious mind, which cannot enter the unconscious where impurities are stored. The conscious mind can only be aware of, and respond to, what manifest from the



subconscious; it cannot access the immeasurable amount of information, impressions and energies that constitute the very material of our unconscious.

Purification is a natural by-product of our evolution that occurs when the soul is ready to drop all her subconscious burdens. What most supports our cleansing is having an open heart that can bridge the human psyche with the plane of the soul and serve as a portal to the grace of the divine. Since our unconscious has been formed by our countless previous births, only higher intelligence, the aspect of universal consciousness that links our evolutionary now with our future self, can transmute the totality of our past. The force of universal intelligence, based on the wisdom and grace of the creator, naturally responds to the sincerity of our intention to seek purity and freedom, manifesting the necessary assistance.

### **Healing the Heart**

Healing is an aspect of purification. While cleansing refers more to the mind, healing is experienced solely in the heart. Over the course of the infinite past, we have all accumulated an enormous burden of suffering and traumatic experiences that manifest as emotional wounds in our subtle bodies. Because life on earth is an existential struggle on all levels, the experience of emotional hurt is universal. However, it is not the experience of pain itself, but our inability to heal and transform it that scars us emotionally.

Instead of learning from our lessons, we falsely presume that we are a victim of circumstance or blame the merciless nature of life for our misery. When we feel that we have been treated unfairly by others we respond with self-pity and resentment. The experience of being hurt renders us fearful, vulnerable and helpless. Our healthy relationship with ourselves is compromised and we close down our positive perception of life. We develop anger, animosity, distrust and bitterness towards the world and others, and damage our primal connection with the reality of love, tenderness, beauty and openness.

Because unhealed emotions stand in the way of our positive expansion, it is essential to let go of past wounds and courageously face our unresolved issues. In so far as possible, we need to bring all that blocks our positive experience of life to the threshold of the conscious mind. To do this, we must be introspective, conscious and sensitive. When we become more aware of what needs to be healed, we can consciously initiate healing in the heart. The function of the mind is only to recognize what needs to be healed and direct our awareness to these areas. Ultimately, the heart heals itself. Its incredible capacity for self-healing is activated the moment we embrace the denied aspects of our past self with the light of love, consciousness and understanding.

### **Spiritual Awakening: The Foundation for Transformation**

As we have made clear in our discussion of the subconscious mind, the transformation of personality cannot be achieved through psychological means alone. Therapeutic models can help us to become conscious of what needs to be changed, but do not actually enable us to make any changes. On the whole, psychological therapies are based on the illusory assumption that by manipulating the subconscious or becoming more conscious of the unconscious we can be transformed. They fail, because they give too much power to the past. By overemphasizing our personal history, they perpetuate our dependence on the past rather than freeing us from it. For example, by delving too deeply into childhood issues we can actually reactivate memories no longer relevant to our present identity. If we put too much energy into the past, we resurrect it, and end up making it stronger and more real than the present.

It is certainly important to address past issues, but only productive if we are empowered by the now. The true strength and autonomy we derive from abiding in the inner state, enable us to face our inherent tendencies in a new way. We are indeed both dependent on the past and independent from it. Therapies believe in the former, traditions of enlightenment in the latter. Only by combining these two viewpoints can we gain a balanced perspective on human evolution. We must see that, by fusing our expansion into the realm beyond the mind with psychological work, we create the necessary holistic base for our growth into awakening and completion.

Spiritual awakening is the foundation of psychological transformation. Unless we are grounded in the self, we cannot purify and alter the negative inclinations of the mind. Only by positioning ourselves beyond the mind can we transform it. Awakening to the soul immensely empowers our ability to face our psychological existence by enabling us to work through psychological patterns from a space of wisdom, clarity and understanding. A person who does not have presence is not just experiencing the mind - he is the mind. Unless we master our consciousness and break free from the mechanical mind, we will never find peace. Only a silent mind can be transformed, and the mind is never silent unless it identifies the soul as the host. To be present to one's true self is the foundation of transformation.

The deeper we enter the realm of awakening, the more power we generate for the transformation of our personality. It is indeed the supremacy of the inner self that governs transformation. The light of the soul gradually envelops the shadow of personality, gradually transmuting and merging it into her wholeness. The same energy that created the mind eventually returns to the integral consciousness of our original I am.

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## Human and the Soul

Our soul can enter the earth only through the human form and can remember who she is only within the context of human consciousness. The dormant soul needs the human to realize herself, but the moment she awakens she is faced with the fundamental discord between her human nature and her eternal essence. The human is of the past, she is of the now and the future. Even after soul-awakening, the human remains entrenched in the subconscious realm, tied to the dimension of forgetfulness. Due to his basic ignorance, he cannot merge with the soul and embrace her as his higher existence. In order to become whole, the soul not only must awaken to herself, but also absorb her human personality into her own consciousness. Only when the human has arrived at the essential degree of maturity, purity and understanding can he be aligned with the soul and ready to surrender.

### Human Purity and the Soul

The human can never reach the transparent purity of the soul, as it is not in the nature of personality to embody perfection. On some level, the personality must reflect the imperfections of the time dimension to which it is subject. For this reason, sages of the past who wished to bypass the imperfect quality of personality renounced both the mind and the world. If we choose to live in the world, however, we must accept that perfect harmony can never be attained on the human level; at most we can achieve a minimum of discord and a maximum of peace and purity. To become pure and real, a human must come as close as he possibly can to the soul. When the process of purification is complete, the relationship between the human and the soul reaches its optimum transparency and the true destiny of the human is realized - to reflect and serve the soul on earth.

### Surrender to the Soul

It is our destiny that upon completion our human aspect must surrender to the soul. From the point of this surrender onwards, it is no longer the human, but the soul who is 'in charge' of living on earth. The human personality moves from its false center to the periphery of the soul's existence, and true subjectivity is awakened. The human returns what he took from the soul many eons ago - the knowledge of I am - and gradually gives up all the identities he accumulated over the course of time.

We cannot realize the state of surrender without first undergoing a deep purification that enables our human aspect to fuse with the soul. From this union emerges the unified energy of a whole human being - one who has gone beyond personality, yet continues to expand on the inner plane as well as on earth.

### **Serving the Soul**

After his surrender, the role of the human is to yield to the transcendent will of the soul. He does not merely submit to a reality deeper than himself: he serves his own highest good, for the will of the soul is one with our supreme wisdom and the evolution of universal intelligence.

We serve the soul by supporting her expansion into light, not by constantly striving to reach higher spiritual goals. The soul has no goals, she has purpose: she exists to totally experience each now. The soul lives in emptiness, beyond the mind, her will merged with the will of the whole. Her existence is not based on psychological continuity, but on the wisdom of the now. Spontaneous inspiration coming from her higher being and the universal I am is the source of all her actions. She continuously evolves, not because she desires to consciously, but because it is her nature to grow. If the soul were to halt in her evolution she would delay the universal expansion of which she is an indivisible manifestation.

A human who has surrendered to the soul still has a personality and carries human memories, but does not have a crystallized sense of false identity. Unified in all aspects with his higher being, he is no longer human in an ordinary sense: his existence belongs to the soul. From the viewpoint of integral consciousness, only one being exists within us - the one who owns the knowledge of I am, the soul.

### **The Human Being**

At this moment we can perhaps begin to understand what it means to be a human being. As psychosomatic creatures restricted to ego-consciousness, most humans have neither soul nor being - they are body and mind alone. Just to be born human does not make one a *being*. A true person is an awakened soul actualized on the earth-plane as a human being.

We can see the complete human being both as a human who has surrendered to the

soul, and a soul who has transcended, embraced and integrated her human manifestation within herself. One does not become a human being merely by belonging to mankind. To become a human being, one must fulfill the noble goal of evolution - the awakening of the soul - our noble purpose for living in the dimension of forgetfulness.

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## Human Completion

In the holistic vision of enlightenment, human completion is integral. Transcendence without completion, though possible, does not lead to the realization of wholeness. On the path that advocates disidentification as its primary approach, the human can be dissolved prior to becoming whole. Holistic enlightenment, however, offers a higher realization, because it incorporates human completion as a new dimension within its expansion into the state of transcendence. In order to be truly whole, the soul needs to be able to express herself as a whole human being. The completion of the human makes this possible.

### Psychological Completion

Psychological completion is not just the work of one lifetime, but of countless incarnations. As most humans seem unable to assimilate their experiences in a constructive way, they must go through the same life-lessons over and over again in order to reach maturity and understanding. This unconscious repetition of our lessons is the very essence of the dimension of forgetfulness. Lower intelligence feeds on this evolutionary stagnation - our spiritual progress threatens its very nature.

Most humans' concept of happiness and joy is highly unintelligent. Having no connection to their higher nature, they seek satisfaction and fulfillment in the impermanent, robotically following collective impulses. On our journey towards completion, we must break free from unconscious living. We must bring true wisdom into our perception of life by becoming conscious of our human nature and of what areas of our personality are still fragmented and incomplete. We also must learn from our experiences, and recognize what we still need to experience. In this way we assist the noble movement towards the very reason for our creation - the realization of light, truth and love. To be truly whole, we must arrive at a full experience of our human existence that consists of mental and emotional maturity, the fulfillment of our major desires and our completion in the world.

## **Fulfillment of Major Desires**

Because our unresolved desires cause us to enter the earth-dimension, their fulfillment is essential for our human completion. However, we cannot succeed in this mission if we remain the victim of our desires. We need to see that our relationship to the world is no more than a sophisticated web of countless desires that creates a hologram we mistakenly believe to be our life. Unless we gain a higher perspective, we will compulsively generate desires upon desires in an attempt to infuse meaning into our existence and become caught in a vicious cycle of existential unfulfillment.

Although desires are a natural force of life and their actualization often has a constructive purpose, they become destructive if we are ruled by them. We must be able to discern which desires steer us towards a more rich and meaningful life, and which burden us with a sense of disappointment, frustration and depression. Only those desires through which we can grow are real and relevant to our evolution. Because all others are created by the mind, they are intrinsically false and must be renounced.

We do not need to fulfill all desires, even if they are relevant and justified. We must primarily address the major, root desires that express the original cause of our birth in the body, for they bind us to the earth. Root-desires can be linked to many spheres of life, such as romantic fulfillment, family relationship, financial security, creativity, and spiritual and philosophical understanding. If we do not satisfy our root-desires, our karmic bonds will keep us chained to the plane of illusion.

Not all root-desires are necessarily based on the wisdom of the soul. Some are just obsessive fascinations that have crystallized in our subconscious mind. However, even these may need to be addressed in order to free our mind. For example, a person who is narcissistically fixated on public recognition will not be able to rest until he gains the admiration of others. Or a sexually repressed anchorite whose root-desire for physical communion is left unexpressed will be controlled by this desire and may stagnate on his path. Unless correctly diagnosed, desires become hooks of lower consciousness that keep us from advancing in our evolution.

## **Completion in the World**

The spiritual path should not be perceived as a way to escape from the world. The human in us has to become fulfilled through a total experience of life in order to reach completion. Many seekers are actually driven by their fear of life, not a deep longing for awakening. To succeed on the path, however, we need to be well-grounded in the world and free of fear. Otherwise, unresolved issues and subconscious anxieties may arise and block our internal evolution. Sages and masters of the past who renounced the world were not motivated by fear; they simply had no further need to evolve through earthly experiences. To renounce the world



from a positive place one must be confident and positively connected to the physical plane.

Our psychological completion is naturally tied to our participation in the world. Our interactions with the outer reality determine how we feel as a personality and naturally need to be integrated into our experience of self. In order to feel complete, we must embrace the world and move beyond any fear of facing the challenges of life. By developing a harmonious connection to the world we begin to experience it as a fundamentally positive place - a place where we can reach spiritual awakening and completion.

### **Ending of Karma**

For many lifetimes we have given away our power to desires that we have been unable to satisfy. These desires have grown roots in our subconscious, influencing our thoughts, emotions and actions, and disabling us from reaching true rest. Apart from allowing us to discharge our desires for the sake of growth and freedom, evolution offers another strategy to emancipate us from attachments: it finally confronts us with our inability to satisfy our infinite cravings and wants, and forces us to give them up. Life teaches us a natural humility by not allowing us to have everything we want. Through our disillusionment, we learn that to reach freedom we have no choice but to renounce all our false desires.

Our karmic roots bind us so deeply to the time-dimension that grace is required for our deliverance. Emancipation from karma is indeed a function of grace; it is the intervention of the beyond that cuts our final karmic ties. Divine intervention is in fact an intrinsic part of our blueprint planned since the beginning of time without which the soul never would transcend her bondage. However, grace does not enter our life at random, but in accordance with our readiness to let go of our separate existence and transcend the plane of lower intelligence.

### **The Human at Rest**

To reach completion is to arrive at a state of true existential repose. Upon completion, the human no longer creates a reality based on a personal agenda, but rests, free from the need to become something or someone other than self. When the human is at rest, the energy of desire, anxiety and boredom can no longer pull him away from his natural state of peace and harmony. He relaxes his existence into the presence of the soul, who reciprocates by enveloping him with the light of I am. The child is absorbed by his mother, and all separation between individual and universal dissolves into the immaculate. The one who began the journey of evolution at the beginning of time is not the one who ends it. The one who has been neither real nor unreal finally yields to his eternal essence.





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## The Realm of Understanding

From the heart of the creator is born the ground of existence being. From being manifests consciousness; from consciousness, intelligence; from intelligence, understanding; from understanding, pure knowing; from pure knowing, beyond knowing; from beyond knowing, the beyond itself.

Consciousness is the luminosity of being, intelligence is the brilliancy of consciousness, understanding is the radiance of intelligence. When understanding reaches its supreme flowering, pure knowing, it returns to the root of being. As this spiral cycle of creation continues, being again manifests consciousness, consciousness manifests intelligence, and intelligence gives rise to a new expansion of understanding before merging into the supreme state beyond knowing and not-knowing.

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## The Mind

The mind is an instrument of intelligence through which knowledge and understanding are acquired. It has no objective essence of its own, existing only as a subjective flux of impressions, associations and thoughts. A multidimensional organism of mental reality, the mind is linked to the soul through the sense of me. It is this essential quality that distinguishes our mind from artificial intelligence, for it connects it to the plane of pure subjectivity. Around the axle of me, the mind creates a coherent structure of identity we experience as the personal self, the matrix of psychological identity that defines us as human beings.

Initially, the mind developed as a tool for survival. However, through the evolution of intelligence, the functions of the mind have gradually extended into other spheres of reality, such as conceptual thinking and scientific understanding. Psychological processing that transcends the survival instinct has opened the doors to our conscious evolution, allowing the mind to expand and gradually awaken our spiritual intelligence. The highest endeavor of the mind is enquiry into the dimension of spirituality, as it initiates the actualization of its ultimate destiny - its own surrender.

### The World of the Mind

To understand the mind we have to engage this very mind. The ability of the human mind to observe and analyze its own activity is most extraordinary, indicating a highly evolved consciousness. Another remarkable quality of the human mind is that it does not rely solely on its individual capacity, but is capable of expanding through conceptual knowledge it gathers from the collective mind. The mind receives stimuli from the external world, processes the data in its internal world, and arrives at its own personal interpretations and conclusions. It is a sort of self-programming thinking system that enlarges its inherent capacity for learning through the process of its own education.

**The Unconscious Mind** : The mind is composed of many layers, but its ability to

think consciously manifests only on its surface. It is similar to an ocean, with waves visible on the surface, but infinite depth hidden in darkness beneath. The foundation of the mind is the unconscious, the storehouse of all the memories and impressions we have gathered from our present and countless past lives. Our human intelligence actually could not function without the unconscious mind, for it is the inner ground of reality from which the conscious mind arises. Thus we can see that unconsciousness is not the polar opposite of consciousness, but rather its ontological foundation.

The unconscious mind is individual, collective and universal. The individual unconscious relates to our personal history and past evolution. The sum total of the memories, knowledge and destiny of all humans and other species is contained in the collective unconscious. The universal unconscious is the existential root of the manifested universe - the original source of phenomenal reality.

**The Subconscious Mind:** The subconscious mind arises from the unconscious, like a misty dawn arising from the darkness of night. It is the link between the unconscious and the conscious mind - the subtle sphere of consciousness in which spontaneous thoughts, emotions and perceptions manifest prior to the conscious mind becoming aware of them. 'Subconscious' signifies a low frequency of consciousness that operates just above the unconscious level, and just below the conscious level. Unlike the unconscious, in the subconscious, a degree of cognition is active; semi-conscious experiencing and knowing are involved.

There is a hierarchy of cognition that reflects the ladder of consciousness. The highest degree of cognition is the knowledge I am, as it represents consciousness in its pure form. In the unconscious realm, cognition is zero. No one can actually experience the unconscious, because the knower is absent. The level of cognition inherent to the subconscious mind is between that of the unconscious and conscious realities. It is sufficient to produce a subconscious experiencer, but too weak to crystallize a clear sense of ego. We can see it clearly in a dream state in which the sense of me is present, but in too rudimentary a form to generate a lucid consciousness of its own. The lower the frequency and lucidity of me, the more subconscious its consciousness.

It is a common misperception that we experience the subconscious mind only while asleep or daydreaming. Most human beings actually live their whole lives in a subconscious state - their entire existence is a kind of daydream. Their sense of me cannot be truly conscious, for they are too busy frantically maintaining the insubstantial reality of the false personality to connect to their essence. In their ignorance, they mistake subconscious mental activity for the conscious use of mind, unaware that they are lost in a waking dream. Since the subconscious mind is the foundation of our perception of reality, we must understand its nature and inherent limitations in order to evolve towards higher consciousness.

**The Conscious Mind:** The conscious mind represents the stage in the development of consciousness in which thinking becomes self-conscious. It can be seen as a solidified ego that is able to focus thought processes in a clear and directed way. This ability to focalize attention and hold onto particular streams of thought is the characteristic that distinguishes the conscious from the subconscious mind. Being 'conscious' denotes a sense of presence and lucidity within a thought process. From a spiritual perspective, it is the conscious mind that performs self-enquiry and supports the process of awakening by serving as a link between lower consciousness and pure subjectivity.

### **The Mind and the Sense of Me**

The mind operates within objective reality, but serves its subjective host, for it cannot function without the presence of the one to whom it refers. Yet, the thinker is not the thinking. The vital question is: who is the thinker in separation from thinking? The thinker is the sense of me created by the mind that arises when the mind becomes self-conscious. In its essence, however, the thinker's sense of me lies deeper than the mind's self-consciousness; it points beyond thinking to the sense of I am. The thinker is not only a part of the mind, but also the bridge between the mind and I am. The thinker is in fact both this bridge and the one who crosses it. By first turning attention from thinking to the sense of me, and then from the sense of me to I am, the thinker can discover his true center.

How conscious we are directly reflects the strength of our sense of me. In the subconscious state, our sense of me is too feeble to become self-conscious. When we sleep or daydream, we cannot separate it from our fantasies at all - the identification is total. In contrast, in the conscious state, our sense of identity is crystallized to a significant degree. Our me can recognize itself clearly as a knower separate from the known, a thinker separate from the thought.

Within the conscious mind, me can only recognize itself as distinct in relation to the thought, not to its own essence. It can sense itself as separate from thinking, but depends on thoughts to reflect its existence back upon itself. An ignorant me is just a shadow of the mind - it feels that it exists because it thinks. No thought, no me. Conscious me, or ego, does not possess true subjectivity; its sense of self is only experienced through the medium of thought. The ego has no quality of being or existence of its own.

Unlike the ego, the soul does not require the mind to define her existence. The ego only borrows I am in order to create its own personal sense of me in the mind. The soul owns I am. The ego has to think in order to know that it exists. For the soul it is sufficient to be in order to know that she is, she knows herself directly through the light of presence, her pure subjectivity.

## **The Mind: Friend or Foe?**

Because the mind is generally seen as the primary cause of our ignorance, to transcend it is the ultimate aim of almost all traditions of enlightenment. While it is true that the mind is the source of our delusion, without it there would be no spiritual path and no enlightenment. We need the mind to both to understand and to move beyond it.

Although the mechanical and fragmented mind is the root of all of our suffering, it is not the mind itself, but how we use it, that is to blame. Whether the mind is our friend or foe depends on our level of consciousness. If we are unconscious, the mind is unconscious as well; if we are conscious, the mind becomes conscious. If we don't bring awareness into the mind, it is our worst enemy, a parasite that eats away at our spirit. The moment we instill it with the qualities of presence, clarity and wisdom, the same mind becomes our best ally.

Thinking does not necessarily stand in opposition to spiritual illumination - it can be a creative expression of our true nature. The notion that we need to transcend the mind is correct, but that transcendence cannot be actualized until the mind has become highly evolved. Until we are ready to surrender it, the mind remains a fundamental component of our identity and our quest. Our goal is not to negate, but to integrate the mind as an inherent part of our existence.

## **The Limits of the Mind**

The mind is a useful, but limited instrument for the exploration of reality. It can bring clarity to our path, but cannot grasp its essence, for it operates only within the confines of the past. It can carry us to the door of the now, but not through and beyond it. The only way for the mind to come closer to reality is for it to cease its unconscious movement and renounce itself. The spiritual terms used to describe this stilling of the mind are non-abidance, not-knowing, silence, presence and being.

Seekers often hope to gain spiritual security by gathering conceptual knowledge from various teachings, but theoretical understanding cannot bring us to the direct experience of reality. We can feed the mind all kind of spiritual ideas, but unless we go beyond the mind, we become entangled in those ideas. No amount of information can reveal the truth. The most sophisticated philosophies and mental constructs are like castles in the sand: no matter how impressive they appear, they are ultimately engulfed by the ocean of reality and dissolve to nothing. The mind can point to reality, but only the soul, free of thought, can cross its threshold and abide in it eternally.

## **The Illusory Nature of the Mind**

The mind has no substance. It appears to be, but is not. It arises, but has no being. It merely creates the illusion of solidity by enveloping us in a net of endless thoughts. Completely identified with the mind, we cannot tell the thinker from the thinking. Blinded by a dark cloud of mental reality, we do not see the real world; a veil of thoughts separates us from reality as it is. Instead of being, feeling and knowing, we constantly think, think about what we think about, and think about what *to* think about. We are locked in the never-ending interpreting, checking, comparing, and labeling commotion of the mind. The mind cannot rest, for it would cease to exist. It must constantly move in order to be.

We are prey to two false assumptions about the nature of the mind: that it has its own being apart from the arising of thoughts, and that it can capture the truth of reality. The mind is not an entity, and therefore has no identity. It is merely a mental flow devoid of any solidified sense of self. For lack of a true center, the mind can only grasp at objectified existence through thinking. It has no power to reveal the truth of reality, for it is always external to it.

Ironically, one can be intellectually convinced of the illusory nature of the mind, but remain fully identified with thinking. The mind can believe various concepts about its own unreality, but cannot actually experience that it is unreal. The insubstantial nature of the mind can only be recognized from a place beyond it. Only through the awakening of the inner state and the soul do we gain the necessary distance to be able to perceive the mind as external to our essence.

One cannot think about reality. Only in the absence of thought is that which is real exposed. The non-conceptual is the only door to pure subjectivity.

### **The Power of the Mind**

Each thought is a unit of mental energy that carries an emotional charge - it has a force that affects reality. We must take responsibility for what and how we think, for what the mind strongly believes and desires most often becomes our reality. Thinking is not only a private affair limited to the headspace, but has karmic consequences that shape our lives and impact everyone around us.

Most humans think in circles, ruled by the obsessive tendencies of the mind. When the mind cannot find something to think about, it will think about *anything* just to escape boredom. In this vacuum of purposelessness, the mind generates dull and depressing thought-forms and energies, utterly powerless to create anything positive. Unconscious, mechanical thinking is but a misuse of energy and consciousness; thinking that is not focused, clear and directed is impotent and serves nothing.

The positive power of the mind is rooted in silence and presence. Only from a place of pure awareness and being can the mind function with true creativity, intelligence



and purpose. Abiding in mirror-like consciousness, an awakened mind reflects reality with clarity, and can manifest the correct understanding and action.

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## Intelligence

Intelligence is the creative power of the mind, the spirit of understanding that runs through our being and enlivens our existence. The mind without intelligence is like a car without a driver - it will idle, but it cannot drive to its destination on its own. Intelligence is the mind's ability to use the energy of thoughts in an organized and purposeful way. It is also the secret link between the mind and I am. Intelligence is not thinking, it is the creative space in-between our presence and arising thoughts; it is the un-crystallized movement of cognizance that precedes the gross manifestation of thought.

Intelligence is the heart of consciousness and the dynamic force behind our journey to awakening, the very essence and justification of our evolution. It is the only tool we have to uncover the meaning and aim of our existence. The expansion of intelligence leads to an increasingly higher perception and understanding of reality, liberating us from the false and revealing the truth of creation.

### Lower and Higher Intelligence

Intelligence is not always intelligent. There is higher intelligence, lower intelligence, and many shades in-between. Lower intelligence is bound by the unconscious energies and negative tendencies of the mind, whereas higher intelligence supports the wisdom of the soul and her evolution towards light. The capacity of our intelligence is not predetermined and static, but expands in proportion to our awakening to the realm of understanding, directly reflecting the level of our evolution and depth of our consciousness.

Intelligence is not efficiency of thought, but efficiency of consciousness. Humans who limit their intelligence by aspiring to nothing higher than intellectual sophistication serve only lower intelligence. No matter how erudite they become, they remain locked in the dimension of forgetfulness and ignorance, for they misuse their intelligence by applying it solely within regions removed from the heart of creation. In

reality, they remain unintelligent. Intelligence that is not rooted in the knowledge of the self is not conscious; it is in fact subconscious. It has a sense of me, but no sense of I am - it has no soul.

Until the mechanical mind is transcended, our intelligence cannot realize its full potential. Only a mind that is truly present - clear and awake - can be intelligent. Prior to the awakening of awareness, the intelligence of the mind operates in a space of confusion, without any center. Once I am is recognized as the true essence of the mind, our intelligence links itself to pure subjectivity and begins to act as an awakened agent of our conscious evolution.

### **The Intuitive Mind**

Linear thinking represents only one aspect of the soul's intelligence, its analytical dimension. The discursive mind, which operates in the frontal lobe of the brain, is merely the self-conscious expression of our holistic intelligence. True intelligence, our higher intuition, is faster and much more direct than discursive thought. By the time the conscious mind draws its conclusions, understanding has already been reached in the intuitive mind.

Intuition is the soul's ability to gain direct insight into the nature of truth without the filtering of the linear mind. It is the most efficient faculty of holistic intelligence because it operates in a space of silence and emptiness directly linked to our higher wisdom. Intuition is therefore the aspect of intelligence most closely connected to the soul. It allows her to transmit her pure knowing to the mind, and through the mind, to formulate her understanding.

### **The Power of Recognition**

The essence of intelligence is its cognizing faculty, the power of recognition. Recognition is immanent to consciousness; without it, the information of existence could neither be received nor registered. It is recognition that makes the growth of discernment and understanding possible. As recognition is not always spontaneously present, we often have to make an effort to activate it. We do so by deepening our discrimination, sharpening our spiritual perception and striving uncompromisingly for complete understanding. The refinement of our recognition directly corresponds to the evolution of our intelligence, sensitivity and inner experience.

Recognition has two main functions: it enables us to register and understand our experience, and imbues our experience with meaning. One may have an experience but not recognize it, or one may recognize an experience but not see its existential value. We mature as both types of recognition develop; we grow in our ability to recognize various states of awakening, and in our appreciation of their significance. On a certain level, we could even say that recognition *is* the experience. If one has

an experience but is unable to register it, the experience is valid but empty. True awakening is the fusion of our inner realization with the depth of our recognition.

### **Personal and Impersonal Intelligence**

Intelligence belongs to no one. If we contemplate the laws of nature, the ecological systems of the earth, the tremendous wisdom of creation - we can clearly see that intelligence is the spirit that permeates the whole of existence. Impersonal intelligence is the foundation and fabric of the ever-expanding universe. Behind it there is no doer, no thinker, no agent. In the process of individuation, however, intelligence becomes personal. Within the infinite space of impersonal intelligence, countless beings, entities, creatures and individualized angles of perception have been formed. Personal intelligence is an individualized expression of universal consciousness that operates according to its blueprint within the boundless space of impersonal intelligence.

Although the ego can be seen as a form of personal intelligence, personal intelligence of a higher degree is the intelligence of the soul. Nevertheless, as long as she is separate in her existence and lost in the ego, the soul's intelligence is free to evolve only in the mental dimension, within the bounds of personal memories, associations and perceptions of forgetfulness. Only when the soul returns to the state of unity and her personal intelligence merges with universal consciousness are its frontiers no longer constrained by her individual existence. Her personal intelligence has not dissolved entirely, but it is now free to function in the impersonal space of pure subjectivity, constantly inspired by the beyond.

### **The Luminosity of Consciousness**

What makes consciousness conscious, and how does consciousness know that it is conscious? In objectified consciousness, cognition is based on sensory perception, thought and emotion. The ego knows that it is conscious through checking, observing and processing incoming data. But on higher planes of consciousness, cognition does not require an object in order to know itself. Knowing is inherent to pure subjectivity. Intelligence is the heart of I am illuminated with the radiance of knowing; it knows beyond knowing that it knows - it is conscious without thought.

Intelligence is not thought. Intelligence *uses* thought to construct understanding, but it is itself the primal cognizance that exists prior to the mind. The pure knowing of consciousness cannot be separated from intelligence. Intelligence is in fact what enables consciousness to be conscious; they are two aspect of the same reality. Pure intelligence is the self-illuminating radiance of consciousness, and pure consciousness, intelligence illuminated.

### **The Essence of the Soul**

It is the soul who evolves. She owns intelligence and is the axis of its everlasting expansion. Her identity is being, and her essence is the pure intelligence through which she knows and can be herself. She is the light that radiates the knowledge I am. Rooted in the space of pure subjectivity, the intelligence of the soul constitutes the consciousness of her identity.

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## The Light of Understanding

Ignorance is bondage and understanding is freedom. Understanding and consciousness are inextricably tied - the higher our consciousness, the higher our understanding. True understanding has nothing in common with intellectual satisfaction or the accumulation of knowledge and concepts. It is a direct experience-perception of reality - it is *being* understanding. In pure understanding, that which is comprehended reveals its meaning in the luminous mirror of consciousness, where there is no one who understands, understanding just is.

### The Purpose of Understanding

Although it has many functions, understanding is a light unto itself. More than a means to attain spiritual states, it is their very essence. Understanding not only brings us to our inner realizations, it saturates them with pure knowing. When our intelligence merges with a realization, understanding actually embodies the significance of that which has been realized.

Understanding is the nature of reality. There is no difference between being and knowing, no difference between understanding and love. Understanding pervades all aspects of existence - life *is* understanding. Like the light of the sun that makes the earth visible for no other purpose than to express its true nature, understanding illuminates the reality of creation.

### The Art of Learning

Life is a never-ending learning process of self-discovery and evolution. Those who resist learning not only stop growing, but are bound to regress. Understanding is the essence of life, and like life itself, must continuously move forward. The art of learning is the art of living. In order to master it, we have to be truly awake, sensitive and highly intelligent in our encounter with our lives.

We must not take our lives for granted, leading a dull and lethargic existence. To grow in our understanding we must be open to learn. There are questions to be asked and answers to be discovered. We must enquire into the nature of our existence and seek the true explanation of its meaning and purpose. We must awaken from the amnesia of the collective mind and recognize the central problem of human existence, our forgetfulness. We are not who we think we are and life is not what it appears to be. A shroud of ignorance smothers our perception of reality as it is. To awaken from our unconscious condition and unravel the hidden truth of our creation is our ultimate reason to be.

### **Evolution in Time**

Intelligence evolves through time. At the beginning of time, a seed of intelligence was planted in our soul so we might grow towards our ultimate destiny and reach the optimal understanding reflected in our blueprint. Before becoming one with the inner realm, intelligence uses linear time as its vehicle. After shifting to the transcendental realm, intelligence enters 'real time'. Though often considered timeless, it is not true that there is no time in the dimension of universal I am. As long as consciousness and creation are present, so is time.

Real time is the time of universal consciousness. It is not based on a linear progression from past to future, but on pure evolution; it is the movement of intelligence within the motionlessness of the timeless. On the earth plane, time comes first and evolution follows, whereas in real time, evolution comes first and time follows. In this dimension, consciousness is ruled by time; in reality, consciousness rules time.

Universal evolution occurs ahead of time, on the other side of the now. In linear time, we recognize an experience because it has already happened in the past; consciousness refers to the past in order to register experience. In real time, we recognize an experience because it has already happened in the future; the one who knows the experience is ahead of the one who recognizes it. It is the position of the experiencer that determines the quality of time. If he is bound by the past, his experience of time is linear. If he abides in the now of reality, he is one with the universal flow of real time - his being precedes his becoming.

Time is the space of cognition between the recognizing consciousness and the recognized reality. If this space is absent, so are the recognition and sense of time. In linear time, the experiencer recognizes reality by referring to his last identifiable experience; he cannot experience the present. What he perceives as occurring in the present has in fact already happened in the immediate past. Only in real time is the experience truly of the present - it is instantaneous. Here, consciousness is one with the arising of each now, for the experiencer is merged with its timeless source.

Recognition in real time is a function of both the soul's being and intelligence. Since she is merged with the pure consciousness of reality, her total awareness of the now precedes the secondary recognition of that now within her intelligence. First she knows, then she recognizes. Her intelligence is non-abiding; it exists apart from the linear continuity of becoming in a state of constant surrender to the vertical reality. In real time, the experiencer is reabsorbed into the state of absence in each now, dissolved in every instant of recognition. He cannot distance himself from experience. He is one with it - one with reality.

Our evolution in this dimension depends upon the evolution taking place in real time; how fast consciousness evolves within universal I am impacts our linear time. As long as we are separated from the source, our consciousness is bound by the extremely low velocity of earthly time, but the more we merge with real time, the faster our evolutionary movement becomes.

### **The Evolution of Understanding**

In the dimension of forgetfulness, the evolution of understanding is slow and materialistic in nature, predominantly oriented towards serving our survival instinct and the desire to improve our worldly existence. It is only by connecting to the higher purpose of our intelligence that our understanding can evolve towards our ultimate destiny - spiritual awakening.

The evolution of understanding unfolds over the course of many lifetimes. Even for a seeker on the path, it is most often not based on a positive movement towards truth, but on a search for relief from unconscious living. In the state of deep unconsciousness, the highest attainment is the recognition of the unreal and dissatisfactory nature of the un-awakened reality. At this stage one can finally begin to open up to the spiritual quest.

Our understanding accelerates exponentially as we move beyond the dimension of ignorance. The more we understand, the more easily we can expand into further understanding. As we become increasingly free of ignorance, we move closer to universal evolution, and our understanding gradually transcends the boundaries of our human consciousness.

### **Individual and Collective Understanding**

Our evolution on earth has both collective and individual aspects. It is our individual evolution that places us above all other species. In pre-human forms of life, evolution is exclusively collective, but the progress of humanity has always been fuelled by the creativity of individual minds. Ironically, however, the individuals who introduce new and revolutionary ideas to human consciousness inevitably struggle for freedom from the collective mind, for the herd mentality of mass-consciousness always seeks to



restrict the freedom of subjective perception. True evolution can only take place independent of the collective mind. The deepest creativity of intelligence has its source in the realm of I am and by nature expresses itself through individual souls.

Because the vision of spirituality is a part of the collective mind, its message is inevitably tailored to reach the masses. Organized religion, though widely accepted, cannot bring transformation to the individual, because its message has to accommodate the unconsciousness of its audience. It opens the human mentally to the divine, but at the same time, locks it into a system of belief that is merely a sentimental substitute for real experience. 'New age' spirituality addresses a more sensitive group, but suffers the same limitation, because its popularity depends on the shallow level of the spiritual truth it presents. It positively affects humanity by opening it to the reality of subtler realms and alternative modes of transformation and healing, but it fails to point to the heart of awakening. Pure subjectivity is a dimension of existence totally incomprehensible to the collective consciousness.

The suggestion of spiritual illumination based on I am threatens the status quo of the collective unconscious. Humanity as a whole is afraid of confronting its own fundamental emptiness, the absence of sacred individuality. The invitation to awaken can only be extended to individuals who are sufficiently mature and conscious. For this reason, spiritual teachers of a higher order have never addressed humanity en masse, only individual seekers. Those who attempt to impact the collective mind by preaching spirituality and morality, or by commercializing the spiritual path, cannot bring true awakening, because they themselves are part of that mind.

### **Complete Understanding**

Complete understanding does indeed exist, but not in the sense of knowing everything or having all the answers. Not all souls are destined to reach the same understanding of reality; each has a particular flavor of evolution and a unique vision of wholeness. The final understanding of each soul is reflected in the very nature of her completion through which she reaches the limits of her expansion within the realm of the known.

Upon completion, the soul can finally drop understanding. Her need to understand has exhausted itself, and she can rest on all levels. Understanding continues to evolve within her intelligence as a function of real time, but it is no longer based on any inner deficiency or personal will to learn, but on the impersonal expansion of universal intelligence. The soul finally graduates from the dimension of understanding and returns to the original state of not-knowing. This is complete understanding.

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## Beyond Understanding

Spiritual evolution is a movement from not-knowing to knowing, then beyond knowing back to not-knowing. The initial state of not-knowing is ignorance; the ultimate not-knowing is freedom from the known. Understanding sets us free, but freedom itself is beyond understanding. To transcend the dimension of understanding one must be totally empty - one must be no one and indeed know nothing.

### The Limits of Understanding

To know what we need to know and to unknow what we do not need to know is wisdom. Understanding lights our way, but where we are going is beyond understanding. The moment we start clinging to the conclusions we have reached, they entrap us. Understanding is the last barrier to the direct experience of reality, for it separates the knower from the known. Understanding has a purpose but it is not *the* purpose.

Certain traditions of enlightenment overemphasize the role of understanding as a tool for awakening, creating the illusion that through the power of self-knowledge or a sudden radical insight into the nature of reality we can instantly realize the self and complete our path. However, no matter how intelligent or spiritually sensitive, we cannot be transformed and illuminated through understanding alone. Many seekers gather extensive spiritual knowledge yet remain unable to realize true peace. Even the most profound spiritual revelations cannot tear down the walls of our separate existence and false individuality and emancipate us from our sadness, emptiness and suffering.

There is a vast chasm between understanding and reality, between knowing and experiencing. Although we may get in touch with the essence of our consciousness through understanding, without the total transmutation of our consciousness and the awakening of our complete self, we remain far from enlightenment. Our efforts to

awaken through understanding orient us towards reality, but can never manifest as true self-realization. Enlightenment transcends understanding, for it is beyond the power of our intelligence to fathom the mystery of the self. True understanding is humble - it knows its own limits. While its final act, the surrender into being, is indeed an expression of understanding, it points to the end of knowledge.

### **The Burden of Knowledge**

Knowledge can be a blessing or a burden: a blessing when it enables us to progress on the path towards freedom, a burden when it is either excessive or clung to when no longer needed. Knowledge is always of the past, for it is no more than an accumulation of memories, experiences and concepts. Though necessary to help us grow and live in the world, it cannot take us beyond it. In order to enter the dimension of the now, we must be empty, free of the totality of the past. Only in the absence of self is it possible to merge with universal presence. Knowledge, no matter how precious, crystallizes our personal identity - the known creates the knower. Even self-knowledge becomes a burden when it separates us from the realization of oneness and absence.

Knowledge can be seen as part of ignorance. In fact, without ignorance there is no knowledge; knowing requires the shadow of not-knowing. Only when both knowledge and ignorance are dropped, can we enter the dimension beyond the knower and the known - the unknown.

### **Letting Go of Understanding**

Letting go is the essence of the spiritual path. Everything we hold onto in the form of conceptual understanding solidifies the false self. To let go of understanding is the real key to freedom. Nonetheless, we cannot let go of understanding prematurely, as we must first enquire into the nature of reality. Only when understanding has fully ripened and been assimilated by our intelligence, can it be transcended.

Letting go of understanding demands courage, for we renounce the security of knowing. To drop understanding is to become empty and exposed, yet ready to be filled with the light of the self. We no longer require the crutch of knowledge in order to be. We are open to experience reality as it is, and in this pure state of existence, regain our original innocence. In the absence of the knower, the known is no more, and we return to non-conceptual unity with reality as it is.

### **Pure Knowing is Being**

Pure knowing is the natural state of the spiritual dimension, yet it cannot be accessed until our personal consciousness has merged with the beyond. When we surrender our knowledge and understanding to the non-conceptual state of being,

our knowing and not-knowing transform into pure knowing. Pure knowing is owned by the supreme reality alone, and revealed only to one who abides in emptiness of the now.

### **Divine Ignorance**

Our perception of reality before entering the path and after completing it, while different, are also mysteriously alike. To become a true sage is to become ignorant again, empty of all knowledge, intoxicated with the supreme alone. But unlike ordinary ignorance, the ignorance of the sage is divine. It is a blissful state of freedom. In divine ignorance, one no longer knows through oneself - one knows through the creator. To enter divine ignorance we must return all of our understanding to its source. We no longer need the conceptual reality that supported our separate self - we leap into the dimension of no-support. With no place to abide, we lose ourselves in the boundless void of the unknown.

### **The State of Not-knowing**

Not-knowing is not antithetical to knowing. Although reflected in the mind, not-knowing points beyond all mental states - it is actually a state of existence. Not-knowing is the nature of the soul and the gate to the beyond. It is the meeting between the renunciation of the known and the knowing of the unknown.

Not-knowing is our ancient innocence. Nothing is more innocent than a small child facing the unknown world of infinite possibilities. That child-like innocence is within us all, beneath all of our empty knowledge and endless layers of mind. The dust of experiences we have gathered along our path has never touched its essence. Still, because we have been lost in forgetfulness for so long, we are now disconnected from our original purity. It is only by passing through the process of true understanding, inner remembrance, awakening and existential surrender that we can return to our primordial state of not-knowing.

### **Entering the Unknown**

'The unknown' is not an idea to grasp with the mind, but the pure reality beyond the known - the state of universal now existing eternally prior to knowing and consciousness. Not-knowing is not the unknown itself; it is the final passage from mind to no-mind through which consciousness renounces knowing in order to enter the unknown. Entering the unknown through the gate of not-knowing, we surrender our knowing to the ancient source and merge with the eternal movement of universal intelligence. What was unknown to the mind becomes known to the soul as the bliss of samadhi and the state of love.





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## The Realm of Oneness

To transcend separation and realize oneness is the supreme goal of our human evolution, by the power of which we come back to our original state and actualize our eternal identity. True oneness cannot be accessed prior to the awakening of the inner state, for without the inner state there is no existential bridge between self and reality. As we move into the states beyond the mind, our human consciousness gradually begins to surrender to reality as a whole. Expansion into no-mind, the awakening of integral consciousness and the return to the natural state are the various aspects of our enlightenment to complete oneness with existence.

Pure subjectivity is the only gateway to the one reality. Because it is the root of our perception and the source of me, unless I am is awakened, we lack the requisite ground to embrace oneness. Our limited self can only be transcended through the awakening of the soul - the essence of our individual subjectivity and the portal to universal subjectivity. By the power of soul-realization we reinstate the perfect equilibrium between individual and universal, and reclaim the ancient state of natural oneness.

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## Unity and Separation

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As it is a universal experience that unity is bliss and separation is suffering, the attainment of oneness has always been the ultimate goal of all real spiritual paths and traditions of enlightenment. Although their means and teachings differ, they unanimously agree that separation is ignorance and unity is self-realization.

To transcend the illusion of separation, we must transform our false self, give birth to a higher consciousness and, finally, merge with all-that-is. The awakening of the inner state, the realization of the soul, the surrender of the mind, and dissolution into the realm of pure subjectivity, are the fundamental elements of the process through which we regain our integral unity with existence.

Unity is indeed the antidote to separation, but only from the standpoint of lower truth. The one reality transcends this division inherent to the realm of ignorance. It is within the undivided whole that we experience our dream of separation as well as our awakening to unity. In our evolution we journey between these existential extremes, shifting through a rainbow of diverse realizations as we draw increasingly closer to the realm beyond opposites.

The state of totality is not subject to divisions, for it is the absolute container of all possible and actual realities. To enter this great unknown, we must return to the natural state of selfless being and merge with the root of all things, the non-abiding



realm of universal I am. Only after merging with existence do we finally rise above the dichotomy of unity and separation and realize the exalted state of oneness.

### **The State of Oneness**

In its most direct definition, oneness is the absence of separation. While it is true that separation obscures the state of oneness, it is at the same time the very energy that makes the realization of oneness possible. Without separation, there is no oneness - without oneness, no separation. It is their complex interaction that constitutes the multilayered nature of both our awakening and the reality of oneness itself.

Just as the poles of ignorance and enlightenment are often misconstrued as having no intermediate reality, separation and oneness are commonly regarded as fixed opposites. However, sensitive examination of the evolutionary process reveals that prior to our arrival at the ultimate state of oneness, various levels of separation still coexist with our growing experience of unity. Unification with the universal self is not simply the removal of separation, but the result of a positive process of evolution and expansion into the one reality. In the state of oneness, separation is not nullified, but transformed into the unity of individual intelligence with the ocean of universal I am.

Essentially, the state of oneness is a result of an expansion of our consciousness, energy and existence beyond our separate sense of self, based on both the awakening of the soul and our absorption into the beyond. The awakening of the soul entails our entry into the inner state and the actualization of our pure subjectivity; our absorption in the beyond involves the dissolution of our sense of separation from both phenomenal reality and the inner realm. When the soul transcends separation through her realization of unity, all traces of duality are erased and oneness itself is forgotten.

### **The Two Dimensions of Separation**

Although existence is one, due to the human inability to experience it as a whole, it is mistakenly viewed as being comprised of two distinct realms - inner and outer. This division is real, but only from the standpoint of unevolved consciousness. As long as we operate in the plane of forgetfulness, the poles of inner and outer remain our primal reference points as we mature towards enlightenment. Until unity with both inner and outer is realized, our apperception of totality remains inaccessible.

The human being is painfully split from both the outer and inner realms - the planes of objectified reality and pure subjectivity - as if living neither inside nor outside of existence. He is locked in a netherworld, suspended between the outer reality of appearances and the inner reality of universal I am, experientially and existentially disconnected from both. From this rootless, painfully unstable place, our human evolution begins.

The cardinal cause of our separation from both inner and outer is the exteriorization of our human consciousness from the dimension of pure subjectivity. The human sense of me is entirely uprooted from the internal space of the universal now, the ground of reality as it is. In fact, our sense of me is estranged from both the subjectivity of the soul *and* the subjectivity of the universal self. It has no stable sense of self, nor any abiding place in the inner realm - it is alienated from its own essence as well as fundamental reality.

The realization of oneness with phenomenal existence can only be achieved from a place of unity within the inner plane. The outer world is not outside of the universal I am; it is contained within its boundless space of pure being. Since creation dwells within the universal subjectivity of the self, there is no way to experience oneness with the external reality unless one becomes unified with the inner realm and the soul. When inner and outer are united and integrated in the consciousness of an individual, their duality is dissolved and the experiencer reaches the state of universal non-abidance and impersonality. Thus reality as a whole is divulged.

### **Self and Other than Self**

The essence of separation is the friction between the experience of self and the reality external to self. As long as we are lost in ignorance, our sense of identity is experienced only in contrast to the phenomenal world. Since the reality external to self is both objective and subjective, the experience of existence is determined by the quality of one's simultaneous abidance in the world and in being.

To possess a sense of self is perfectly natural and fundamental to all living things, and does not in itself create a sense of separation. A bird feeling its sense of me is not extracted from its natural unity with existence; its sense of me is more or less dissolved in its environment. Since creation contains diversity-in-unity composed of infinite angles of perception, the subject is by nature distinct from the object, and can therefore clearly distinguish itself in thought and feeling. There is a natural equilibrium between individual consciousness and the reality containing it. In the universal experience, subject and object are both embedded in consciousness, balanced in perfect harmony.

If we look deeper into the nature of reality, we can see that the balance between subject and object is actually intrinsic to pure consciousness. The very fact that consciousness is self-perceiving demonstrates how its absolute subjectivity includes a translucent objectivity that mirrors that same subjectivity back to itself. It is not the sense of me as such that is to blame for the friction of separation, but the distortion caused by the crystallization of identity resulting from a loss of the soul's original transparency.

In the natural state of being, the cognition of oneself and the outer reality is

unobstructed, freely interpenetrating, mutually inclusive and translucent. But in the human realm, consciousness has become unnaturally self-centered and alienated from the external world. This primal friction between knowing oneself and knowing the world is the essence of duality and the source of our isolation from reality as a whole.

We arrive at the state of oneness not by eliminating the faculty to experience ourselves, but through the realization of the ultimate transparency between self and other-than-self. The ego alone can never reach transparency, because its very presence creates an existential knot in the openness of being. It is by its very nature in a state of perpetual contraction and self-centered attention. This crystallization of identity involuntarily translates as excessive self-awareness, and is responsible for the acute sense of separation between I and the world. In order for there to be transparency between self and other, we must first awaken the soul to regain the transparency inherent to our true being. When the soul awakens, she supplants the petrified ego and experiences herself in an expansive and pure way that mirrors the complete translucency of her abidance in the realm of pure subjectivity. From this place, her perception of the outer world is open, unhindered, all-pervasive, and free of any center. After she attains oneness, the soul continues to live in the world, but her identity is no longer constrained by a sense of separate self. She has no fixed boundaries and the world ceases to be external to her being and consciousness.

### **The Root of Separation**

The root cause of our separation is our self-consciousness. The human mind perceives reality based on a split between subject and object, experiencer and experienced, observer and observed, knower and known. Whatever is perceived occurs external to the perceiver, who has no stable identity apart from the mind. The apparent subject observes his surroundings from his conceptual watchtower, processes incoming data, and responds to outer stimuli, all in reference to a fragmented sense of me that becomes increasingly self-conscious as the subject of the experience.

Lesser-evolved creatures have a sense of me just as we do, but one that is too weak to crystallize into a sense of separation. As humans, our sense of me has solidified in the mind, creating the illusion that our personality is an actual entity. This ego-entity is both excessively self-conscious in how it relates to the world *and* how it relates to the virtual reality of its own mind. By over-exercising its ability to think about itself, the ego has deformed our natural sense of me into a wound of separation.

Although self-consciousness is essential and fundamentally positive, the warped self-consciousness of the mind is responsible for our sense of isolation from both the natural state of being and the rest of creation. It has become a wall separating us from the totality of existence. Everything we experience is processed in the

obstinately self-centered mind-construct of the pseudo-me; we are conscious of ourselves only in contrast to everything that appears to be outside of our singular sense of I.

The human stream of consciousness constantly oscillates between subject and object, object and subject. Locked in a claustrophobic reality of mind, lonely and disconnected from the rest of creation, human self-consciousness has overridden the consciousness of the undivided whole. It is too conscious to feel unity with existence and too unconscious to transcend the illusion of separation.

### **Separation and Unity**

Most creatures below us in the hierarchy of existence recognize neither unity or separation - they are in an unconscious state of oneness. Above them on the evolutionary ladder, however, many possibilities exist for how beings can relate to unity, separation and their interplay. There are those who recognize the presence of separation, but not the absence of unity - they are too asleep to question their existence, but conscious enough to suffer due to their separation.

There are those who recognize both the presence of separation and the absence of unity - they have begun their evolution towards realization of oneness, and those who experience both separation and unity simultaneously - they have reached a relative realization of oneness, but have not yet transcended separation. There are those in a state of complete unity, but have no concept of the presence or absence of separation - they live in a conscious state of oneness that bears no relation to the plane of illusion. Finally, there are those who are conscious of both their complete unity with existence and the absence of separation - the awakened souls who have realized oneness, but continue to exist in the plane of ignorance.

### **Returning to the State of Oneness**

Evolution is a journey from unconsciousness to consciousness, from consciousness to the soul, and from the soul into the beyond. The realm of unconsciousness can be seen as a dimension of negative oneness, for in it there is no possibility to recognize either unity or separation. Even an evolved ego, though aware of separation, cannot transcend it alone, for it lacks the foundation of pure subjectivity.

Once again we stress that we cannot reach oneness prior to realizing our subjective essence. Pure subjectivity is the only gateway to the one reality. The ego can neither dissolve itself nor dissolve into the beyond; it can neither attain reality nor abolish its own unreality. To attempt to negate the ego by seeing through its illusory nature fails, because the ego cannot invalidate itself. All mental conclusions we reach about the mind and ego are confined to the mind and ego, and therefore cannot take us beyond them. Our limited self can only be transcended through the awakening of the

soul. Because pure subjectivity is the root of our perception and the source of me, unless I am is awakened, we lack the requisite ground to embrace oneness.

The soul is both the essence of our individual subjectivity and the portal to universal subjectivity. Through her awakening, we unite with the source, the foundation and container of all-that-is. In order to realize oneness, we first must actualize our whole individuality and then merge with the universal beyond. To abolish any trace of separation, we must open the inner state, awaken our soul and surrender our consciousness.

### **The Portal of Perfect Soleness**

Before we can experience the world and self as one field of unified consciousness, we must first attain 'perfect soleness', complete separation from objectified reality. Upon entering the inner path, our identification with the world of perception is the fundamental distraction from realizing our essential self. For this reason, in our early efforts to disengage from objectification, we must isolate our consciousness from all that does not possess the nature of I am. To awaken our true subjectivity, we first have to disconnect our essence from the sensory, emotional and mental impressions that constantly invade our psyche and create the construct of the personal self. Due to this need for internal focus as we evolve towards self, we initially may feel even more isolated from the world than in our previous, ordinary state of unconscious separation. But unless we regain solidity and stability within our true self, the illusory forces of the external reality and our own mind will continue to antagonize our integrity. Only upon realizing the soul in her eternal unity with the inner realm can a seeker cease to view the world of appearances as alien to his true nature and consciousness. By actualizing the soleness of I am, we lay the ground of being from which we can move beyond the polarities of inner and outer, self and other, I and you, here and now - and embrace the whole of existence as the undivided one.

### **Misconceptions about Oneness**

We cannot transcend separation through the negation of our individuality, or through a simplistic identification with objective reality. These, the two most common misconceptions about oneness, actually lead us away from the reality of unity, for they presume that we must somehow disappear in order to merge.

Losing one's sense of self is not an experience of oneness, but the imbalanced condition of a split mind that is not grounded in the reality of I am. Although our individual consciousness is indeed responsible for our separation, it also serves as a base for the actualization of our union with the totality of existence. We do not need to eradicate our individuality, but to awaken its true subjectivity and surrender it to the whole. Only when our individual essence is awakened and then merged with the universal self, can subject and object be embraced in one, homogeneous field of

reality.

To experience oneness with external reality, we do not abandon our individuality. We do not *become* an object that appears in our field of perception - a chair, for instance. The perceiver does not become the perceived. Oneness does not stand in opposition to the natural presence of diversity and differentiation. The very existence of unity depends upon the polar unsameness of the subjective and objective modes of experiencing reality, without which there would be no way for consciousness to identify the manifested universe as an actual experience. To assume that one must actually become a chair in order to experience unity with it would degrade the concept of oneness to the level of 'mystical' insanity. The chair is just the chair, and the subject perceiving it remains just the subject. In the consciousness of unity, an object continues to be what it is, an object, in reference to me, but it is no longer existentially external to the experiencer. The experiencer of oneness is absorbed in the inner realm, from which both subject and object spring forth in each instant of creation.

### **'Negative' Oneness**

Oneness cannot be achieved by expanding or modifying the false self through altered states, emotional exhilaration or the suspension of consciousness. Though they sometimes create the illusion of oneness, such experiences are not grounded in pure subjectivity, and thus can be considered examples of 'negative oneness'. The true foundation of oneness is the ground of non-perception that envelops us in the boundless space of pure subjectivity, where nothing is outside of self. To experience oneness is to dissolve the boundaries of self, inwardly and outwardly, into the limitless translucency of total reality.

In the realm of the mundane, the most common experiences of negative oneness are ecstatic states and human love, for both alleviate the pain of separation by transporting one beyond the boundaries of the individual self. In the case of 'ecstasy' - its original meaning was 'standing outside oneself'. This type of euphoric feeling can be induced by certain music, dance, and drug experiences, or by identification with a powerful idea or emotion. Here, one is taken out of oneself; the very one who would constitute the foundation of unity is absent. Hence, no positive experience of oneness can be attained.

As for human love, most people are overly attached to this concept, missing the hidden truth of love that is rooted in unity. While at times we may feel an empathetic connection to phenomenal reality when overwhelmed by intense beauty or compassion, and temporarily lose our sense of separation, if we look beyond appearances, we can see that the experience actually points to our deepest longing for oneness with existence. For the average human, love as expressed in its many forms is the most accessible means of coming closer to a sense of unity with 'other'.

However, though love is an attractive way to lose oneself, true oneness cannot be accessed by merging with an external being or object. Again, to lose or forget oneself is a case of negative oneness - not a positive expansion, but an unconstructive absence of conscious separation. Real oneness is actualized by first becoming one with oneself, next merging with the source of creation, and finally, embracing reality as a whole. Love is an imperfect oneness, while oneness is the perfect love. True love melts the duality between lover and beloved.

There are also more 'mystical' varieties of negative oneness, for example, to forget oneself by becoming spaced-out. Pure absent-mindedness goes beyond getting lost in daydreams or becoming distracted - it has no object. In fact, being spaced-out involves neither object nor subject; one does not know who, what or where one is. It is not a state signifying true freedom from separation, but resembles more a temporary experience of non-existence or suspension of self. Spacing-out is actually a regression to a pre-conscious state wherein the conscious mind loses grip of both its internal and external reality.

It is possible that a spaced-out state mixed with certain energetic expansions can transport an adept into a mystical plane. There are in fact numerous spiritual paths that do not point to the grounded realization of pure subjectivity, but to mystical states. Through mystical states the soul can connect to other dimensions and mental realms that present an alternate way of existing within totality, but she cannot realize herself and reach wholeness, for she remains alienated from her original nature and the vertical purity of being. Mystical states exist in-between the dimension of pure subjectivity and objectified reality, and as such, abide outside of the soul's essence. As altered states of consciousness, they can be seductive for the mind - they provide relief from ordinary waking consciousness, and may even give us a *sense* of oneness. But as they are not founded upon the inner realm and the soul, they are unable to deliver us to the freedom and transcendence that is anchored in the self. Shifts to mystical states that do not coincide with the awakening of awareness offer no means to arrest the mechanical mind. They may give one an energetic experience, but no real refuge from the chaotic mind, for they are not solid states, but relative dimensions of expansion related to planes of existence peripheral to the source itself. They do not serve the realization of true oneness.

Negative oneness can be a dangerous pitfall on the path. We can lose our way getting distracted by, or even addicted, to negative experiences of oneness that give the illusion of being constructive in spite of the fact that they do not free us from our fundamental forgetfulness. We must strive to move beyond illusive experiences of freedom and bliss in order to attain a true awakening that is rooted in the light of I am.

### **The Essence of Oneness**



Is oneness an experience? While in any ordinary experience self is external to the object of experience, true oneness occurs in the non-experiential dimension, beyond the division of knower and known. It is experienced through one's own dissolution. The experiencer merges with the experienced - he is one with it. To experience oneness is to disappear into the beyond.

In essence, oneness is an expansion beyond oneself realized through one's positive absence in the presence of total existence. In the space of pure subjectivity, the truth of oneness is divulged, absorbing our sense of me without annihilating it. Through the realization of oneness, the core of our individuality, the light of the soul, is integrated into the total experience of reality as a whole.

The complete state of oneness requires stillness of self and the motionlessness of being as its foundation. In pure being, all-that-is reveals itself to the absorbed consciousness as the non-conceptual apperception of everythingness. To be one with reality is to dwell in the state of non-activity, the unconditional repose of existence. Although oneness encompasses both the inner and outer realms, it is primarily rooted in the vertical dimension of the now. From the vertical profundity of being, the stillness of our essence, we expand horizontally into universal consciousness. Thus manifests the bliss of oneness.

### **Levels in the Realization of Oneness**

Are there stages leading to the state of oneness, or is the realization of oneness a singular event? Following an impersonal philosophy, we could deny the possibility of gradual evolution into oneness on the grounds that oneness signifies the sudden and absolute transcendence of individuality. If we dissolve individuality, who remains to experience any levels of unity? But the logic behind this reasoning is overly simplistic; the truth is of oneness is far more subtle. The secret of healing is not to obliterate the patient but to eradicate the causes of his illness. In other words, the realization of oneness is not the annihilation of individuality, but its transmutation - it is the removal of ignorance, the unification of self with the whole.

Oneness itself has no grades, but the process of the unification of the individual with the universal is gradual. The journey begins with our evolution into the inner state, and progressively deepens through the awakening of our true identity, our surrender into the beyond and our expansion into the one reality. The more oneness increases, the more separation decreases, until by the cumulative power of our awakening, separation is no more.

The first level of oneness is accessed through the awakening of awareness, which opens the space of pure subjectivity. However, pure awareness represents a stage in the realization of oneness only if it is linked with the energy of being. If the state of presence is too crystallized and lacks surrender, it may temporarily intensify our self-



consciousness and sense of separation. The natural state of presence is restful and transparent - it absorbs the sense of me in choiceless awareness.

The next level of oneness involves our expansion beyond awareness into being, the opening of our connection with the universal source. Merging into being, the soul dwells in the ground of existence, anchored in the unconditional state of repose. Through this absorption, she expands beyond herself and grows roots into the beyond. Only from the depth of being can the soul experience reality unmodified - as it is.

Absorption in being links the soul with the uncreated, but further expansion into oneness takes place through the portal of the heart. In being the soul is one with the source, but remains alienated from the external world. It is through the awakening of the heart that she reaches horizontal unity with creation, for the heart energetically and existentially bridges the inner and the outer spheres of the one existence. The unity of vertical and horizontal expansion gives rise to a whole new experience of reality: when being and heart merge into one, they create a holistic field of energy that expands the soul into unity with both the source *and* all of creation.

After the awakening of the heart, the evolution into oneness progresses through the immersion of intelligence in I am, and the attainment of transparent me, in which the integration and unification of the soul and the inner state are completed. Beyond the state of transparent me, yet deeper states of oneness manifest through existential shifts into the state beyond polarities and the transcendental state. The final and complete state of oneness is based on samadhi of me, the transcendence of ego, the merging of the mind and the complete actualization of our eternal soul-identity.

### **Absorption into Oneness**

The realization of oneness can occur in relation to the vertical or horizontal planes of existence. As we have just seen, the vertical plane of oneness reflects our unity with the source reached through being, whereas the horizontal plane of oneness reflects our unity with creation reached through the heart. Awareness can be seen as the intersection between these two dimensions; the state of self-awareness is horizontal in nature, awareness at rest is vertical.

Although oneness is primarily realized through the energetic awakening of the inner state, on a deeper level, the realization of oneness requires the transformation of our very consciousness. The depth of one's experience of oneness is measured by the level of absorption of awareness and the mind through the inner state into the beyond. The type of absorption we refer to here should not be confused with the trance-like consciousness that certain traditions misidentify as the experience or even realization of the self. In such a condition, one temporarily loses awareness of oneself and dwells in blissful oblivion, but what one really experiences is negative

oneness. The positive realization of oneness is engendered by the presence of clear awareness and the integral consciousness of the soul.

The absorption of awareness and me crown the process of merging into reality. In the state of oneness, our individual consciousness is merged with the soul and the beyond.

### **The Soul and the Self**

Although oneness is a state beyond the subject-object relationship, its attainment does not nullify the subjective knower. We could not speak about oneness if there was no conscious presence experiencing it. The knower of oneness is not the ego, but the inmost essence of our individual consciousness, the soul. It is the soul who is the true subject to oneness, for unlike the ego, she does not experience reality based on duality.

We must deeply contemplate the difference between the soul and the self in order to grasp the delicate balance between our presence and absence within the realization of unity. In our complete absence, oneness cannot be experienced, for we become unconscious. In our ordinary presence, oneness cannot be experienced either, for our crystallized self-consciousness separates us from the whole. To realize oneness we need to transform our sense of me so that it can merge with absence, yet remain present. As long as there is an experience, there must be an experiencer; but who we are as the experiencer is fluid, and changes according to the level of our awakening. Our human personality cannot access the state of oneness - only our deeper self can. The dimension of me that experiences and recognizes oneness is not a product of the mind, but an intelligent expression of the deepest consciousness of I am. It is the soul uniting her eternal presence with total existence. The light of recognition is inherent to the soul's intelligence and existence. Her knowledge of being herself is unconditionally merged with the beyond and concurrent to her consciousness of all-that-is.

The integral consciousness of our true self is unified with the beyond and steeped in the pure knowing of its own light, yet free from self-reference. Such is the consciousness natural to all realized human souls. There are also various beings of light that inhabit the space of universal consciousness but possess no self-consciousness. They eternally dwell in a state of an uninterrupted union with the beloved, but, like humans, experience the light of creation in a way that is unique to their consciousness and level of evolution.

One must go deep into meditation to understand what it means to experience simultaneously both one's complete presence and absence within the universal I am. It is only by becoming our true self that we can merge with the ocean of universal presence and still remain conscious. In this, the ultimate coalescence of presence

and absence, that which merges is our illusory consciousness based on false individuality, and that which re-emerges is the pure consciousness of the soul based on the immortal light of I am.

The soul is an individualized angle of perception. She is an aspect of totality through which the universal I am views its entire creation, an infinitesimal sphere of I am which has a function and purpose within the total existence. The soul is not separate from the self, but exists within the space of universal consciousness, like a wave in the ocean. By becoming one with the self, the soul transcends her illusive separation, but not her existence and function. She continues her everlasting evolution within universal I am. Prior to her awakening, the soul evolved towards the state of unity, but now, from the point of her complete realization, she begins to evolve within the state of oneness to beyond oneness.

Oneness is not the final goal, but the true beginning of our expansion into the mystery of the beyond. Who is evolving? Who is expanding into the bliss of reality? Who is growing into an increasingly deeper revelation of truth? There can be no final answer to this question because that one is eternally changing and expanding within his unchanging essence. The soul's identity can never be fully fixed, because there is no end to her awakening beyond awakening beyond awakening.

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# The Teaching of Enlightenment

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## No-Mind

To transcend separation and realize oneness is the supreme goal of our human evolution, by the power of which we come back to our original state and actualize our eternal identity. True oneness cannot be accessed prior to the awakening of the inner state, for without the inner state there is no existential bridge between self and reality. As we move into the states beyond the mind, our human consciousness gradually begins to surrender to reality as a whole. Expansion into no-mind, the awakening of integral consciousness and the return to the natural state are the various aspects of our enlightenment to complete oneness with existence.

In order to reach complete understanding, we must investigate the state of oneness from several complementary angles. Here we will examine the realization of oneness from the standpoint of the mind's presence and absence. What is the relationship between enlightenment and the transcendence of the mind, and what are the limits of this transcendence? Is the condition of no-mind the same as the state of oneness? Does 'no-mind' denote a complete absence of thought or is it an ontological dimension beyond the mind? Is the state beyond the mind a single reality or is it multifaceted and multidimensional? How can we go beyond the mind? What remains when the mind is transcended? What is no-mind?

### Beyond the Mind

The limitation of the profound concept, 'no-mind', is that it points to what is not, without indicating in any way what *is*. To conceptualize 'no-mind' through negation alone does not reveal its true meaning. To truly understand the essence of this term, we must delve into the positive reality that lies behind it.

Since the reality beyond the mind is so subtle, so far beyond the grasp of ordinary language, some traditions choose to emphasize what it isn't, rather than sully it with imperfect understanding. However, if we avoid trying to understand what no-mind actually is, we leave the door open to its false interpretations, and make ourselves

vulnerable to numerous dangerous pitfalls.

Many seekers are stuck in their practice precisely because of their confusion about the state of no-mind. They either mistake various mystical or mental states for no-mind, or unskillfully resist thinking; they lack any understanding that no-mind is not realized by the negation or repression of thinking, but through a positive expansion into the highly intelligent dimension *beyond* the mind. We must have a deep intuitive feeling-understanding for what no-mind is in order to realize it, just as we have to experience it before we can grasp its ultimate significance.

Can we think about non-thinking? How can we comprehend the reality beyond the mind if the only instrument to understand it is this very mind? The answer lies in the fact that the knower of the state beyond the mind is in fact not the mind, but the soul. Even though the soul uses the content of the mind to formulate her understanding, she knows no-mind directly without the medium of thought. The aspect of the mind that has the ability to observe the condition of no-mind is not the gross conceptual mind, but the subtle mind that operates as the soul's intelligence. Thinking about non-thinking does not necessarily interfere with the thought-free state, for the very simple reason that no-mind is existentially beyond thinking. No-mind is not the suspension of thought, but an energetic dimension of consciousness and being transcendent to mind.

### **Beyond the Presence and Absence of Thought**

No-mind is both the thought-free dimension of being and the consciousness of the soul. Since it is beyond the mind, no-mind is independent of both the presence and absence of thinking. If no-mind were based on the absence of thought, it would be confined to the realm of polarities. True no-mind is beyond polarities, thus it contains both the movement of thought and the stillness beyond thought.

The mechanical mind is transformed not through the suppression of thinking, but through expansion into non-thinking. Trying to suppress thinking is a misguided approach to the path, since thinking is a natural part of life. By consciously resting in no-mind, we stop fuelling the energy of thought, and in due time, the mind becomes pacified and morphs into no-mind. The automatic activity of the mind doesn't fully stop, but gradually subsides into the tranquility of 'minimum thinking'. The natural state of mind is this minimum thinking, and no-mind is its existential foundation and container.

In meditation, we rest in a state beyond thinking, while allowing thoughts to manifest as they naturally do. We do not calm the mind by restraining its activity, but by awakening our complete presence within the inner state. The mind cannot be pacified directly, because any effort to change the state of the mind only gives it additional energy. Instead, we should remain totally uninvolved in the mind, or allow

a relaxed, but minimal involvement. Gradually, as we grow roots into the dimension of no-mind, our sense of identity is freed from the mind. Once the state of no-mind is fully established, we embrace the natural mind once again as a part of our multidimensional existence; no-mind itself remains existentially autonomous of both our involvement and non-involvement in the mind.

### **Levels of No-mind**

The dimension of no-mind includes all of the states beyond the mind. The inner state is the gateway beyond the mind, and each of its aspects represents a particular level of expansion within no-mind. The deeper we move into the inner state, the more profound is our realization of no-mind. From awareness we move to being, from being to the absolute, from the absolute to the heart, and from the heart to transparent me, until we reach the state of transcendence - the highest energetic realization of no-mind. Beyond its energetic dimension, the deepest level of no-mind is reached through the complete surrender of our personal intelligence in the impersonal space of being, the state of samadhi.

### **Personal and Impersonal No-mind**

There are two aspects of no-mind: personal and impersonal. Impersonal no-mind is the internal space of the inner state through which the soul abides within totality, the primordial source of the whole creation. An example of impersonal no-mind is the absolute state. No one owns the absolute, as it is the beyond of the beyond, the bottomless ground of existence. Personal no-mind is the essence of I am, the non-conceptual heart of the soul's existence. The presence of the personal aspect reveals how it is possible to know the state of no-mind even though it is beyond knowing. The soul does not need the mind to be conscious of the beyond and herself, for this knowledge is intrinsic to her consciousness. She is the embodiment of the personal no-mind through which the unknown is known.

### **No-mind is Our True Self**

Many seekers are conditioned by the impersonal vision of no-mind, which while not incorrect, is incomplete. For many, it is an unexpected revelation to realize that the state of no-mind is none other than being oneself. Unless we recognize no-mind as our very self, it does not link us to the ground of reality, for it is not founded upon pure subjectivity. The experience of impersonal no-mind cannot be embodied before we realize our personal essence. From the viewpoint of complete realization, we can say that when the soul is bypassed in the realization of no-mind, the state is tainted by objectivity - it is objectified as external to our true nature. To experience universal subjectivity in the absence of personal subjectivity is to externalize the ultimate reality, because the knower has not yet integrated his own subjective essence with the universal subjectivity of the beyond.

The understanding that to be in the state of no-mind is to be oneself liberates us. No longer do we strive to experience our state in an artificially impersonal way that conforms to our pre-conceived notions about no-mind. We can just be natural in the space of pure presence, beyond the coming and going of thoughts. Still, we must not limit our experience of no-mind to one of individual subjectivity; personal no-mind must be founded upon universal no-mind. Our pure subjectivity must be actualized in its primordial unity with the impersonal subjectivity of supreme reality.

It is crucial to understand that the realization of no-mind is beyond the expansion into the inner state. Although the opening of the inner state is a precondition for transcending the mind, true no-mind is embodied in the shift of identity from mind to soul. Many seekers who have awakened the inner state are often still heavily identified with the mind. To be identified with the mind while abiding in the inner state does not mean that we are simply attracted to thoughts, but points to the fact that our sense of I am is still ingrained in the thinking intelligence. If this is the case, no matter what state we experience, our identity continues to be of the mind. Unless our identity shifts to the soul, the ego will continue to rule our consciousness as the illusory center of the mind. Prior to soul-awakening, it is the mind that is the primal knower and experiencer of the states beyond the mind; after the true awakening of no-mind occurs by virtue of an existential shift from the ego to I am, no-mind is known, experienced and owned by no-mind alone.

### **The Non-conceptual State**

The next step after the energetic realization of no-mind and our existential shift of identity from ego to I am entails a certain degree of integration between the mind and no-mind. The non-conceptual state reflects the surrender of the mind to the purity of no-mind. If the mind conceptualizes its experience of reality in any way, it veils the bare state of oneness. Any and all grasping from the mind creates a sense of separate self that stands in the way of the direct perception of that which is. To live in the freedom of the non-conceptual state is to transcend the fear of not-knowing, to live in emptiness and dwell upon nothing.

No-mind is the essence of our liberation from the illusory net of conceptual reality. Nonetheless, we should be careful not to take a superficial view of the non-conceptual state, for we cannot drop the conceptual realm prior to reaching an adequate expansion of understanding. The depth of the non-conceptual state is in fact directly tied to the profundity of our previously gained conceptual insight. Intelligence does not become absent in the state of no-mind, but expands, penetrating the dimension beyond thinking with transparent knowing, and flooding it with the light of consciousness and truth. Only after the state of no-mind has been realized and fully comprehended can we move beyond understanding to embody supreme no-mind as the intelligence of the original void.

## No-mind and Oneness

The term no-mind points to the absence of conceptualization within the experience of oneness. Ultimately, true oneness is not realized solely through an energetic expansion beyond the mind, but through the dissolution of the very apparatus that externalizes the undivided reality by means of thought. We must transcend the ego-construct, which by its very nature can never become one with existence. Only when we are empty of self can all the illusory boundaries of our personal identity dissolve into the infinite space of the one reality. To enter the realm of oneness we must surrender our very existence. This surrender is the highest expression of human wisdom. It begins within our own intelligence, but ends in the beyond.

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## Integral Consciousness

To transcend separation and realize oneness is the supreme goal of our human evolution, by the power of which we come back to our original state and actualize our eternal identity. True oneness cannot be accessed prior to the awakening of the inner state, for without the inner state there is no existential bridge between self and reality. As we move into the states beyond the mind, our human consciousness gradually begins to surrender to reality as a whole. Expansion into no-mind, the awakening of integral consciousness and the return to the natural state are the various aspects of our enlightenment to complete oneness with existence.

Integral consciousness is another name for the unification of the mind with the inner state and the ego with the soul. In our journey towards the realization of oneness, we must merge our human personality with our eternal essence and attain inner wholeness. Integral consciousness signifies this state of internal harmony. Through the integration of all aspects of our multifaceted existence, we give birth to one, single state of consciousness. The attainment of this integral consciousness is the flowering of our spiritual evolution through which we realize true oneness with the soul and the supreme reality.

### The Split Between the Mind and the Inner State

It is the experience of almost all meditators that the awakening of the state beyond the mind does not necessarily bring true peace. On the contrary, in most cases the inner awakening has little or no effect on the fundamentally neurotic nature of the mind. In spite of reaching even a profound inner state, we continue to suffer a schizophrenic split between our human personality and the bliss of being. On a deep existential level, our personality is unable to follow the dramatic shift of awakening that has occurred on the inner plane; our level of consciousness as human beings is simply too low to recognize the immense value of spiritual awakening. We have our own unintelligent vision of happiness which has nothing to do with inner silence and the repose to be found in the beyond. Due to our basic ignorance, the mind persists

in obsessively circulating endless thought-forms of desire and fear based on the reality of the earth-plane and the collective unconscious. Even after awakening to the inner state we usually remain fragmented and incomplete inside.

Seekers often wonder why, despite the presence of the inner state, they continue to be lost in the mind most of the time. It is essential here to comprehend that arriving at the state beyond the mind does not automatically transform our basic unconsciousness. To be truly conscious is much more profound than the awakening of any state, pure awareness included. One can be in the state of presence and remain completely unconscious. One can dwell in the profundity of the absolute state and remain hopelessly controlled by the mind. Shifting to a state beyond the mind does guarantee that one existentially owns it as a new condition of being. Though it may have been realized on the energetic level, if the inner state has not yet become filled with the presence of I am, the consciousness of the soul cannot embody the inner realization.

Most meditators, regardless of having the inner state, will still indulge in incessant thinking and daydreaming, unable to dwell with total presence in the depth of being. To move beyond this neurotic divide between mind and being, they must gain a deeper insight into the truth of their internal reality and merge with their essential identity. The integration of consciousness is the missing link between the awakening of the inner state and the awakening of the soul.

### **To Go Beyond the Mind**

If the most profound state is given to someone who does not possess a reflective consciousness, it has no existential value. What gives value to any state is our ability to see its transcendent depth and meaning. When we are unconscious and ruled by the mechanical mind, no benefit accrues to our awakening. To devote our existence to inner silence and being, we must awaken true understanding and transcend our habitual identification with the mind. Only the power of our intelligence can distance us from the state of forgetfulness and bring real meaning to our abidance in the inner state. In the state of ignorance, the intelligence of our human mind is disconnected from the soul. Our responsibility is to develop a deeper wisdom and the spiritual intuition to activate the intelligence of the soul. The awakening of this level of intelligence is far more complex than the awakening of the inner state, and requires a long period of evolution to clearly reflect the intrinsic wisdom of our higher being.

The intelligence of most seekers lags way behind their awakening to the states beyond the mind. The presence of the inner state does not give them enough motivation to renounce excessive thinking, for they still habitually seek happiness through the mind. The mind continues to constitute their fundamental identity. Furthermore, they cannot succeed in going beyond the mind by reaching other, even more profound states, because their problem lies elsewhere - they are asleep in their

essence. Their intellect may understand that they *should* be conscious and transcend the mechanical mind, but because this conviction is purely mental, it is impotent to transform their experiential reality. The intellect is of the mind, and does not have the necessary power to bring about a real change in our perception on its own. It is the function of an evolved intelligence to align and integrate the mind with the realm of being. Integral intelligence still operates within the mind, but belongs to the soul and serves our higher purpose. It owns the knowledge I am.

A seeker has to recognize that living in the mind is none other than spiritual death. Unless we truly see the tremendous loss we suffer by forgetting our inner light and living unconsciously, how can we transcend the mind? The conversion of our perception is only possible when we finally recognize that there is no other way to exist than through continuous surrender to the inner realm.

### **Merging the Mind**

We cannot surrender the mind unless we are able to see our existence from the higher perspective of the soul's intelligence. The moment we reach this essential maturity, we begin the process of becoming whole. Only the soul is able to recognize that, in the absence of thought, something infinitely more valuable emerges as our sacred presence. This maturity is a function of our very evolution, the growth of our consciousness and being. To surrender the mind is to open an inner space within which the mystery of being can manifest and absorb our separate self.

To merge the mind is to unite the thinking part of self with one's inner being. From the place of stillness to which merging the mind delivers us, thinking can still arise in a gentle and transparent way without causing an existential split between the human and the soul. Truly conscious thinking is an extension of the soul's intelligence - not an expression of the mechanical mind - and possesses the qualities of tranquility and bliss, for it is fully embraced by the light of awareness and being. Thinking that arises from the depths of non-thinking is nothing but the natural creativity of silence, for it is the soul abiding in the unbroken awareness of the self that bridges arising thoughts with the silence of being..

The merging of the mind is a gradual process of growing into the state of surrender. The mind still has things to think about, as the human has not yet completed his evolution and existence on earth - but a mind that is conscious during thinking does not disrupt the simultaneous awareness of the inner state. While pursuing the relative, it dwells in constant remembrance of its unchanging essence. It does not act outside of the self, but is contained within the all-pervading presence of I am.

### **Becoming Conscious**

The process of becoming conscious is perhaps the most significant element of our

evolution. We do not refer here to increasing the power of awareness, but to the very illumination of the soul's intelligence. We can activate many components of our internal reality through practice, but we cannot awaken true understanding by means of meditation or mindfulness. Intelligence cannot be manipulated or activated from outside of self, for it represents the very consciousness of the soul. The evolution of our deepest intelligence is the result of an existential awakening to both our essence and our higher consciousness. The intelligence of the mind is something that we possess and can work with, but the intelligence of the soul is what and who we are.

Intelligence is the state of the soul's consciousness, the frequency of her light and the pure reflection of her identity. To be conscious is to embody the existence of the soul on the plane of pure knowing - to honor and treasure our true nature by constantly abiding in the light of I am. This unremitting devotion to the self is an expression of our real awakening as the soul.

### **Complete Presence and the State of Oneness**

Integral consciousness is the consciousness of the soul fully integrated with the inner state, uninterrupted by the movement of thought. As her awakening deepens through integral consciousness, she not only dwells in continuous remembrance of the inner state, but also of her own holistic, undivided existence. Ultimately, integral consciousness is the soul's complete presence merged with unbroken awareness of the beyond - the state of being whole.

Through the awakening of integral consciousness we transcend the split between mind and no-mind. Through the awakening of complete presence, the witness to oneness is no longer external to the consciousness of unity. When the mind surrenders to the inner state and our sense of identity shifts from thinking to being, we expand into the ultimate transparency of the universal I am. From the heart of pure subjectivity, we dissolve through the realization of the soul into the supreme subjectivity of the nameless undivided one reality.

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# The Teaching of Enlightenment

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## The Natural State

To transcend separation and realize oneness is the supreme goal of our human evolution, by the power of which we come back to our original state and actualize our eternal identity. True oneness cannot be accessed prior to the awakening of the inner state, for without the inner state there is no existential bridge between self and reality. As we move into the states beyond the mind, our human consciousness gradually begins to surrender to reality as a whole. Expansion into no-mind, the awakening of integral consciousness and the return to the natural state are the various aspects of our enlightenment to complete oneness with existence.

The natural state is the true environment of enlightened reality. To be natural is to dwell in the state of oneness with existence. All that does not possess the nature of oneness is foreign to the natural state. What makes the state natural is that it is rooted in the dimension of pure subjectivity in which the soul is not set apart from the ground of universal non-abidance. To realize this ultimate translucency of being - oneness - the natural state of the soul has to merge with the natural state of the universal self.

For any experience to be registered as an occurrence, a dualistic friction of energy and consciousness is required. But the natural state is so pure and transparent that it cannot be apprehended by the mind. In the natural state, the frequency of reality has reached such immaculate clarity and openness that it can no longer be differentiated from the absence of experience. It is so fundamental to who we are and what reality is that it cannot be captured as an actual experience, for it has nothing to contrast with other than itself. The natural state is neither an experience nor an experiencer, but our true nature in absolute unity with the true nature of reality. It is the elemental space of existence, the ground of our spiritual sanity, well-being, freedom and truth.

### Levels of Attainment in the Natural State

Any state of awakening we reach should eventually mature into its own dimension of

the natural state. And so, in our evolution towards the complete natural state, we move through the natural states of awareness, being, and the heart, until we reach the natural state of the soul. The natural state of awareness is the culmination of the stabilization and integration of that particular state - spacious, lucent and free of crystallized energy. The natural state of being has the characteristics of pure rest, non-fluctuation of energy, absolute transparency and unbroken absorption in the now. The natural state of the heart has the attributes of warm and tender expansiveness, deep and delicate sensitivity, and an unconditional sense of love and unity with creation. The natural state of the soul is a holistic and boundless experience of oneself that results from the integration of the inner state, the awakening of me and the surrender of the mind. In the natural state of the soul, one abides in a dimension beyond inner and outer, in complete union with the pure subjectivity contained in the space of everythingness.

From here, our further evolution into the natural state takes us into the state beyond polarities, transcendental state, and samadhi. In these states, the sense of individuality and the construct of the mind gradually merge with the inner realm and the soul. The complete natural state can be defined as the absence of personal self within the presence of universal transparency.

### **Natural Absorption**

For a state to be natural, it must be linked with absorption in the vertical reality. Unless we are absorbed in the inner state, we cannot experience the necessary absence through which we can transcend self-referral. Natural absorption allows us to rest beyond our self-consciousness in unity with the dimension of pure subjectivity. Absorbed in the natural state, the soul is unconditionally immersed in the inner plane of being and non-being at all times. Her absorption is equally present during meditation and daily activities; it is beyond doing and non-doing, thinking and non-thinking, having the eyes open or closed. Natural absorption is the true goal of all mature paths, for it reveals the depth of reality, without negating our ordinary existence on earth.

### **Non-abidance**

The ultimate reality has no support and no dwelling place. It abides upon everything and nothing, it abides upon itself. Non-abidance is the nature of reality - the formless, dimensionless foundation of the natural state. The natural state is one with the unoriginated consciousness of no support.

Non-abidance is the groundless ground of the now, the living depth of enlightened reality. In non-abidance, one goes beyond the limitation of having a relationship with existence. In truth, one can never 'relate' to existence as a whole. To experience the whole, one must get out of the way and dissolve into absence. In this absence, all is.

In the state of separation, one dwells upon the external or internal reality through thought, experience or perception. In the state of oneness, one dwells upon nothing. To realize non-abidance is to merge with the natural state of existence.

One enters non-abidance only through the dimension of being, which alone can absorb our separate consciousness, and gradually moves through various layers of absorption in reality. Although the inner state is the gateway to reality, one cannot reach non-abidance through the inner state alone, for in the very act of dwelling in it, there is an inherent duality in the relationship between one's individuality and the inner realm. To dwell in any state, no matter how profound, is to objectify it as external, even if this externality points inwards. Therefore, to transcend duality and attain true non-abidance, one has to surrender and dissolve in the state of one's own abidance.

To realize non-abidance we first need to transcend the division between our inner and outer realities and merge our separate consciousness. We must then deepen our unity with existence by awakening to transparent me, the state beyond polarities and the transcendental state. From this foundation, we are ready to relinquish our false individuality and unite with totality in samadhi. In our own absence, we merge with the void of the uncreated to finally embody the ancient state of non-abidance.

### **The Stateless State**

The natural state is unlike any ordinary state, for there is no one who dwells upon it. No one experiences the natural state, as the experiencer is no longer distinct from the state itself - he has merged with the inner realm. Because the natural state is not external to the one who knows it, there is no movement of energy and no direction of absorption. Natural absorption is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. It is not within or without, up or down, here or there. In natural absorption, no one is absorbed into nowhere. The natural state just is. This stateless state is neither the soul nor the beyond, but their undifferentiated unity - the dimensionless abode of one existence - pure reality as it is.

### **Nothing Special**

When we arrive at the destination of our inner quest, we realize that what we have reached is actually ordinary in its essence. The ego believes that behind the idea of enlightenment something absolutely extraordinary awaits. Bored with its own ordinariness and suffering a permanent inferiority complex, the idea of enlightenment holds a seductive charm for the ego, since it promises to transform its banal existence into a fairy tale of bliss and ecstasy. The ego looks to the path of self-realization as a way to gain spiritual power and collect all sorts of mystical experiences, but all these projections are ultimately hollow. The ego cannot see the truth of the path unless it surrenders to it.

The natural state is nothing special; it is divinely ordinary and perfect in its simplicity. However, the ego, due to its gross and superficial nature, tends to interpret this naked simplicity as negative. The ability to recognize the tremendous value of the natural state comes from the surrender of the mind and the awakening of the deeper sensitivity of the soul. The soul does not seek anything special, for she longs for truth, not intensity of experience. She seeks liberation from all that is false so she can return to her natural state of peace, freedom and purity.

The ego, in its insensitivity, is unable to even register the absence of the natural state until it gets so stifled by its own falseness that it is finally forced to recognize the lack of any internal space in which it can simply be and regain its basic sanity. The natural state is like the air we breathe or the open space in which we live. No one considers space to be extraordinary, yet it contains all living things and is the very precondition of life. Only in the claustrophobic suffocation we experience when space is taken away from us are we able to see, its priceless value. The natural state represents the basic goodness of existence, which is so primordial that we are able to identify it only when we lose or regain it.

If we do experience something 'special', it is not our natural state. Because the mind cannot see beyond reality's surface, it only gets excited by shallow experiences that have no existential value. By surrendering to the natural state, we transcend our craving for experiences and drop the grasping mind. In the emptiness of just being we merge with the transparency of reality and become free from seeking at last.

### **The Natural State of Oneness**

The natural state of being is non-abidance. The natural state of consciousness is not-knowing. The natural state of the heart is kindness. The natural state of the mind is egolessness. The natural state of oneness is all-that-is, the one taste of existence. Dwelling in the natural state, the soul can finally rest in her original unity with the whole. The natural state of universal oneness is an ocean of pure bliss, the primordial, all-containing space of truth and love.

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# The Teaching of Enlightenment

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**Absolute:** the dimension of the source; the realm of absence; the unborn; the uncreated; the heart of the now; the primordial isness of reality; the original void; the ground of creation; the unmanifested essence of the beyond; the being aspect of the supreme reality; the final depth of the inner realm.

**Absolute State:** the final depth in the realization of being; the state of pure rest and unconditional absorption; a state of freedom from energetic fluctuations; the unification of the soul and the absolute on the level of being.

**Absorption:** the experience of being pulled into the inner plane; the fusion of self and reality; the amalgamation of relative consciousness with absolute existence; the unconditional repose of the soul in the beloved; samadhi.

**Awakening:** a radical shift of consciousness into a higher state of existence; a sudden opening into one of the states beyond the mind.

**Awareness:** the radiance of cognition; the true nature of intelligence; the pure knowing of consciousness channelled through me to bring the phenomenal world into recognition or, when internalised, to illuminate the knowledge of I am.

**Being:** the aspect of the inner state that links the soul with the vertical plane of the source; the ground of existence; the pure isness of the supreme reality; the fundamental support of consciousness and all that is.

**Beloved:** the heart of the supreme reality; the divine; the creator; the all-embracing love-essence of the god-state.

**Beyond:** the inner dimension of the universal I am; the divine realm; the unmanifested.

**Blueprint:** the design and plan of completion for each soul; the evolutionary destiny of the soul and final vision of her wholeness.

**Completion:** arrival at maximal wholeness within human existence; the ending of root-karma; the actualisation of the soul's full potential; the enlightenment of the soul.

**Complete Me:** the unification of pure me and the human personality.

**Conscious Me:** the sense of presence experienced in the mind; self-attention within the thinking process; the ego

**Conscious Mind:** the level of consciousness at which intelligence can sustain a relatively clear sense of me.

**Consciousness:** the light of cognition intrinsic to creation and being; the source of awareness; the primordial knowledge of I am.

**Creation:** the totality of the manifested consciousness; the entirety of the phenomenal world and the inner plane of universal consciousness.

**Cultivation:** methodical practice directed towards perfecting a previously awakened state, or towards preparing the ground for a further stage of awakening.

**Divine:** the heart of the absolute reality; the domain of grace and love.

**Duality:** in ignorance, the state of separation; in reality, the natural polarisation of consciousness into being and knowing.

**Ego:** the self-consciousness of the mind; the sense of me based on personality.

**Enlightenment:** the complete transcendence of ignorance; the dissolution of the false self; the awakening of the soul; the soul's return to her original state of oneness and wholeness; the complete inner state; the merging of the mind; the dissolution of the false self; the unification of me with the soul and the soul with the ultimate reality.

**Emptiness:** a state of consciousness free of content relating to both experiencer and experience; the absolute; no-mind; non-abidance; the state of absence.

**False Me:** a subconscious sense of me fully identified with the mental realm; a superficial sense of individuality alienated from one's true nature; the exteriorized self-consciousness of forgetfulness; me disconnected from I am.

**God:** the supreme reality; the absolute heart of existence; the mind and being of all-that-is; the cause and ultimate goal of creation.

**Grace:** evolutionary intervention from the beyond, or in the form of a human guide, which manifests as a sudden acceleration of our awakening, healing and purification, or a release from karmic ties.

**Gradual Enlightenment:** a concept according to which enlightenment is reached by elevating one's level of awakening through many stages of gradual inner progress.

**Gradual Path:** an evolutionary journey towards enlightenment involving the gradual completion of many levels of awakening.

**Healing:** the transformation of human pain into love and wholeness.

**Heart:** the sacred core of individual consciousness; the seat of the soul; the soul's gateway to the divine; the divine realm.

**Here:** the horizontal plane of existence made known by the senses and the mind; perceptual reality; that which appears to be arising from the now; that which comes and goes, lacking the fundamental quality of being; the time-space continuum.

**Horizontal Plane:** the here; the relative expression of the now in the linear time-space continuum.

**Human:** the vehicle of the soul on the earth plane; the soul's extension in creation; a temporary identity based on the mind and personality that has a sense of me, but not of I am.

**I Am:** the soul; the light of pure subjectivity; the essence of true individuality; the centre of higher intelligence; the fundamental nature of universal consciousness.

**Inner State:** the state of pure subjectivity beyond the mind as experienced through awareness, being, heart, or any combination thereof; the energy-body of the soul; the soul's portal to the beyond.

**Integral Consciousness:** the state of unity between the mind and the inner state; the unbroken consciousness of the inner state and the soul; an uninterrupted state of complete awareness and presence.

**Integration:** full maturity, transparency and naturalness within a previously awakened state.

**Intelligence:** the living spirit of existence; the coherence and purposefulness of the thought-process; a movement of understanding linked to the sense of me and the soul.

**Karma:** the interconnectedness of all elements in creation; the law of cause and effect; the law of justice in the plane of relativity.

**Negative Karma:** the net of illusion that holds the majority of souls in a state of lower consciousness; a lack of evolutionary support caused by one's resistance to awaken from the collective ignorance.

**Positive Karma:** being true to the inner call of the soul and taking responsibility for one's own awakening manifest as assistance from existence.

**Liberation:** the final step in the journey towards self-realisation; emancipation from human existence; the ending of karma; freedom from self; entry into reality.

**Me:** the sense of personal individuality; the personalized light of pure subjectivity tied to individual purpose, blueprint and destiny; the first and foremost expression of the soul through which she reflects her identity in the mirror of pure consciousness; the human sense of individuality arising from the fundamental I am; the human sense of I am; the cognizing essence of the waking state through which the soul enters creation; the link between the I am of the soul and the mind of the human.

**Meditation:** a natural state of absorption in reality; abidance in the inner state; a condition of surrender to the now; just being; the unity of I am with the beyond.

**Meditation Practice:** a training of concentration on self and letting go of self that aims at achieving the natural state of pure subjectivity; internalization of attention; an expansion and deepening of consciousness towards unity with the beyond.

**Mind:** an organism of mental reality composed of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious, inseparable from intelligence and the intrinsic sense of me.

**Mystical State:** an altered state of consciousness not rooted in the reality of I am and the soul.

**Natural State:** effortless abidance in reality as it is; natural absorption in being; the state of perfect emptiness; an experience of transparency between the soul and the beyond.

**No-mind:** a dimension of consciousness and being that exists beyond and independent of the mind; a profound level of realisation wherein the sense of me in the mind is absorbed within the state of emptiness; the surrender of the mind to the consciousness of the soul.

**Non-abidance:** an experience of non-separation in which the division between here and now is dissolved; a level of realisation in which the soul abides in the reality of all, beyond any reference to creation or the uncreated; transparent unity between consciousness of oneself and consciousness of the totality that transcends the self-

limiting notions of 'who' and 'where.'

**Non-being:** non-abidance; the realm of absence; the state of transcendence; a condition in which me has merged with the beyond; the dissolution of self in the absolute through which being is transcended; the absence of a knower through which being reveals its non-abiding depth.

**Non-conceptualization:** the natural state of being; a condition of abidance in reality free of veiling mental constructs; the unity of the knower and no-mind

**Non-doing:** a state of surrender; pure meditation; the original stillness of being.

**Non-thinking:** a natural absorption in the light of consciousness and being that is untouched by arising thoughts, yet includes the transparent movement of intelligence.

**Not-knowing:** the thought-and-content-free dimension of being and consciousness.

**Now:** the vertical reality of being; the timeless ground of reality; the meeting-point between time and the beyond; the source of the present moment; real time.

**Oneness:** a condition of existence devoid of a sense of separation; a level of realisation in which the individual consciousness is merged with the consciousness of all; a state of unity through which the ultimate transparency between the soul and the one reality is realized.

**Over-soul:** the aspect of universal intelligence that bridges the soul and her destiny; the force of grace that oversees and directs the evolution of each soul.

**Personality:** a structure of human consciousness composed of the physical, emotional and mental bodies; the psychological frame of ego-consciousness; the sense of self based on the mind.

**Pure Me:** me in itself as reflected in the light of I am; the luminous consciousness of oneself beyond the mind and senses; awakened me.

**Pure Subjectivity:** the realm of I am; the dimension of the source and the soul; the ground of consciousness; consciousness in its original non-objectified form.

**Purification:** the cleansing of the mind; the removal of negative tendencies; the alignment of the human with the soul's essence and intention.

**Real Time:** the non-linear flow of the timeless now; the transcendental time of the

beyond; the becoming of being; the process of cognition merged with non-becoming.

**Samadhi:** the natural absorption of human consciousness into the soul and the beyond; the merging of I am and me in the state of absence; the dissolution of me in I am.

**Self:** the self-evident, self-radiant, self-knowing, fundamental nature of reality; the non-dual consciousness of existence in itself, by itself and through itself; in its higher meaning, universal I am; in its lower meaning, the soul; in its most basic meaning, the sense of me.

**Self-attention:** in its highest meaning, I am conscious of I am (consciousness of consciousness); in its higher meaning, me conscious of I am (awareness of consciousness); in its lower meaning, me conscious of itself (awareness of awareness).

**Self-remembrance:** mindfulness of I am; the effort to maintain constant awareness of pure consciousness; unbroken recollection of the state of presence; the horizontal unity of me and I am.

**Separation:** a state of ignorance and forgetfulness in which the condition of conscious oneness is absent; a low level of evolution wherein individual consciousness experiences itself as existing apart from the one reality; an existential friction between self and the total existence; the sense of me alienated from both the inner realm and creation.

**Soul:** the essence of impersonal individuality linked to the eternal evolution of light and consciousness; an individualised angle of perception endowed with the intrinsic knowledge of I am.

**Dormant Soul:** the soul present only in its seed-potential, entirely disconnected from me.

**Active Soul:** the soul unaware of herself, but inspiring her evolution through the intuitive dimension of human consciousness.

**Awakened Soul:** the soul conscious of her own identity.

**Soul-realisation:** the complete actualisation of the soul's identity; the awakening of the complete body of the soul; the embodiment of wholeness and integral consciousness; becoming one's eternal self; the culmination of the individuation process; the birth of the complete state of I am, our ultimate individuality.

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**Source:** the absolute; the unmanifested; the original emptiness.

**Stabilisation:** the relative completion of a process through which an awakened state becomes fully established; a stage of awakening in which the need for further cultivation of a particular state becomes unnecessary.

**State Beyond Polarities:** an early stage of the transcendence process in which awareness reaches a level of relative absorption and absence.

**State of Presence:** the state of self-attention; pure awareness; consciousness in itself; the turning back of consciousness upon itself; the centre of the soul's intelligence; the I am of the mind.

**Subconscious Me:** the subliminal sense of identity; the diluted sense of me experienced below the threshold of conscious me; a dream-like, unfocused sense of self experienced when lost in the mind or spaced-out.

**Subconscious Mind:** the semi-conscious arising of thoughts in which the 'thinker' is not present to itself.

**Subconscious:** a subtle realm of lower intelligence present below the conscious reality; the processing sphere of mental impressions that serves as the foundation of the conscious mind.

**Sudden Enlightenment:** instantaneous arrival at the enlightened state through a sudden and dramatic shift of consciousness and being.

**Sudden Path:** the path based on the principle of sudden enlightenment.

**Time:** the movement of becoming as reflected in consciousness.

**Transcendence:** liberation; the final level in the realisation of the transcendental state wherein one is released from the dimension of ignorance.

**Transcendental State:** the state of absence; a level of realisation in which the consciousness of the soul merges with the absolute.

**Transcendental Me:** the realisation of the soul from within the transcendental state; the complete experience of me merged with the realm of absence; me abiding in the natural, unconditional samadhi.

**Transparent Me:** a level of soul-realisation in which me is met and actualized holistically within its translucent unity with the inner state.

**Turiya:** samadhi in the sleep state; I am integrated with sleep; awakened sleep; the fourth state - beyond waking, dreaming and deep sleep; the soul absorbed in the beloved; the natural samadhi.

**Turiyatitta:** the substratum upon which the soul abides in samadhi; the beyond; the state of the creator.

**Unconscious Mind:** the matrix of memories, impressions, and tendencies that lies beneath the subconscious and conscious mind; the non-conscious source of the subconscious mind; the impersonal wisdom at the root of individual consciousness.

**Unconscious:** the storehouse of universal, collective and individual mind-content; the ontological foundation of manifested consciousness.

**Understanding:** the clarity of knowing; the unity of discrimination and wisdom.

**Universal Consciousness:** the self-illuminating aspect of the whole of existence; the impersonal I am of totality; the fundamental nature of the absolute now.

**Universal I am:** the consciousness of the god-state; the overseeing awareness of all-that-is; the supreme reality.

**Universal Intelligence:** the wisdom of totality; the mind of universal consciousness; the intelligence of the supreme reality.

**Wholeness:** the soul's evolutionary completion including her spiritual enlightenment and human completion; the realization of our evolutionary potential; the embodiment of our ultimate self; complete and multidimensional awakening of our soul-identity.

**Witness:** the background consciousness beyond perceptual reality; the state of presence; the condition of natural non-involvement founded upon a consciousness of one's true self.

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The following audio recordings are available for download. Please note that these recordings are not 'lectures'. They are not communications from mind to mind. These are teachings recorded at retreats during practice sessions in which all students sit with closed eyes in the state of meditation. The words do not arise from a personal intelligence, but from the inner dimension of truth and understanding. We recommend to listen to these recordings while sitting in meditation.

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[The Realization of Transparent Me](#)  
[Meeting of Clarity and Surrender](#)  
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### **November 2008 retreat in India**

[The Essence of Love](#)  
[Abiding in the Heart](#)  
[Embodying the Soul](#)  
[The Birth of the Individual from the Universal](#)  
[Divine Shikantaza](#)

### **August 2008 retreat in Israel**

[The Essence of Consciousness](#)  
[From Mindfulness to Presence](#)  
[Opening to the Beyond](#)

The Mystery of Heart  
Merging of Heart and the Absolute



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Meditation Retreat with Anadi is a time of intense inner work and complete dedication to the soul's awakening. It calls for commitment to one's evolution, sincerity and genuine longing for the self. Here, from the heart of the timeless now, we remember our original identity again and become our ultimate self.

The retreat aims at the multidimensional awakening of all aspects of our existence as reflected in the teaching of Anadi. The foundation of the work is initiation and the deepening and maturation of the inner state, the internal space in which we abide beyond the mind. Giving birth to the inner state involves achieving the condition of pure awareness, attaining absorption in being and the awakening of the heart. Once the inner state has opened up, and become permanently established and solidified, we dwell in unity with existence. Now we have created the foundation for the awakening of the soul. It is only within the space of oneness, emptiness and no-mind that we can fully meet ourselves as the light of the soul, our eternal identity beyond life and death.

The retreat is held in complete silence. Its structure, which includes 6-7 hours of sitting and walking meditation, bears similarity to Zen form and discipline. Sitting meditation is combined with various practices designed to deepen and realign the energy body and consciousness with expansion into the inner state.

To support individual practice and clarity, private consultations will be given. For any participant of the retreat, we highly recommend deep study of the teaching, as well as continuity of daily meditation practice and constant cultivation.



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To contact Anadi - [anadimail@gmail.com](mailto:anadimail@gmail.com)

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