

Approaching Reality

As requested, the focus of this first meeting of 2016 will be on the final, long quotation at the end of the paper '*20151119 Am I My Limited Mind?*'. It would be a good idea to re-read this before continuing with the material below which is supplementary, and covers the same subject from a different angle. It is a transcript of a meditation Rupert gave towards the end of the recent retreat in Wales, and it followed on from a long dialogue on the same subject the day before. It is worth mentioning what Rupert said towards the end of that dialogue:

'I've given you the rational explanation of how that process takes place [*awareness's forgetting of its own being*] but that's not really important. What's important is to *feel* that everyone and everything we come in contact with is God's infinite being. The explanation is for people like you and I who have such complex minds ...'

So if you find the material below difficult or boring, it's not a problem. Stop reading, spend some time just resting as awareness, and then listen to the free yoga meditation on Youtube: '*The Borderless, Empty, Self-aware Field of Pure Consciousness*' which covers the same ground experientially (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84E1NGMM00s>). And we might all experiment with seeing and feeling that everyone and everything we come in contact with in our day-to-day activities is God's infinite being.

If you want to explore and understand these ideas, which relate to the second stage of the Direct Path, it's worth remembering that during that second stage all new understanding comes not from the mind, but from abiding as awareness – self-remembering. That is why Rupert says near the end of the meditation below: '*Don't think about anything that I am saying. It cannot be thought about*'. So as you read the meditation, don't wrestle with the words. Just read them very slowly and allow them to point the direction and lead you back over and over again to resting knowingly as pure awareness.

God Lives in Eternity But Dances in Time

In order to *know* an object, be that object a subtle object such as a thought or a feeling, or a gross object such as a body or a world, there has to be a subject that *knows*. It is not possible to have an object without there being a subject. And it is not possible for there to be a subject without an object. This subject-object relationship is what is known as 'duality'. This dual way of knowing is the only way it is possible for an object such as a thought, feeling, sensation or perception to be known. In other words, duality is the *means* through which objective experience is known. As such it is not a mistake – it is a way of knowing. A way in which it is possible to know a thought, a feeling, a body or a world. As such, duality is the agency of manifestation – the means by which objects are brought into apparent existence.

However, there is one type of knowledge that doesn't require this subject-object relationship. And that is the subject's knowing of itself. In dualistic knowledge, the object is always known by a subject: 'I know my thoughts and feelings'; 'I love you'; 'I perceive the landscape'. In dualistic knowledge or experience there is always an 'I', the subject, that knows, feels or perceives an object. But the subject's knowing of itself doesn't require the subject-object relationship. The 'I' that knows, is the 'I' that is known. So the subject's knowing of itself, the self's knowing of itself is the only knowledge there is that doesn't require apparent duality.

The self that knows is the self that is known. I am that which knows that 'I am'. In other words, in the self's knowing of itself there is no subject that knows and no object that is known. In the self's

knowing of itself, there is no knower and no known. There is just 'knowing'. And this 'knowing' knows itself simply by being itself. It is too close to itself to be able to turn round, as it were, and look at itself, and thus know itself in subject-object relationship. Its being itself, *is* its knowing of itself. Its knowing itself *is* its being itself.

The entire manifestation – that is thoughts, feelings sensations, perceptions – lies in potential in this pure knowing. In order to be realised or actualised, this knowing has to divide itself into a subject and an object, into a knower and a known. So duality is the mechanism or the means through which and as which pure knowing realises or actualises the infinite potential that lies unmanifest within it.

Prior to dividing itself into a subject that knows and an object that is known this knowing has no form and therefore no limitations. That is why it is referred to as 'pure knowing' – knowing that is not mixed with anything seemingly other than itself, not mixed with any limitations, and is thus said to be unlimited or infinite. In the religious traditions it is known as 'God's infinite, self-aware being'. The common name for it is 'I'. Thus the world lies in potential, unmanifest in 'I'. That is why in the Kashmir Shaivite tradition they say that the world is an expansion of 'I'.

However, in order to realise or actualise this unmanifest potential, 'I' has to divide itself in two. It has to become a separate subject of experience, the separate self from whose point of view a separate object, other or world may be known. And this is why Ramana Maharshi said: 'The 'I' thought is the mother of the world'. He didn't literally mean the thought, 'I', he meant the collapse of infinite knowing or infinite consciousness into a temporary, finite self. It is that collapse which brings manifestation out of being, into existence. 'Existence', from the two Latin words: *ex, sistere*, meaning 'to stand out from'. In order for an object, other or world to 'stand out' as an object of experience the self must collapse into a separate subject.

In order for Mary, asleep in Buckland Hall, to manifest the streets of London that lie in potential, unmanifest in her mind, her mind must collapse into Jane's temporary, finite mind, from whose point of view she is able to know the streets of London. In other words, Jane believes that she is looking at something other than herself. In fact, she is looking at the content of Mary's mind. Mary's mind has divided itself into a subject, Jane, and an object, London. Through the agency of Jane's apparently finite mind, Mary is seeing herself as the world. That means that whatever each of us, as apparently separate selves know or experience, is *only* God's infinite mind.

The world is what God's infinite mind looks like from the point of view of a separate subject. That is why the Sufis say 'whosoever knows their self, knows their Lord'. In order to know the ultimate reality of the world, it is first necessary to know the essential reality of oneself. In order to know the nature of the world she sees around her, Jane must first recognise the nature of her own mind. She must first recognise that her mind is a temporary and apparent limitation of Mary's infinite mind. Jane does not have her own mind. Her mind is Mary's mind.

In order to know the nature of the world we see around us, we must first know the nature of our own minds. We must first recognise that our temporary, finite minds that seem to be located in and share the limits and destiny of the body, are in fact, temporary modulations of God's infinite mind – the only mind there is. Our minds are not our minds. There is only God's infinite mind. Each of our minds is a temporary limit that God's infinite mind itself assumes, in order to bring into apparent existence a segment of its own infinite potential. It is only from Jane's limited point of view that the streets of London, or the world, comes into existence – that is that 'stands out from' her own mind. From the point of view of Mary's mind, which is the only mind there is, no

object, other or world ever comes into existence, that is never 'stands out from' itself. All that seems to be in existence is a modulation, a colouring of its own infinite being.

From the point of view of a temporary, finite self, located in and as the body, objects, others and the world seem to exist independently of that self. Things seem to have their own existence, they seem to 'stand out from' our minds. But the apparent existence of things is a reflection of the *way* we see, not *what* we see. From the point of view of God's infinite mind – the only mind there is – no object, self, other or world ever comes *into* existence or passes *out of* existence. There is just itself, modulating itself, appearing to itself as a multiplicity and diversity of all experience, but never being, becoming or knowing anything other than itself.

The knowing that shines in the midst of all knowledge and experience, is God's infinite being, God's infinite, self-aware being, the common name for which is 'I'. And as all there is to all knowledge and experience is the knowing of it, thus all there is, is God's infinite self-aware being. Manifestation is not *pervaded* by God's infinite being, it *is* God's infinite being. To suggest that manifestation is pervaded by God's infinite being or Consciousness, is to suggest that manifestation is *one* thing and that it is pervaded by God's infinite being, *another* thing. In other words, it is to *start* with manifestation and add God's infinite being to it.

We should *start* with God's infinite being. Why? Because unlimited, self-aware knowing is our primary experience. We should start there. Start with God's infinite, self-aware being. Start with the knowing with which the apparent known is known. And then see if it is possible ever to leave this knowing. See now if you, as this knowing, can ever know or come in contact with anything other than knowing. See that this knowing never knows or comes in contact with anything other than itself.

Don't be fooled by the apparent collapse of this infinite knowing into a subject that knows and an object that is known. It is not possible to prevent the subject-object mechanism from taking place. Indeed the subject-object mechanism is the means by which God's infinite potential becomes realised or actualised as the world. But don't lose your identity to this mechanism. The separate subject of experience is not a 'self'. It is the activity of consciousness through which and as which it manifests itself to itself as the world. Don't lose your essential identity to this activity.

Mary falls asleep in Buckland Hall. She dreams that she is Jane on the streets of London. From Jane's point of view, her internal world of thoughts and feelings seem to take place in 'time'. Her external experience of perceptions seems to take place in 'space'. And as Jane is ignorant of the nature of her own mind, she believes that time and space are qualities of reality. Jane believes that time and space exist independent of her own mind. Indeed, she believes that her own mind takes place *in* time and space. She doesn't yet realise that 'time' is what Mary's *eternal* mind looks like when seen from the perspective of thought. That 'space' is what Mary's *infinite* mind looks like when seen from the perspective of perception.

It is *thought* that makes eternity look like time. It is *perception* that makes infinity look like space. In other words, time and space, the apparent containers of our experience, are what God's eternal, infinite mind looks like from the perspective of our finite minds. God's eternity refracted through thought appears to itself as time. God's infinity refracted through perception appears to itself as space. As such, time and space are these two empty containers, these two transparent containers in which experience, from the point of view of the finite mind, seems to be contained. They are, as it were, the first objects that come into existence. They are the objects that are

closest to God's eternal, infinite being. Their emptiness mimics the true emptiness of God's infinite being.

Time never stands out from eternity. It is a modulation *of* eternity. Space never stands out from infinity. It is a modulation *of* infinity. The common name for eternity is 'Now'. The common name for infinity is 'Here'. As such, the 'now' is eternity shining in the finite mind. The experience of 'here' is infinity shining in the finite mind. The 'now' is the finite mind's access to eternity. The experience 'here', at which all experience takes place, is the finite mind's access to infinity.

Don't think about anything that I am saying. It cannot be thought about. See that no experience ever leaves this self-aware knowing. We may call this self-aware knowing 'God's infinite being' or 'I' or 'consciousness'. But whatever we call it, or if we prefer to leave it unnamed, see that whatever it is never comes in contact with anything other than itself. See that whenever any experience appears – a thought, a feeling, a sensation or a perception – no new thing comes into existence. There is just an endless modulation of this ever-present, self-aware knowing.

[3/12/2015 Meditation from Rupert Spira's Retreat at Buckland Hall]