

THE JOURNEY

3. Other worlds

It seems plausible that the guidance and the experiences of heightened consciousness we get on the way come from a level beyond our normal state: they are transcendent. Here is a recent example of such an experience in a letter from one of our friends, who had read the last two papers:

The Hubble spacecraft beamed pictures of a star being born and a star dying (the news last week).

I was aware of universes created into existence and universes dying, by what power? Is it the power we call God, but we make God too small. I feel that the power is LOVE. Unconditional LOVE.

This power incarnated at a certain time – Jesus, fully God and fully man. We killed the body and the power of LOVE reunited with LOVE. The Holy Spirit is drawing us back to where we came from and our journey through life is to remember who and what we really are, and when we leave the body we will be at one with LOVE. We are being drawn by LOVE and responding to the calling.

I went to bed and slept well and awoke feeling at peace with the world, 'the peace which passes all understanding'. [Anne Milton 20.9.09]

How do we view experiences like this one? It seems as if we normally live in a sort of fog, which light only occasionally penetrates at full strength. We actively or passively seek for the light through meditation, stillness, through music, through gurus and so on. And why? Because the experiences make us feel better, they give us energy, and when the fog disperses for a while, as Robert Browning puts it:

The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his Heaven -
All's right with the world!

These experiences seem to come from another world, the other side of the fog. In terms of the idea of the different worlds: the physical, subtle, causal and divine worlds, the transcendent is presumably that which crosses the boundaries between these worlds. A mental worry triggers a physical feeling of fear. Exercise produces a psychological state of well-being. An intellectual enquiry leads to an ecstatic discovery of the truth. Meditation transcends the physical and the subtle levels.

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How do we view such transcendental phenomena in relation to the Fourth Stage of the Ladder?

Fourth Stage or SATTVAPATTI - the dawn of true Self; having gone inward he comprehends his Self as it really is. The doubts and reflections cease and the real Self with right knowledge begins to appear.

If this is the object of our journey, what part do the experiences of the transcendental play? They seem to be sign posts or pit stops, but do they reveal the real Self? And why don't they last? We usually explain this away by saying that our egos lay ownership and they lose their power.

Perhaps, on the other hand, the selfish ego does not matter. Maybe we just fail to see that our picture of the Self is faulty. We normally see ourselves as a mind and feelings inside a body, and somewhere else buried deep inside ourselves is a higher self. Sometimes the giant awakes from its slumbers, maybe alerted by something from outside or another plane, and sends us a message.

But an awakened state isn't experienced like that. As Rupert Spira puts it:

We are deeply conditioned to believe that the world contains the body, that the body contains the mind and that the mind contains a little intermittent spark of Consciousness. And because this conditioning is so deep, we *feel* that this is so.

However, we never experience a body in a world, a mind in a body or Consciousness in a mind.

It is not the world that contains the body, the mind and Consciousness. It is Consciousness that contains the mind, the body and the World, on an equal footing.

The mind, the body and the world appear *in* Consciousness. That is our actual experience. It is not an extraordinary experience. It is not the experience of one in a million enlightened sages. It is just our natural, every day experience. It always has been. When it is seen, it is so simple and so obvious.

The old belief that the world contains the body, which contains the mind, which contains Consciousness, triggers a series of thoughts, feelings and activities all based on that belief.

Once it is seen clearly that it is Consciousness that contains the mind, the body and the world, these thoughts, feelings and activities slowly unwind. They disappear, not through any effort but rather through neglect. They simply become redundant. Their foundation has been removed.

The clear seeing that everything is within Consciousness is instantaneous. The unwinding of old habits of thinking, feeling and acting, takes time.

[Rupert Spira, *The Transparency of Things*]

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