

Not Peace
But A Sword.

*A Philosophical Treatise
On Ego,
Allusion,
and Non Duality*

Foreword

When Jesus Christ said, “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword,” he was not promoting war and violence while subjugating tranquility. The sword he speaks of is not the sword of steel, but the sword of Truth. What is meant by his summarial and metaphorical statement is this:

“I am not here to make friends, be popular, be thought well of, and maintain the status quo.”

“I am here to tell the Truth. The real Truth—and not what is championed by the masses or the authorities as the truth.”

“This Truth shall not be watered down for the sake of appeasing people; it shall cut like a scalpel with surgical precision.”

“This Truth shall make no compromises to avoid offending or to spare the feelings of those who cannot handle it.”

“This Truth shall not be fettered because it is perceived as inconvenient; because it refuses to conform to the prevailing sentiments of the time; because it might imply that some of your behaviors ought to be altered and your aims in life realigned.”

“This Truth shall be spoken regardless of anyone's limited ability to comprehend it.”

“This Truth shall be spoken even if it results in my crucifixion and death.”

“This Truth is THE Truth—and I make no apologies for it.”

Chapter 1: Introduction

“He who writes 4 fools
is certainly 2 have a large...audience.”

~AS

In this philosophical treatise, the most essential information has been presented up front, in a style intended to maximize clarity—at least to the extent possible given the subject matter, which is by nature elaborate and challenging to comprehend. There is an inherent trade-off between brevity and rigor: one cannot be entirely concise while also addressing every skeptical consideration or providing detailed justification for every claim ; as such, the reader is encouraged to contemplate adjunct matters himself, if such is his inclination.

As the treatise progresses, the focus shifts from foundational to more specialized matters: the reader will encounter the core tenets of the philosophy early, while the later chapters provide additional depth and texture for those who wish to pursue a full and vivid rendering of the philosophical vision offered here. This structure allows flexibility: if the reader elects to abandon the work after the foundational framework has been established, he will not have an incomplete picture, but only one of a lower resolution. (It has been taken into account that realistically the audience for a work such as this is surely quite small, and relatively few people finish such works even if they enjoy them).

Early chapters are intentionally brief by design in the hopes of conveying a clean and clear narrative on various definite, essential topics. Many key concepts are repeated deliberately throughout this work, because learning is best accomplished via repetition—to read something once is often insufficient for meaningful assimilation, and the amount retained of that which is read but once tends to be a relatively small percentage. I have endeavored to leave personal details and anecdotes out of this treatise to the maximum extent possible and instead to speak in general, universal terms. Some chapters, particularly those found later in the treatise, conclude with

quotes relevant to the topic therein discussed; the reader is welcome to skip these quotes if he finds reading them more a distraction to the flow of the main text than a valuable supplement (quotes considered essential reading are included in-line).

The term ‘spiritual’ as used in this treatise, unless otherwise specified in a particular context, is not meant to imply adherence to any particular tradition or belief system; rather, it is a shorthand for pointing beyond the purely material, egoic, and conceptual framing of reality—toward the direct apprehension of metaphysical Being that cannot be reduced to psychological states or narrative constructs, and the underlying nonlinear, non-material substrate and nature of Reality. The term generally functions as a broad catch-all, and the reader is encouraged to interpret it loosely rather than rigidly.

In this treatise:

- *self* (lower case) refers to the false, egoic sense of identity as a character and its storyline.
- *Self* (capitalized) refers to the infinite, irreducible ground and condition of Being—what one truly is.
- *individual* (lower case) refers to any particular person.
- *Individual* (capitalized) refers to the Self manifest as the combination of subjective knowing and immediate object (the physical body), in contrast to the Self as prior to division and the Self manifest as mediate object (i.e., the material universe).
- *Positive* and *Negative* are occasionally used with their original intended meanings (addition vs subtraction ; as opposed to good vs bad); I have endeavored to specify when they are being so employed.
- *Consciousness*, *Awareness*, *Subjectivity*, and *Mind* are used essentially interchangeably. Except in the rare case that some fine distinction is being made for the sake of clarification, these terms can be treated to mean precisely the same thing.
- Self and Atman are used interchangeably and mean precisely the same thing.

- *God* and *Brahman* are used interchangeably and mean precisely the same thing.

Non Duality, as it is known in the West, or Advaita, as it is known in the East, happens to be the nearest approximation to the Truth that can be found amongst the major belief systems that populate the world stage—but it does not represent the whole truth: there are many aspects of Non Duality that range from potentially confusing to patently fallacious. Non Duality is, however, the best jumping off point for most of what will be discussed herein—it serves as a foundational framework one can reference as a reasonably solid basis of understanding, from which all necessary modifications and adjustments shall be made. It is not essential that the reader be already familiar with Non Duality, as sufficient detail will be provided to explain the basics of the belief system herein; however, it is likely that having some background of understanding in Non Duality would make comprehension of that which is advanced in this treatise somewhat easier (then again, previously-held beliefs and rigid positionalities can often serve as a great hindrance to gaining deeper insight and understanding into the real nature of things, so perhaps he who ventures into this treatise with no preconceived notions is in fact in the superior position).

No one is in exclusive possession of the Truth, and even the most sincere realization is ultimately unverifiable beyond the Individual; therefore, the reader is encouraged to treat this treatise not as gospel, but as a set of perspectives worth considering, and to contemplate the veracity of everything put forward herein. The Truth of our incredibly complicated and elaborate Reality, with respect to which most are aware of but a tiny fraction, is not something to be grasped conceptually and intellectually via comprehension of what another has written or talked about, but lived through radically subjective experience. It is one thing to *know*, and another thing to *know about*.

Best wishes!

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:Proclamation.....	8
Chapter 2:Certainty vs Uncertainty.....	10
Chapter 3:Fundamental Ego Positionalities and Their Reversals.....	12
Chapter 4:The Basics of Non Duality.....	16
Chapter 5:Qualities of Authentic Spiritual Teachers.....	23
Chapter 6:A Brief Overview of the Seven Chakras.....	27
Chapter 7:Love as a Limitation.....	30
Chapter 8:The Relationship Between Subject and Object.....	34
Chapter 9: The Problem with the Concept of Proof.....	36
Chapter 10:The Beautiful Freedom of Not Having Free Will.....	41
Chapter 11:The Incredible Power of Radical Acceptance.....	45
Chapter 12:The Difference Between Compassion and Empathy.....	48
Chapter 13:Harmonizing the Inner and Outer Worlds: The Importance of Authenticity.....	51
Chapter 14:The Cost of Manifestation.....	53
Chapter 15:The Contexts of Everything and Nothing; the Relative and the Absolute.....	55
Chapter 16:In Defense of Solipsism.....	61
Chapter 17:The Definition of Enlightenment (As Used in This Work).....	67
Chapter 18:A Clarification of the Relationship Between Self, Spacetime, Subject, and Object.....	72
Chapter 19:Non Dual Myths of Non Existence.....	74
Chapter 20:On Judgment and Comparisons.....	77
Chapter 21:Christianity Interpreted Through the Non Dual Lens.....	81
Chapter 22:Science and Religion.....	86
Chapter 23:The Ego: Enemy or Opponent?.....	91
Chapter 24:A Critique of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Psychology in General.	94
Chapter 25:On Morality.....	98
Chapter 26:Religious Scruples, Moral Superiority, and Superstitious Behavior.....	102
Chapter 27:Psychological Projection.....	108
Chapter 28:Humility and Arrogance.....	111
Chapter 29:On Narcissism.....	119
Chapter 30:Pleasure vs Pain.....	124
Chapter 31:On Happiness, and Pleasure Versus Pain.....	129
§ 1	129
Chapter 32:On Spiritual Awakening and the Illusion of Mental Illness	136
Chapter 33:The Importance of Avoiding Extremes.....	143
Chapter 34:The True Nature of Time.....	148
Chapter 35:The Intrinsic Balance Between the Genders.....	151
Chapter 36:Introverts and Extroverts.....	156
Chapter 37:On the Purpose of Meditation.....	158
Chapter 38:On Emotion.....	163
The Scale of Consciousness.....	163

§ 2	164
Chapter 39: Soul Versus Spirit.....	171
Chapter 40: A Critique of The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path.....	175
1. Wisdom (Prajñā):.....	176
2. Ethical Conduct (Śīla):.....	176
3. Mental Discipline (Samādhi):.....	176
Chapter 41:Synchronicity vs Coincidence vs Co-incidence.....	184
Chapter 42:On Conspiracy Theories.....	185
Chapter 43:The Value of Studying Formal Symbolic Logic	189
Chapter 44:On The Relationship Between Logic/Reason and Spirituality.....	192
§ 1	192
Chapter 45: On Meaning, Significance, and the Desire for Purpose.....	197
§ 1	197
Chapter 46: The Trap of Becoming the Savior.....	205
Chapter 47: Everything Comes Full Circle.....	206
Chapter 48: On Causality.....	211
Chapter 49: Various Essential Ways In Which the Ego Simulates the Self.....	216
Chapter 50: A Critique of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics.....	220
Chapter 51: On Compassion.....	225
Chapter 52: Laughter...Simple Laughter.....	226

Chapter 2: Proclamation

Truly I tell you, before Jesus, Maitreya, Buddha and Krishna were—I am. Before all Universes were, I am ; and after all Universes have come and gone, still—I am. I was not created, for I have always been and have never not been ; and I cannot be destroyed, for I shall always be and shall never not be. That which I am was never born and cannot die. I do not *have* life because I *am* life; and truly I tell you, life is not subject to death. I am the Source out of which all Creation arises, and I *am* that Creation. I am the infinite potentiality out of which arises finite actuality, and this too—I am. I am the Everything and the Nothing.

Perhaps the reader has heard others speak along similar lines as to what has just been proclaimed and then go on to claim that this much is true of you as well, or of all people, or of all sentient beings; however, I shall not venture to make such a claim—not because such would be surely untrue, but because such cannot be known. For I have only ever directly experienced One Mind and One Subjectivity —One undivided, without a second—and while I do indeed observe that animals behave in a manner analogous to my own behavior, such that it appears they are conscious; and while all humans claim to have a unique mind and subjectivity, and consistently assure me they are conscious; behold, I have also seen clever computer programs and robots that convincingly simulate consciousness—and yet conscious they are not. How, then, can I speak with confidence on the nature of that which I apperceive only indirectly, which therefore may be genuine or merely a simulation? Truly I ken no reliable method by which such a discernment may be made, and therefore I shall restrict that which is stated as certain here to only that which may be certainly known, for truly I cannot know if that which applies in the case of the Self applies also in the case of 'others'.

The reader is advised thusly: if he is so certain of his own existence, that if history's greatest Avatars were to appear before him and say "you are not", he would reply, with full confidence and all sincerity, "you are mistaken—I am", then what has been said hereto regarding the nature of the Self is likely true of the reader. That

which is true of oneself is always available to be perceived directly, and never depends upon an external source for justification, and therefore the reader is advised to not treat what has been proclaimed hereto regarding the nature of the Self as authoritatively true, but rather as a testimonial which, through direct experience, may be confirmed as valid or invalid with respect to his own experience of reality. Further, it is at the reader's discretion to decide if what has been proclaimed here about the Self is true in the case of the 'author'.

Chapter 3: Certainty vs Uncertainty

What can be known with complete certainty? Surely very little, for it takes but one tenable skeptical consideration to demote any belief or understanding from certain to possible. Indeed, I have many times witnessed something believed with great conviction to be true turn out to be false, and likewise I have many times witnessed something believed with great conviction to be false turn out to be true. Furthermore, the trueness or falseness of a proposition is in most cases dependent on context: what is small in one context is large in another; what is desirable in one context is undesirable in another; what is applicable in one phase of life is inapplicable in another, and so on. So what, then, can be known with complete certainty?

One's own existence: not in the sense of the story of one's life, or the descriptors of one's personality, but in the most primitive, basic, visceral, and irreducible sense of awareness of being—this much can be known with certainty. Indeed, the very process of speculating upon what can be known with certainty is predicated upon and presupposes existence. Even though one might speculate that the entire content of memory is false, or that all one takes oneself to be is not true, the existence of the one who is aware of these speculations—that existence cannot be speculated away, for any act or perception of speculation is predicated upon this existence: to even consider that one's existence is false is in fact sufficient to guarantee it is true.

Another thing can be known with certainty: it is certain that there is uncertainty. For how could a contemplation of certainty vs uncertainty, true vs false, real vs unreal, occur if both conditions were not conceptually understood, and how could both conceptions be understood were there not exemplary expressions of each to provide a meaningful frame of reference? Stated another way: there cannot be only falsehood, for falsehood has meaning only in contrast to truth; and there cannot be only truth, for if this were the case, the idea of "false" would be incomprehensible and meaningless—yet experientially such is known to be not the case.

At the risk of adding confusion to the matter, there is indeed one context where everything is true and nothing is false: this context is that whatever is experienced is always precisely what it is and never what it is not. Experience, taken at any given moment and restricted to the visceral subjective sensory impact without consideration of meaning, accuracy, or objective reality—that is, the radically subjective—is always true in the sense that it is itself and never not itself, even if its contents contain an illusion or a falsehood. This, however, is a severely restricted and specific context that does not include essence, meaning, concept, or significance; and so nothing more of value can be said on the matter beyond the simple acknowledgment that this context exists.

There is no context in which everything is false.

What can be known with certainty?

Let us start here:

1. Existence (I am)
2. Certainty (truth; reality)
3. Uncertainty (falsehood; unreality)

Chapter 4: Fundamental Ego Positionalities and Their Reversals

The term 'Ego' as used in this work refers to the false sense of self created by the Mind. It does not refer to the Mind in its entirety, nor does it refer to the mind/body mechanism, nor does it refer to the psychological concept of the Ego as advanced by Sigmund Freud, nor does it refer to the qualities of selfishness, self-adulation, and self-aggrandizement (behaviors often described as egotistical in common parlance); rather, it is the autonomous enemy force designed to perpetuate the belief in a separate self (in juxtaposition to the rest of Creation) who appears to be a causal agent with free will, the decider, and thinker. *This sense of a separate self is illusory.* More shall be said on this matter in later pages, but I feel it is imperative that this truth be overtly stated and that the following recommendations be presented early in this work, that they may be contemplated and assimilated during the course of this reading, because what is professed here describes an essential practice that ought to be implemented immediately and trained until it becomes second nature.

The following items describe the basic tendencies and characteristics of the Ego, along with their reversals, which help weaken the hold and influence of the Ego, such that one might learn to break the errant identification therewith. This list does not represent a complete depiction of the Ego or the full depths of its cunning and deception; rather, these items represent the most fundamental and obvious traits of the Ego, as well as the most simple and basic ways to transcend them. These illustrations are intended not to be simply read and intellectually understood, but to be practiced, such that a real and immediate transformation of the quality of one's experience, and the clarity of one's understanding of Reality, may be realized.

1. The Ego considers itself the thinker of thoughts; therefore, understand thoughts to be arising

spontaneously and autonomously in the field of perception without a thinker—de-personalize them and instead see them as simply happening and being perceived, as were they showing up on a screen in front of oneself.

2. The Ego is humorless and takes life very seriously; therefore, try to find the humor in all happenings and refuse to take any event seriously regardless of the context.
3. The Ego bemoans all action as requiring effort; therefore, dwell in the effortlessness that underlies all action—see activity as play rather than work.
4. The Ego regrets or pines for the past while fearing or longing for the future; therefore, avoid dwelling on the past and the future—instead, remain anchored in the present: the current, immediate circumstances and felt sense of existence.
5. The Ego likes to try to control life and desires to feel in control at all times; therefore, allow life to flow on its own without trying to direct it; plan as little as possible, and function from a place of spontaneity. Allow life to handle life.
6. The Ego cares about money, status and appearance, because it is inherently prideful (narcissistic) but also desperately seeks approval (insecure); therefore, worry not about money, and allow the universe to provide you with the abundance that best enhances your spiritual evolution, which is the highest context and primary purpose of life (absolute), regardless of how an individual seemingly chooses to set his priorities (relative). Care as little as possible about how others perceive you, as you have no control over this, it does

not speak to what you truly are, and further, those with strong Egos tend to dislike those on the spiritual path, and therefore often the feedback one on the path of truth will receive from the people of the external world will be overwhelmingly negative: to be generally liked or generally disliked does not reflect upon the true value of the Self whatsoever.

Understand that appearance often has nothing to do with essence, and is for all intents and purposes insignificant.

7. The Ego fears and is resistant to all change, but simultaneously loves to find fault in and complain about present circumstances; therefore, realize that whatever is happening presently is perfect and exactly as it ought to be no matter what, but also be open to change and embrace it with courage.
8. The Ego prefers a rigid rule-based structure and generally thinks in dualistically polarized terms (black vs white rather than shades of gray); therefore, do not become bound by rigid rule-based thinking, but rather remain flexible and set intuition above logic.
Understand that many answers are highly nuanced and depend upon context for their validity. You are dealing with an extremely clever illusion riven with many subtle layers—understand that many rules are meant to be bent, while others are meant to be broken.
9. The Ego is obsessed with labels and roles for the self, as these are largely how it defines its identity; therefore, treat all labels and descriptors of oneself loosely and as of only trivial importance; and see roles, like one's job or hobbies, as temporary, non-essential arrangements that do not define 'who you are', but rather 'what you happen to be doing currently'.

10. The Ego has an intense desire for validation, and so it seeks to find others who agree with its positionality, and so reaffirm that it is right, good, worthy, and lovable; therefore, embrace radical self-acceptance and refuse to place importance on whether or not others agree with or approve of you.
11. The Ego derives a twisted satisfaction from drama and the suffering of others (though, hypocritically, it denies this outwardly and claims to revile such things); therefore, avoid indulging in activities that glorify drama and reveling in the suffering of others (e.g., watching soap operas and gossiping).
12. The Ego craves constant entertainment, distraction, and occupation, and fears boredom, solitude, and stillness; therefore, train yourself to be comfortable being silent, being alone, and not doing anything. There is nothing wrong with entertainment and occupations, but it is essential that one is not engaged in such things around the clock, such that one feels uncomfortable just sitting in silence for even a few minutes—carve out at least a little time each day to withdraw attention from the hustle and bustle of the external world and engage in some introspection, or just be still and silent for a while.

The Ego has an incredible penchant for getting things exactly backwards.

Chapter 5: The Basics of Non Duality

When the two
Have run each other through,
The path to your Destiny
Will Open

First and foremost, let it be clearly understood that Non Duality is *not* the entire story of the Truth, but only the nearest approximation of the Truth that can be found among the world's major belief systems, and it is therefore utilized here as a frame of reference that will be useful in generally orienting one's understanding in the correct direction, from which various adjustments and additions can be made in order to approach the full Truth of Reality, which will be accomplished in part through this work and in part through the reader's own subjectivity. I do not profess that this work has all the answers—indeed it is completely impossible for any work to achieve that lofty ambition—; rather, this work is designed to lead one as far as possible in the correct direction: whatever the remaining balance will have to be traversed by the reader. External sources can only take one so far; the direct subjective experience and understanding of the Self is required to cross the finish line.

The most fundamental tenet of Non Duality is that the Self is God (in Indian tradition, this is stated as: the Atman (the true Self) is identical with Brahman (the Supreme God)). In other words, there is not a separate Creator God 'out there' somewhere who stands in relationship to the individual personal self—in truth *there is no separation; the two are one and the same* (hence the term Non Duality). In places like India, where is found a long standing tradition of spiritual teachings in Advaita Vedanta (which means the conclusion of the Vedas, the primary traditional Hindu spiritual teachings), such an understanding is somewhat common and not looked upon as out of the ordinary; however, in the Western world—which is dominated primarily by the Abrahamic religions, as well as a peculiar atheistic worship of science and logic (which has become particularly prevalent in recent years)—such a statement is generally considered

quite shocking, potentially blasphemous, and almost certainly insane. Philosopher Alan Watts once quipped that in India, if you tell someone you are God, he will likely congratulate you on remembering. In the west, however, such a claim is typically met with extreme resistance for several reasons, which admittedly seem quite plausible, including the fact that such a claim appears on the surface to represent the peak of grandiosity, that there are reasonable concerns over what the effect would be upon society were such a belief widely adopted and acted upon, and that in most cases one's upbringing has been to consider God to be a separate entity who is infinitely Good—a far cry from the imperfect and lowly individual self, who is prone to vice and error. The overcoming of such concerns and barriers to the understanding of the true nature of Reality, therefore, is a task of no small order, and it shall be a primary function of this text to expose the fallacies that uphold the illusion that one is separate from God, or even that there is no God.

Often times, spiritual teachers have elected to refrain from using the term 'God' because this word has been so distorted and misused in society, and most are deeply attached to their present conception of God (overcoming such tightly held assumptions and entrenched positionalities is therefore challenging to say the least); and so in many cases alternative terms have been employed to avoid the resistances involved in stating the reality of the situation overtly (many believe that Buddha did not believe in God, but the truth is that on the subject of God, the Buddha "maintained noble silence"). In various spiritual teachings, particularly of the Non Dual variety, terms like Infinite Consciousness, or The Eternal, or The Divine, or The Higher Self are utilized instead. However, if the term 'God' is understood correctly, it means precisely this. I therefore advance it as the truth here in the early goings of this work, and shall attempt to make a convincing case for its veracity throughout the remainder of this work.

The first consideration that naturally springs to mind upon hearing the claim that one is in truth God is this: why, then, is this not known to me? Why is this not obvious? Why do the world, my mind, and my experience all seem to confirm that I am *not* God, but a limited, imperfect, individual human being who is moral and finite, born into this world via a chemical reaction and doomed to one day die, at which point I will either cease to be, or be granted eternal

glory or punishment based on my behavior and beliefs? The reason for this confusion lies in the underlying story of manifest existence, which is essentially this: this experience we call life is God experiencing an illusion so grand and so convincing, that He forgets who he is and becomes lost in a world of suffering and uncertainty, often for many decades, only to one day at last remember who He truly is. In the scope of eternity, such an illusion would have to play out eventually, and this physical universe and expression as an apparent individual self *is* that illusion playing out. This, surely, is a hard pill to swallow, but it is the true explanation of what is going on with this reality, and so it is best to come to terms with the fact that one is temporarily confined to intense illusion and often extraordinary suffering as a result; one can be thankful for the fact that it is an inherently temporary arrangement, and that it could have been that it endured for a great deal more than approximately a hundred years (or fewer if one is fortunate).

The notion that there is an incredible illusion underlying the nature of the manifest universe is indeed present in many of the world's great spiritual traditions and philosophies. In Hinduism and Buddhism, this is called Maya—the illusion of the material manifestation which is taken to be reality. In Hinduism, liberation from this illusion is called Moksha, and in Buddhism it is called Enlightenment (however, this is slightly more veiled in the Buddhist tradition, because the Buddha, as a teacher, stylistically tended to avoid completing the picture for the student, and instead allowed the student to make the essential connections regarding key understandings himself, which is a perfectly valid teaching method with its own unique upside and downside). In the Christian tradition, Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness with clever trickery; and he frequently reiterates a teaching: they hear but do not understand, see but do not perceive. In philosophy, Plato speaks of Ideas that underlie all appearances yet are not directly perceptible (sometimes these are called Platonic Forms, but Ideas is a superior translation, as the term 'Idea' more accurately refers to eternal archetypes beyond appearances, whereas the term 'Form' is connected with 'that which is perceptible'); Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer speak along similar lines with respect to the phenomenal (the perceptible, manifest objective form) versus the noumenal (the underlying essence of form which is not itself perceptible). In the scientific

realm, it is well established that there is a radical difference in appearance between the macroscopic and the microscopic based on investigations into the atomic/quantum level, where everything that is normally perceived as solid and defined is indeed comprised of infinitesimally tiny particles which are constantly whirling about, along with a great deal of empty space. It has also been posited in the scientific realm that perhaps the most fundamental level of material reality is vibrating strings of energy, and in quantum mechanics, it has been established that one is never dealing with certainties, but only probabilities, and that even the mere act of observation has profound effects on the material, such as whether energy presents as a particle or a wave. And of course in nature we see myriad examples of deceit and dissimulation, such as how predatory animals hunt through cunning trickery, or how other animals utilize camouflage or other forms of deception to protect themselves; and the same can be said on the human level, where enemy armies throughout all of history have engaged in every imaginable attempt to deceive their adversaries, while salesmen invariably pitch some insincere angle in an attempt to sell whatever their product or service—indeed, nearly every person on this planet is constantly presenting to others through the guise of a figurative mask designed to create a desired impression of himself. Therefore, we can conclude with great conviction that illusion is a fundamental quality of manifest existence. Things are not as they appear. The fundamental purpose of an illusion is to present as convincingly real. Indeed, the fact that the profundity and depth of the illusion is routinely underestimated *is itself a result of the illusion.*

Every (apparent) individual's story of spiritual awakening is unique, yet there are several notable trends and tendencies which can be spoken of as generally applicable ; the reader is therefore advised that what follows may potentially be inapplicable in his particular case. Recall that we have already established that the only things one can know with certainty are existence, truth, and illusion; and therefore, from this point forward, we shall speak in generalizations and likelihoods rather than in absolute terms.

Infants are still in touch with their Divine Nature and are not

yet keenly identified as separate distinct selves with unique bodies and minds—it is for this reason that Jesus says to his disciples that in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, they must become as little children. Generally speaking, as the child ages, he or she becomes increasingly identified as an individual self, becoming associated with a particular name and body that is retained in the memory as a story of a persistent character; and as this identification increases, the experience of the infinite divine nature of the Self is gradually lost and forgotten. The story of spiritual awakening includes this gradual forgetting and progresses towards an eventual remembering; therefore, depending on where one is in this process, the early childhood memories of one's Divine Nature and how extraordinary it feels may not yet be remembered—if it is not yet recalled, eventually it shall be. The identification with the peculiar character continues to grow and solidify as the individual is indoctrinated with the endless repetitious affirmation that he is a mortal limited self by parents, teachers, friends, and essentially everyone else. Over time the individual becomes attached to various adjectives he considers applicable to himself (e.g., “I am John, I am a good student, I am popular, I am well-behaved, I am loving, I am smart, I am shy, etc.”), and these qualities come to make up what he perceives to be his unique character. In addition to this indoctrination, there also occur various traumas, with some cases being more severe than others, which gradually ebb away at the sense of wonder and mystery in the world, replacing these with a far more grim and mediocre impression of the nature of life. Between the indoctrination and the traumas, the Ego gradually takes over control of the Mind, impersonating identity until one treats its inner narrative and emotional responses as “me/mine”. Once this has happened, the individual is dragged further and further into illusion and away from his Divine Nature—rather than life being about spiritual advancement and creativity, it becomes oriented around survival and material concerns, such as money, career, family, status, possessions, and the endless pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. This transition happens quite rapidly in most cases, as even children in the first grade are often asked “what do you want to be when you grow up?”, as if the child ought to already have a plan for how the entire course of its life will go and what it intends to do every day until it retires, at which point it is well beyond its prime in terms of mental and physical capacity.

In nearly every single reported case, the story of spiritual awakening contains this journey into illusory identification for a time, only for one to eventually recognize the illusion, recall one's Divine Nature, and so "wake up" to the Truth. The story of Siddhartha Gotama, the individual most often referred to as "the Buddha" (there were several who were considered Buddhas—such as Maitreya, the fat, laughing Buddha—as this term means "an Enlightened One"), involves a lengthy and trying quest to discover the true nature of reality—it took him many years to finally one day attain Enlightenment while meditating under the Bodhi tree. Various well known Non Duality teachers from both the east and the west, including David Hawkins, Lisa Cairns, Robert Adams, Rupert Spira, Eckhart Tolle, Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, and Ramesh Balsekar, all report slight variations on the same basic story of being lost in the illusion of individual identity for many years until eventually there came a remembrance of the Divine Nature, and a transcendence of the identification as a limited, mortal self. In most cases, the catalyst for spiritual awakening is tremendous suffering: those who are content to raise a family, have a career, and pursue worldly goals rarely see beyond the illusion, as there is simply nothing to catalyze a search for truth beyond what is accepted to be true in their paradigm of reality ; those who suffer immensely, however, tend to intuitively sense that something about this world is amiss, and so begin seeking for a greater truth beyond their present assumptions, perhaps through philosophy or religion, and this persistence sometimes leads to a remembering of the Divine Nature of the Self and the recognition of the illusion as a fictional story. Other known catalysts include near death experiences, through which the individual sees beyond the illusion and accesses spiritual reality temporarily, which experience gives him the remembrance of the Reality beyond personal identification and the conviction that there is a very real dimension beyond the logical, scientific, linear, objective interpretation of the world, after which there tends to be a realignment of one's values and the beginning of a search for truth beyond what is currently believed; and experiences with certain psychedelics, which temporarily anesthetize the Ego, allowing Reality to shine forth in its absence (though it should be noted that this path has a serious potential downside, as the resultant temporary anesthetization of the Ego is not the same as authentic transcendence of the Ego, and therefore it is easy for one to become

reliant on the repeated use of psychedelics to experience the Enlightened state as a way of bypassing authentic Ego transcendence, which is accomplished through meditation and the practices enumerated early in this work, is lasting, and does not require external supplements to achieve).

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

This is the trajectory of every soul: the thirst for righteousness is the longing to remember; and when remembrance dawns, one sees there was never thirst at all—only the fullness of being.

*I and the Father Are
One
~The J~*

Chapter 6: The Relationship Between Subject and Object

There is a common confusion in Non Duality that there is no such thing as a “subject” vs an “object” because no such duality exists. This is an error of over-extending the intended meaning of Non Duality. It is correct to say that there is no subject without object and there is no object without subject—that is, the two mutually condition one another and either both are present or neither can be—but it is not correct to conclude therefrom that neither subject nor object exists. Neither subject nor object has existence *independent* of the other, yet both do simultaneously exist, just as is the case with two sides of the same coin. Subject is the knower (or the knowing, if we wish to de-personalize it), and object is that which is known. The statement that neither subject nor object exists is positively absurd: the fact that such a statement is perceived implies that it is an object of knowing, and the fact that there is perception at all implies the existence of the subject of knowing. There is another common error made in Non Duality which states that subject and object are precisely the same thing. This represents a failure to recognize the difference between *equality* and *mutual interdependence*. In symbolic propositional logic:

The former would be expressed this way:

$$S = O$$

The latter would be expressed this way:

$$(S \rightarrow O) \& (O \rightarrow S) \& (\neg S \rightarrow \neg O) \& (\neg O \rightarrow \neg S)$$

The scientific paradigm also fails to properly grasp the relationship between subject and object, for it posits the existence of objects independent of the subject of knowing, as if there were some independent objective universe out there quite apart from the subject, who then is more like an explorer coming across various objects that are stationed at particular locations in space at particular times, irrespective of whether or not they are perceived by the subject of knowing (this would be akin to believing that in The Legend of Zelda, the game is at all times rendering the entirety of

Hyrule but the player is only viewing one screen at a time, as opposed to the game rendering only the screen the player is on and creation an illusion of continuity between screens). Indeed, certain scientific paradigms go so far as to claim that the subject is in fact merely an object at its root (such as a body and brain made of atoms, etc.) and that consciousness, and so apparent subjectivity, is nothing more than an emergent property of objectivity attaining to levels of sufficient complexity. This is an error of reasoning, as it uses consciousness to attempt to place consciousness outside of consciousness, which when viewed in this light is obviously absurd and a self-defeating argument.

There is greater wisdom in the Zen koan “if a tree falls alone in the forest, does it make a sound?” to which the answer is “no”—there has never been a sound in absence of either subject (which hears) or object (which generates what is heard and is what is heard).

As respects one's understanding of Non Duality generally, one is advised to avoid falling into the conceptual trap of believing that Non Duality means that there is no “this” vs “that” in Reality. The *only* contexts in which this holds are (1) in the respect that the visceral sense perception that constitutes the whole of one's experience at any given moment is exactly what it is and never something else—so it is correct to say that there is no opposite or alternative to the experience of the present; and (2) in reference to the Self, which is beyond spacetime, is the source and substance of all things, and so is one and undivided, including all and omitting nothing. However, the proper understanding of the context of the term Non Duality taken literally, is: (1) the recognition that there is not an individual free willing self who is separate from and stands in juxtaposition to God; (2) the acknowledge that all of plurality in form is only an expression of a singular, infinite, undivided source; and (3) the affirmation that there is only one subjectivity through which experience occurs—this is to say, the apparent distinct subjectivity of other objects such as persons and animals is a phantom image abstracted to be the case in the one subjectivity which itself is beyond the confines of space and time and is therefore indivisible and eternally existent.

Chapter 7: The Problem with the Concept of Proof

Proof, as a concept, is applicable in an extremely limited context: that is, having to do with fields such as geometry (and several others fields in mathematics), and formal symbolic logic. However, in this world, the concept of proof is generally extended far beyond its applicable scope, most markedly in the scientific realm and in the legal context. As a result, many are keen to make the following logical error of reasoning: only that which is provable is true. This statement is fallacious on two levels: firstly, there is that upon which proving itself is predicated, and such things are beyond the scope of proof to justify their reality, and yet reality they have ; secondly, much of what is considered proven to be true in the world is later revealed to be untrue once more information is revealed, and so what was thought of as indelibly proven was in fact only tentatively posited as true based on the available evidence and rationale derived therefrom. As regards the former case, one's own existence, the existence of God, the immediate sensory impression that defines the whole of one's experience at a given moment (subjectivity), and the existence of space, time, and object (generally) —all of this is beyond the scope of proving, for proving itself is predicated upon these things and can have no existence without them. So much then for the argument “perhaps I will believe in God once I have proof that God exists”. As regards the latter case, how many times in history have we seen that which is considered indelibly proven be overturned at a later date due to the revelation of additional information or a more sophisticated understanding: the Sun was proven to orbit the Earth until Copernicus revealed the opposite to be the case; atoms were proven to be the smallest expression of matter until the atom was split and subatomic particles discovered; the Newtonian physics of mechanical motion were proven until Einstein's quantum mechanics and general relativity illuminated a more sophisticated layer to the laws of physics; time was proven to be a constant until it was revealed that the rate of time can indeed be influenced by factors such as gravity and speed.

“Proof” is meant to apply to that which is indelibly true based on direct derivations from axiomatic understandings, such that, for example, the Pythagorean Theorem can be said to be proven

based on the axiomatic rules of geometry, and that Modus Tollens can be said to be proven on the axiomatic rules of symbolic logic. What is claimed to be “proven” in the scientific field more generally is in fact only speculative truth, with certain propositions possessing a greater likelihood of being accurate than others.

Finally, let it be clearly understood that what an individual accepts as sufficient proof to verify any proposition is *always and in all cases a subjective assessment*; this is to say, it is a subjective decision and not an objective conclusion when the individual determines there is sufficient evidence in support of some proposition to consider it proven as true in his estimation. And though one may try one's best to operate on such matters from a place of so-called objectivity, one's biases, preferences, aversions, and historical tendencies invariably factor into the assessment whether he wishes them to or not.

In consideration of all that has been hereto said on the subject of proof, let us henceforth be far more cautious and conservative in the way in which we approach the matter of “proof”, holding as tentative that which is tentative, holding as certain that which is certain (even in absence of proof when such is appropriate), and restricting the definition of proof to its appropriate ambit—that being of mathematics and formal symbolic logic.

In the context of our greater discussion of Non Duality and spiritual Reality, we must be doubly cautious with our application of the concept of proof because, as has been established and acknowledged in this work, we are dealing with an incredible grand illusion capable of extraordinary deception (Maya). When the underlying nature of manifest reality is illusion, how confidently can we apply the notion of proof to anything, knowing that the illusion governing nearly all of manifest reality is designed specifically to deceive? Truly, it is much wiser to hold all beliefs as tentative and to be comfortable with not knowing things than it is to adopt rigid beliefs about this world, fashion an opinion on every matter, and profess to know with certainty how everything actually works.

The process of Enlightenment is not one of positively gaining knowledge but of subtracting that which is false (though this process of elimination is often accompanied by positive revelations, much as removing cloud cover simultaneously allows the sun to shine

forth). False beliefs and positionality are to be recognized and jettisoned; grudges held against others are to be given up in favor of forgiveness; habitual and systematic activity is to be subordinated to spontaneity, flexibility and creativity. This much is in keeping with the literal definition of enlightenment, which is to relieve a burden via subtraction (such as lightening one's load by removing heavy items from one's backpack). Knowledge and wisdom lead in opposite directions: knowledge involves the accumulation of information and experience, such that one is said to be well read in a subject or experienced in a practice ; wisdom involves stripping down what is held to be known to the relatively little that actually can be known. It is entirely possible for one to be very wise and yet have very little knowledge of the affairs of the world, most of which are completely inconsequential and often quite ridiculous. Likewise, it is entirely possible to have a great intellect, possess a great deal of knowledge, and be very clever, but completely lack in wisdom (such as is the case with one who engages in insider trading). It can be said with certainty that the great Enlightened sages of ancient India had no knowledge of how the stock exchange works, and yet this did not negatively impact their wisdom whatsoever—such is completely superfluous information that one ought to know only if he happens to have a particular interest in it. Socrates, when named by the Oracle at Delphi as the wisest man in Athens, famously said, “if I am wise, it is only because I know how little I know”.

“Knowledge from the universal to the particular, peculiar to the sciences, makes it necessary that in them much is established by deduction from previous propositions, that is by proofs. This has given rise to the old error that only what is demonstrated is perfectly true, and that every truth requires a proof. On the contrary, every proof or demonstration requires an undemonstrated truth [as its ultimate foundation]. Therefore, a directly established truth is as preferable to a truth established by a proof as spring water is to piped water. Perception, partly pure *a priori*, as establishing mathematics, partly empirical *a posteriori*, as establishing all the other sciences, is the source of all truth and the basis of all science....Not the demonstrated judgments or their proofs, but

judgments drawn directly from perception and founded thereon instead of on any proof, are in science what the sun is to the world. All light proceeds from them, and, illuminated thereby, the others in turn give light...

Only outstanding and extraordinary judgment in an individual can actually advance the sciences, but anyone who has merely a healthy faculty of reason is able to deduce propositions from propositions, to demonstrate, to draw conclusions...

No science can be capable of demonstration throughout any more than a building can stand in air. All its proofs must refer to something perceived, and hence no longer capable of proof, for the whole world of reflection rests on, and is rooted in, the world of perception...

It may be that people often speak in a lofty tone about sciences which rest entirely on correct conclusions from sure premises, and are therefore uncontestedly true. But through purely logical chains of reasoning however true the premises may be, we shall never obtain more than an elucidation and exposition of what already lies complete in the premises; thus we shall only *explicitly* expound what is already *implicitly* understood therein....

The real foundation of [metaphysical truths], that is, of abstract expressions of the necessary and universal forms of knowledge, can be found not in abstract principles, but only in the immediate consciousness of the forms of representation, manifesting itself through statements *a priori* that are apodictic and in fear of no refutation. But if we still want to furnish a proof of them, this can consist only in our showing that what is to be proved is already contained in some undoubted truth as a part or a presupposition of it...

Proofs are generally less for those who want to learn than for those who want to dispute. The latter

obstinately deny directly established insight. Truth alone can be consistent in all directions; we must therefore show such persons that they admit under one form and indirectly what under another form and directly they deny, i.e., the logically necessary connexion between what is denied and what is admitted...

Every deduction from concepts [every proof] is exposed to many deceptions on account of the fact...that many different concept spheres are linked and interlocked, and again because their content is often ill-defined and uncertain. Examples of this are the many proofs of false doctrines and sophisms of every kind. Syllogisms are indeed perfectly certain as regards form, but very uncertain through their matter, namely the concepts...

Consequently, immediate evidence is everywhere far preferable to demonstrated truth."

~Arthur Schopenhauer

Chapter 8: The Beautiful Freedom of Not Having Free Will

More often than not, it is accepted in Non Duality that there is no free will, and that the idea of free will and choice is merely a phantom conjured up in abstraction; this conclusion is reached on the grounds that the individual separate causal entity who is thought to have free will does not actually exist. This much is quite correct, and I would add that the reason there is no free will is *not* because of mechanistic reductionism (which holds that there is no real subject but only objectivity operating based on mechanical and predetermined laws of cause and effect), but because the story of manifestation was created in Eternity, there perfect and complete, and manifestation itself is merely the expression of that story (not so dissimilar to how a play is scripted prior to the performance of that script, which is then expressed in the performance precisely as it was written).

This view that there is no free will opposes the view held by most of society, which considers each individual an agent and decider, and therefore responsible for his decisions. (It certainly cannot be denied that it very much feels as if one has free will and is making meaningful choices from moment to moment ; this sense of ownership and control is central to the Ego and the grand illusion, and persists even after one has fully accepted and realized the truth that there is no actual free will). Most of society vehemently shuns the possibility that there is no free will for a variety of reasons, all of which can be ultimately revealed as flawed or non-integrous. One such argument is “I reject the notion that there is no free will because I do not care for the idea that I am not in control of my life” ; this is a flawed style of argumentation that amounts to “I reject the reality of something because I don't like what it implies”—reality takes no account of one's opinion on the matter for its veracity: whether a particular truth is desirable or undesirable has no impact upon the validity of that truth. Another such argument is “I reject the notion that there is no free will because if everyone believed there is no free will, then there would be chaos in society and no one could be held accountable for his actions”. This argument is flawed in several ways:

firstly, it features precisely the same logical error exposed with respect to the previous argument regarding the lack of influence of opinion on truth; secondly, it involves concern over a hypothetical that is not the case (i.e., one accepting oneself that there is no free will does not therefore result in everyone believing that there is no free will); thirdly, there is no valid reason to conclude that in absence of free will, some would nevertheless hold others accountable for their actions; fourthly, the motivation behind wanting to keep others in line and hold them accountable is not as noble as professed, but rather comes primarily from judgmentalism and punativeness—that is to say, from the Ego. Yet another argument affirming free will proceeds along the lines of “it intensely feels as though I have free will and therefore I must”; this line of reasoning is flawed because it is not the case that because something is felt or believed intensely it is therefore true—consider paranoia, superstition and phobias as exemplifications of beliefs intensely felt and held despite being ultimately baseless. So much then for the common arguments in favor of free will.

Many consider the idea of not having free will as binding and constricting, but in truth it is powerfully liberating. If one had free will, one could go hopelessly wrong—one could go astray and never find one's way back, for it would be a consequence of his choices whether he finds himself on the right or wrong path ; in the absence of free will, one's ultimate safety is absolutely guaranteed—*one cannot go wrong*, and no matter what happens is what is meant to happen and could not be any other way. When one believes one has free will, then one's success or failure in life depends on the quality of his decision-making, and this leads to a great deal of stress—all decisions are meticulously scrutinized, all choices that lead to undesirable results are lamented in guilt (directed at oneself) or blame (directed at others) and frustration, and there is a constant fretting about what the future will hold, for in this paradigm, one is responsible for ensuring not only one's present safety but future safety as well ; acceptance that there is no free will alleviates a great deal of this stress associated with decision-making—now life is trusted to take care of life, decisions are taken less seriously and not dwelt upon, and there is a confidence that tomorrow will look after itself. In the paradigm of free will, it is possible for things to “go wrong”, such as in the belief “I made a mistake and now things are not the way that

they ought to be” ; in the absence of free will, it is definitionally impossible for things to go wrong or mistakes to be made, and everything that happens is precisely perfect as it is no matter what (in times of doubt or distress, this remembrance that everything is as it ought to be and whatever is vexing one will pass represents a great solace available in nearly all circumstances).

A skeptic can always consider the following: either one has free will or one does not; if one does not then one does not, and if one does, then one can freely use that free will to permanently surrender that free will to God and allow God to run the show, at which point one no longer has free will—now both conditionals (which together represent the universal set of possibilities) yield an absence of free will, and so there can be certainty that there is no free will, thus ending the gnawing concern and debate once and for all.

Now that we have rigorously established the truth of the fact that there is no free will, we must move on to acknowledge that regardless of this fact, in most respects one will continue to feel like one has free will and is making meaningful and real decisions, no matter how adamantly is held the understanding that in truth there is no free will and no decider who makes decisions. Some make the error of thinking “if I have no free will then everything is meaningless and there is no reason for me to do anything,” allowing the notion of there being no free will to result in apathy and despondency. It is wiser to proceed in daily life *generally as if one had free will*: continue to choose from the menu whatever meal most appeals to you, etc. A good model of how to best proceed in life while knowing there is no free will is Morpheus from The Matrix—in general he behaves as if he has free will and is making meaningful choices; however, when circumstances are appropriate, he reminds others that what is happening is ultimately predestined and could not be any way other than it is. In other words, he leverages both paradigms by applying whichever one best suits the circumstances—and there is no rule against doing this, indeed it represents greater wisdom than aligning exclusively with either paradigm, such that on one extreme, one often feels anxious that things have gone off the rails, and on the other extreme one feels powerless over life. No amount of behaving like one has free will shall ever result in one actually possessing it.

There is no worldly danger beyond control,
There's so much more than what we're seeing.

It's alright to give up your control,
Come in where it's safe—there is no "I".

Surrender is the only way to go,
Awakening the Stranger in your Soul,
No thought for yourself—you just let go!

~Transatlantic

“It was a good voyage, though I was shipwrecked.”

~Zeno

Chapter 9: The Incredible Power of Radical Acceptance

Most people in this world operate from the self-improvement paradigm—that is to say, they see as central to life the need to constantly better themselves in all regards: advancing in their career, becoming more skilled at their hobbies, gaining new knowledge and skills, earning more money, and becoming kinder, more compassionate individuals. This all sounds well and good on paper, but the constant striving to better oneself can actually be a serious pitfall full of unanticipated and unforeseen ramifications. A superior paradigm is to radically accept oneself as good enough exactly as one is, and to feel no special ambition to improve oneself (which ambition clandestinely implies some sort of lack or deficiency in the present, and tends to yield an endless chase for a state where one is finally good enough—a state that is always pursued but never attained).

The self-improvement paradigm tends to result in one making constant comparisons of oneself to others, evaluating if he is “better” or “worse” than they, and hinging his sense of self worth on how he measures up in comparison to others ; in the paradigm of radical self-acceptance, one no longer bases his sense of worth on comparisons with others, but rather sees himself and others as perfect and sufficient just the way they are—this eliminates most of the emotional negativity that subtly accompanies comparison with others (e.g., the pride of being superior, the shame of feeling inferior, the anger and frustration with oneself for not measuring up to the perceived standard one ought to be at relative to others, etc.). There is also a great deal of stress associated with the self-improvement paradigm: a constant striving to be better involves a great deal of effort, and one tends to spend a great deal of time being preoccupied with making progress in various fields of life even if there is no enjoyment in doing so ; in the paradigm of radical self-acceptance, improvement still happens, but not as a result of effort—rather, it occurs naturally with respect to any pursuit one applies oneself to (it is literally impossible to not improve at something one practices repeatedly, and once one sees this, it is realized that the stress associated with the efforting to improve was indeed valueless, as one can approach any field effortlessly, with no intention of improving or

plan for how to effectively improve, and still one will improve, only it will now be to one as play rather than as work). The self-improvement paradigm also comes with a heavy imbalance of self-denigration and shaming as compared to the fleeting moments of feeling accomplished and successful ; in the paradigm of radical self-acceptance, this self-denigration and shaming fall away as one no longer holds expectations of where in one's development one ought to be, and yet there remains a subtle but pleasant feeling of accomplishment when some pursuit culminates, or when one notices the improvement one has made over time—in other words, here one gets the best of both worlds.

When radical acceptance is also extended to others, it is seen that others are precisely the way they are and could not be any other way, which stands in stark contrast to the commonly held paradigm, which so often holds that others “should have known better”, or similar. With radical acceptance, the tendency to judge and condemn others tends to fall away to a large degree, because there is an understanding that other people cannot help but express what they are, and there is not some hypothetical alternative possibility where, had they made different choices, they would be different and better. While a statement like “everyone ought to be loving, compassionate, tolerant, and understanding” sounds like nobility, it is in fact not aligned with reality and represents a denial of human nature—if everyone *could* be that way, then everyone *would* be that way, but such is not the case, so clearly we must acknowledge that many are simply not capable of this standard and therefore should not be expected to meet it. It is wiser to accept that the grumpy old man is going to remain a grumpy old man, and to simply avoid interacting with him, than it is to grumble “he ought to learn to not be so grumpy and enjoy life”.

All too often, the practice of spirituality falls into the trap of idealism, whereas true spirituality is more closely associated with realism. It is not truly spiritual to “see the good in everyone” and “be loving all the time”—that is a faux-spiritual pose that comes from the paradigm of good-person-ness, which is actually closely associated with narcissism. True spirituality means alignment with Reality, including its positive and negative qualities. It is not necessary to go into denial about human nature in order to be spiritual. As an analogy, someone who is putting on the spiritual

guise of lovingness might go to the zoo and say “the tiger is not actually dangerous—he'll behave lovingly to me if I behave lovingly to him” ; someone who is operating from the paradigm of improvement might say “the tiger ought to be a vegetarian and stop harming other animals” ; but the person who is genuinely spiritually aligned would say, “the tiger is a dangerous animal and therefore I need to be cautious around it—still, it is exactly perfect as God created it and it does not need to change whatsoever; I can enjoy its beauty here from a distance and I understand that there is absolutely nothing wrong with the way that it is”.

Chapter 10: The Difference Between Compassion and Empathy

In recent years, social convention has come to dictate that the words *compassion* and *empathy* are synonymous, indeed to such a degree that neither carries a particular connotation that the other does not carry, such that they are entirely interchangeable without any loss of or change in meaning. This is a rather peculiar bit of foolishness, as there is almost no value in having two words that mean *precisely* the same thing in one language. In truth, the proper definition of *compassion* is a feeling of loving-kindness towards others or oneself (incorporating forgiveness, understanding, patience, considerateness, etc.), whereas the proper definition of *empathy* is the experience of feeling directly oneself the feelings of others (as opposed to comprehending them in abstraction, such as, “I see that you are upset”). Empathy, in the true sense of the word, is a relatively rare phenomenon, and perhaps it is for this reason that social convention transformed the word into a synonym of compassion: few likely possess any frame of reference with which to comprehend what it is like to energetically absorb and feel what others are feeling immediately and directly. Since this ability to experience the feelings of others directly does indeed exist, and since there is no other word but *empathy* available to define this phenomenon, it therefore stands to reason that it would be wise to restrict the definition of *empathy* to only this (so there is no confusion about what is meant when the word is employed), and to eliminate it as a synonym of *compassion*, which use is superfluous and represents zero value added.

Everyone can cultivate the quality of compassion in himself, but empathy *cannot be cultivated*; rather, it is a trait one is either born with or is not—one has absolutely no control over the presence, absence, or intensity of this trait (technically on the absolute level one does not have any control over one's level of compassion either, but we are speaking on the relative level here). In general, empathy is in fact not a highly desirable trait—there is a great deal of suffering associated with having little to no shield protecting one from the emotional energy emitted by others, and so one is in all social situations highly susceptible to having one's energy field negatively

affected by the disposition of those whom one happens to be in contact with presently. Anyone who does possess empathy is well aware that most people are harboring intense negative emotions, even when they are presenting an outward facade of equanimity.

In modern times, the word “compassion” is used quite loosely, and while it is almost universally considered a virtue, few who champion it, if asked, would be able to provide a clean and clear definition of the word. The most appropriate definition of compassion that reflects the actual etymological base of the word would be “communal passion”, and ideally the word would be restricted to this definition. In this light, compassion would define shared creative pursuits and artistic endeavors: writing music together, painting a mural with a group, developing a video game as a team, etc. It would also extend to enjoying art and nature together: going on a hike in the woods, going to a concert together and singing along, etc. In either case, there is a shared passion, and a desire to share and amplify that passion in one another (here we speak of passion not in the pejorative sense of the word, as akin to egoic drive, but in the positive sense of the word, akin to inspiration and the joy of creative expression or appreciation of beauty). Notice that this definition does not carry an moral implication whatsoever. We have spoken at length about how creativity and the appreciation of art, nature, and humor is what transcends the Ego and places one in harmony with the nature of the Self—engaging in pursuits that further this end is the proper definition of compassion, and even if the word is taken in the sense it is more commonly used in this world, one can comprehend that engaging in such shared passions truly is the greatest and purest kindness one can do for another. Helping someone who is disabled carry his groceries is certainly an act of kindness and is helpful on a practical level, but it does nothing to facilitate either's transcendence of the Ego, which is the true task and aspiration of all in this world (despite how few recognize it). This distinction is akin to giving a man a fish versus teaching him to fish—the latter is of nearly infinitely greater value.

In this light, we might consider the following delineation of terms:

1. Loving-kindness: The desire to alleviate the suffering and enhance the happiness of others.

2. Compassion: Shared passion in the arts or nature, and in creative expression.
3. Empathy: The ability to experience the feelings of others directly and immediately.

In the final analysis, empathy pertains to sensitivity of the energetic field, compassion pertains to shared creative expression, and loving-kindness pertains to the benevolent will of the heart. Of these three, only the latter two can be consciously cultivated (on the relative level, that is ; on the absolute level, all are simply what they are); empathy is simply one's natural degree of permeability to others' energy, and is therefore not intrinsically virtuous. Yet all three, when purified of egoic distortion, reflect different rays of the same Divine Light—Love as it manifests through the heart, through creation, and through resonance. To understand this distinction is to cease confusing emotional contagion with spiritual connection, and to recognize that the truest compassion is not pity, but creative communion in the joy of Being itself.

Chapter 11: Harmonizing the Inner and Outer Worlds

Most people live in a state of almost constant denial where there is a serious disconnect between what they are experiencing on the inside (which they consider to be private and secret, such that clever dissimulation would keep it from being known to others), and what they are presenting outwardly for the sake of appearances. When there is a significant mismatch between the inner world and the outer presentation, the resulting cognitive dissonance tends to lead to a sort of denial where one treats the outward presentation as his inner and true reality, and the actual inner reality is repressed and treated as unreal. Thus, for example, there might be a man who genuinely thinks of himself as kind and loving, for so he presents socially as much as possible, but in reality on the inside he is consistently hateful and bitter towards others.

It is extremely unwise to persist in maintaining a discrepancy between the reality of the inner world and the outward presentation. When these two are not in alignment, negative emotions end up being repressed rather than allowed to express in a healthy manner, and this process of repression does not do away with the negative emotions, but rather stores them for later discharge, and if an excess is built up in the system, it will begin to have deleterious effects on the physical and mental health (much as would occur if one allowed one's computer to be overrun with malware apps running in the background because he has not taken the time to delete them), and becomes like a tightly coiled spring that might suddenly release with great and uncontrollable intensity in an inappropriate circumstance (such as when one bottles up one's frustrations at work and then explodes in anger at his wife over something trivial later on as that energy attempts to find release).

Many individuals lack self honesty because they wish to present a certain image to the world that is socially acceptable, praiseworthy, and not controversial or offensive to others; and in creating this social guise, they lose the ability to distinguish between their mask and their inner reality. However, self honesty is an absolutely critical skill to possess, both in terms of practical functionality and spiritual advancement. Pragmatically speaking, to

realistically understand what one is good at and what one is bad at allows one to focus on one's strengths, address areas that need improvement, and to seek assistance with those fields in which one is deficient but others specialize (and in turn provide assistance to those who are deficient in the fields in which he excels). Spiritually speaking, discovering the truth about the nature of reality requires radical self honesty, such as, for example, in the process of challenging long-held beliefs which no longer serve. Therefore, the cultivation of self honesty is absolutely essential for a happy life, and as such, it is essential that one prioritize keeping in harmony the inner world and the outer presentation. If one is a bit mischievous, it is wiser to simply own this quality and admit it outwardly, rather than outwardly claiming not to so be, but then behaving that way clandestinely.

Chapter 12: On Emotion

§ 1

Renowned Non Duality teacher David Hawkins pioneered the Scale of Consciousness, which is an incredibly useful tool for understanding both emotion and the energetic progression towards Enlightenment. Hawkins taught that each level of consciousness corresponds to a distinct attractor field—a kind of invisible, morphogenic energy field—to which individuals can become entrained. These fields are impersonal and pervasive, and they exert influence much like a gravitational or magnetic force. Via kinesologic testing, Hawkins arrived at the governing energy level and descriptors of each attractor field. A basic familiarity with the Scale of Consciousness will be useful for the discussion on emotion that follows, and so it has been recreated here in abbreviated form for reference. The numerical values of each attractor field are irrelevant to our present discussion: what matters is the *order* of the fields. Enlightenment is at the top of the scale ; the closer to the bottom, the greater the Ego's influence.

The Scale of Consciousness

Level	Emotion / State	Energy Expression	God View
600–1000	Enlightenment	Bliss, Peace, Is-ness	Self
540	Joy	Serenity	One
500	Love	Reverence	Loving
400	Reason	Understanding	Wise
350	Acceptance	Forgiveness	Merciful
310	Willingness	Optimism	Inspiring
250	Neutrality	Trust	Enabling
<u>200</u>	<u>Courage</u>	<u>Affirmation</u>	<u>Permitting</u>
175	Pride	Scorn	Demanding
150	Anger	Hate	Vengeful
125	Desire	Craving	Enslaving
100	Fear	Anxiety	Punitive
75	Grief	Regret	Tragic
50	Apathy	Despair	Hopeless
30	Guilt	Blame	Vindictive
20	Shame	Humiliation	Despising

§ 2

Modern culture exalts emotion as if it were divine. It is not. Every emotion arises from the Ego. Not some. Not most. All. The idea that “some emotions are good and some are bad” is itself a trick of the Ego—it allows the Ego to justify its continued existence. The moment one makes the concession that some emotions are good, redeemable, and valuable, the Ego will begin crafting Trojan horses —“this isn’t Pride...it’s self-esteem”. Emotions are categorically deleterious. They cloud the Third Eye Chakra, wreck havoc on proper reason and rationality, and damage the acupuncture and nervous systems. Their function is to (1) create a compelling false sense of identity, and (2) inspire one to behave in a manner that is non-integrous: on the Scale of Consciousness, 200 represents the critical dividing line of Integrity: everything below 200 would be categorized as degenerative and everything above as regenerative—everything below 200 is to be avoided. *The individual who states, “emotion is the very core of what makes us human,” is simultaneously sorely mistaken and inadvertently correct.*

Joy, Love, Peace and Happiness are *not* emotions—they are States of Being. The Ego deliberately miscategorizes these as “positive emotions” so it can sneak in its real payload: Anger, Fear, Envy, Pride. The way to discern the difference between an Emotion and a State of Being is that, aside from the former feeling generally unpleasant and the latter feeling pleasant, Emotion is of limited supply and is used up like fuel (emotional states only endure for so long—they energetically exhaust themselves over time), whereas States of Being are unlimited, still and enduring—they last for so long as some other energy field does not come to dominate the prevailing feeling state. When Anger prevails, there is an accompanying energetic motion ; when Fear prevails, there is an accompanying energetic motion (each analogous to a raging river) : but Love prevails in a state marked only by complete and indiscriminate embracing of all that is (analogous to the tranquil waters of a lake) ; and Peace prevails in the *absence* of energetic motion, when all is still (analogous to being out of the water and on dry land).

We have already discussed The Passionate—those who

mistake excitement and stimulation for Happiness—; these are the individuals who typically extol the virtue of emotion: their reaction is less to having experienced something uplifting and more to having experienced something memorable. In truth, emotions exist to reinforce identity—that is their only purpose. They are not tools of truth; they do not elevate one's level of consciousness. They are energy distortions whose only utility is to keep the sense of “me” intact.

There is no distinction between “welfare emotions” and “emergency emotions”—this is a category error and a contraction in terms, like a “healthy poison”. There is no righteous anger—how many atrocities have been committed in this world on the motivation of anger and vengeance disguised as righteousness? There is no holy fear—the concept of the “God-fearing individual” issues directly from the Ego: as A Course in Miracles clarifies repeatedly and in no uncertain terms—you cannot love what you also fear, the presence of one excludes the presence of the other. These distortions are all products of the Ego creating confusion so that one becomes, perhaps unwittingly, aligned with attractor fields below the critical level of Integrity, as these strongly and effectively reinforce the sense of individual identity as the egoic character. An aim in any combat sport is to make your opponent angry—the moment he makes a choice out of anger he abandons strategic spontaneity and his movements become patterned and predictable, and this opens the opportunity to anticipate, calmly evade, and counter-punch.

§ 3

This all said, it is essential to understand that even when it is seen with clarity that Emotion is purely deleterious and issues from the Ego, one cannot escape the experience of emotions. So long as one is incarnate, one is walking through the electrostatic field of life ; imagining one can avoid experiencing emotion is akin to imagining one can somehow through his moves in a game of chess prevent his opponent from taking his turns. The Ego has emotion at its disposal and there is no taming or getting rid of the Ego—you're stuck dealing with emotion and wisdom is to accept this. What one does have control over with respect to Emotion is this: (1) one can learn to de-personalize it—it can be seen as a temporary and fleeting feeling

state that arose on its own as a product of circumstances over which one had no control, as opposed to an intimate experience tied to identity ; (2) one can avoid throwing additional tinder on the fire such that it extinguishes itself as rapidly as possible—this mostly involves refusing to put stock in the narrative that accompanies the emotion and attempts to justify it as appropriate or valuable.

Emotions inevitably arise and experienced, and this is in no way your fault—it is indeed yet another Ego trap to think, “I should not be feeling this negative emotion at this point in my spiritual evolution—what is wrong with me?”. The aim is not to be rid of the experience of Emotion, but to understand that it does not define what you are; it is wise to simply see Emotion as “an event arising in consciousness” that one experiences—not as something that defines what one is. The wise stance with respect to Emotion is not guilt or suppression, but awareness. Emotion is energy in motion. It arises. It passes through. It fades. You are none of it. You are the screen upon which it briefly flickers. There is no use cursing the clouds, but also no use pretending you *are* the clouds. Any so-called spiritual guru who claims to be transcendent of emotional experience is a liar—either he has gone into denial or is knowingly duplicitous. *Never underestimate the Ego.*

§ 4

Of all Emotions, Pride is the most insidious. It is the only Emotion that genuinely feels good (the others feel good *only* in comparison to lower Emotional states). Pride is the final trick up the Ego's sleeve when one is at the precipice of transcending emotional attachment. It is as if the Ego were a con-man attempting to sell you obviously harmful products at outrageous prices, but just as you go to walk away, it offers you what at last seems to be a good deal—only there's a catch that is undisclosed. If you say yes to Pride, you've accepted the poisoned bait. Pride represents an artificial inflation of one's greatness; an overstatement of one's capability. As such, Pride is extremely precarious—at any moment the bubble can burst and the harsh reality one was denying becomes evident, like in the case of the boxer who boasts of his invincibility and then finds himself in the ring with a superior boxer who pulverizes him with ease. The gambit of Pride is that it is a setup designed to eventually send one

crashing down into Shame at the bottom of the Scale of Consciousness. This is precisely the symbolic meaning of the myth of Icarus, and why it is said, “Pride goeth before a fall”. The higher you fly, the more dramatic the plunge: “How foolish was I to think I was so great!”.

The insidiousness of Pride is evidenced by the fact that the Emotions below 200 on the Scale of Consciousness are considered by society to be negative—that is, all *except* Pride. Pride, by contrast, is touted and championed as a positive quality: it is good to have pride in your country, it is good to have pride in your race, it is good to have pride in your career, etc.. There are not parades celebrating Anger—but there are parades celebrating Pride. This is how deep the deception runs with respect to Pride. So long as one clings to pride, one will remain emotionally possessed. It is not a victory; it is the Ego in its most tempting costume. What is, “I am proud to be a gay Asian American female” but a profound testament to the belief in a sense of identity that is truly and ultimately fallacious?

§ 5

Each emotional level feels better than the ones below it. For one coming from Grief, Anger feels energetic and alive. For one coming from Apathy, Desire feels like motivation. This, however, does not imply that Desire is good, but only that Apathy is worse. But this is the Ego's gambit—transcendence to a state that yields a little relief becomes, “this must be home”. The spiritual trap is in mistaking movement up the ladder for arrival. The goal is not to climb to Pride and set up camp there—the goal is to transcend the ladder entirely. States of Being exist above emotion—they are not simply “better emotions.” They are outside the trap altogether.

§ 6

Yet another trick of the Ego is confusing Emotion with Intuition. These admittedly share a similarity in that both are experienced as a strong felt sense of what one ought to do or believe, and it is precisely this similarity that the Ego exploits to create confusion between the two. When one experiences an intense feeling state that one is in a dangerous situation and ought to leave, is this an

intuitive grasping of the totality of the circumstances or an irrational fear? The difference can be quite difficult to discern.

Intuition is reason performed so swiftly it arrives pre-verbalization, prior to recursive logical consideration or reflection on the details of the situation through the intellect, and this ability is incredibly valuable ; Emotion, by contrast, is the saboteur of Reason; it masquerades as a quick and meaningful insight, but in truth is nothing more than a reaction—a distortion shaped by identity, fear, and past pain. Discernment is impossible when emotion is loud. The third eye cannot see through a storm. This is what is referenced by the classic parable:

Once upon a time, there was a Chinese farmer whose horse ran away.

That evening, all of his neighbors came around to commiserate. They said, “We are so sorry to hear your horse has run away. This is most unfortunate.”

The farmer replied: “Maybe.”

The next day the horse came back, bringing with it seven wild horses. In the evening everybody came back and said, “Oh, isn’t that lucky! What a great turn of events — you now have eight horses!”

The farmer again said: “Maybe.”

The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, was thrown off, and broke his leg.

The neighbors then said, “Oh dear, that’s too bad.”

And the farmer responded: “Maybe.”

The next day, military officials came to the village to conscript young men into the army.

When they saw the farmer’s son with his broken leg, they let him be. Everyone congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out. He said once more: “Maybe.”

§ 7

It may seem, at times, that certain “emotions” are worth keeping and have redeeming qualities, such as the feelings that are stirred when watching a film and a beloved character perishes or the hero finally completes his redemption arc. But these feelings are not emotions in the proper sense; they would better be classified as *Resonances*. Resonance is impersonal. It does not cling, does not seek

to sustain itself, and does not arise from identification. It is the Self recognizing the Self through form—a harmonic flash of alignment with beauty, Truth, or meaning. Emotion, by contrast, is always personal. It reacts, it wants, it narrates. The Ego has taken every form of Resonance and twisted it—Love into need, Joy into stimulation, Compassion into pity. What we call “emotion” is but the corrupted shadow of something pure—and these shadows may very well *appear* to be light if not examined carefully enough. Hence why in meditation, even the most beautiful inner flower that arises in perception must be denied: the moment one makes an exception, the Venus flytrap closes—and one is back in identity. The Siren’s song is beautiful because that is what makes it seductive—the underlying intention, however, is that the sailor be shipwrecked on the rocks.

§ 8

Proceeding from the specific case of Emotion to the more general case with respect to the duplicity of the Ego, we might speak a moment on one of its favorite mechanisms of deception—the category error: merging two things that are similar but not the same. With respect to Emotion, this gambit takes the form of conflating Emotions with States of Being in order to champion the notion that there are positive Emotions. However, we find this same gambit undertaken with respect to myriad situations, such as when excitement is conflated with happiness, or winning an argument conflated with being correct. But resemblance is not identity. That which feels or appears similar is not necessarily made of the same substance. Salt is not sugar, which is discovered in short order when the former is inadvertently poured in one’s coffee. It is wise to take care with one’s classifications (and to not accept at face value the classifications proffered by the world, which quite often are erroneous); and yet one must also avoid the extreme of painstakingly detailed bureaucratic documenting, where one spends all day describing the roses and never stops to smell them. It is wise to know the difference between the rose and the lily so that when one is trimming the rose bush, one remembers to be cautious of the thorns; it is *not* necessary to know the Latin name of every variety of rose that populates the Earth.

To overcome emotion is not to become cold—
it is to become clear;
Only once the storm stills
can the ocean reflect the sky.

Chapter 13: Love as Limitation

Let two things be known with crystal clarity at the outset of this chapter: (1) the intention here is not to denigrate Love, but merely to relocate it to its proper position in the spectrum of energies and expose the potential downside associated therewith, and (2) the concerns the reader may have regarding such a “demotion” in terms of how it may be interpreted by others would be unfounded, as anyone whom this communication would negatively affect due to ignorance and misunderstanding is decidedly not reading a work such as this.

Love is a wonderful energy and something to which all ought to aspire; however, one of the greatest tricks the Ego has ever created is the fallacy that Love is the highest and greatest possible energy. The reader has surely heard it said that “God is Love” and has seen in what high esteem society holds Love, at least ostensibly, placing it as the pinnacle of human experience. If one were to survey a thousand people and ask “do you consider yourself loving?”, all one thousand would respond affirmatively.

The Ego is loveless, and therefore, in its usual style, craves desperately to be seen as loving and lovable. Even those filled with hatred and rife with other deleterious emotions as their primary dominant energy field think of themselves as loving (it is interesting to note how readily people think of themselves as loving, and yet with what hesitation and resistance they are willing to call themselves enlightened, as if the former is virtuous and the latter arrogant). Many people are largely driven by a desire to fit in with and be accepted by society, which motivation dates back to early days of the history of man, where to behave in a manner divergent from what is considered acceptable to the tribe might well yield the consequence of being excommunicated from the group, which in those times meant certain death. This underlying fear of banishment and death as a consequence of behaving in a manner not in line with what the group deems acceptable persists to this day, and so one sees how many people adopt only those views which are considered socially acceptable, embracing whatever is considered presently trendy and then discarding it when it is no longer en vogue. To be a loving

person is a quality revered by society almost universally, and so there is great pressure to conform to this orientation, preaching the importance of love and virtue signaling regularly about one's own degree of lovingness. All this is by no means to say love is a negative quality, but only to point out that it is often positioned unduly high, and also to expose just how frequently the quality is faked or exaggerated for the sake of appearances, or even for self esteem.

Jesus primarily taught Love, whereas the Buddha primarily taught Enlightenment (though of course there is some overlap in the curricula of the two). Buddha was teaching an audience of those who were spiritually sophisticated and advanced; in his day and geographical region, the teachings of the Vedas and Advaita were already well established and proliferated. Jesus was primarily teaching an audience that was less spiritually sophisticated, hence why he said, “one who is healthy does not require a physician; I have not come for the righteous but for the sinners”. The reason Jesus taught primarily Love is because Love is a goal realistically attainable by the masses; Enlightenment (which is a considerably higher energy than Love—let there be no doubt about this), by contrast, is only realistically attainable by a relative handful : the former requires a commitment to loving-kindness, compassion, treating others as one would like to be treated, and the willingness to forgive and put one's own desires aside for the benefit of others ; the latter requires intense spiritual devotion (such that it is one's highest priority by a wide margin), a dedicated meditation practice, a willingness to abandon material wealth and attachment, and a willingness to confront one's shadow side and overthrow one's beliefs, no matter how preciously held and valued—in other words, the requirements to attain Enlightenment are far more demanding and intense than those required to be loving. (Just to be clear, none of this is to say that Jesus was in any way inferior to the Buddha, but merely to point out that the two taught different curricula to different audiences for different purposes).

Those who are fortunate enough to attain the energy level of Love as their dominant energy field in nearly all cases end their spiritual progress there. Such people are often content to raise a family and work a career where they can serve and benefit others. For many, this is the maximum of which they are capable of attaining, and there is nothing wrong with this; however, it is assumed that anyone reading a work such as this possesses the curiosity of

what Truth lies beyond the energy field that serves as the maximum only to the masses. As is said in the Upanishads, “most choose the life of the family, the path of the moon ; few choose the path of isolation and meditation, the path of the sun—and only they attain life eternal”.

In countless cases, I have seen spiritual teachers fall into the trap of championing love as the highest attainment, and professing, with the type of saccharine superciliousness that gives away the performance underlying the presentation, how unconditionally loving they are in everything they do. (Truly I tell you, you are better off with a spiritual teacher who is willing to admit that at times he can be a real asshole.) Such teachers tend to have large followings, because, as has been previously noted, all people wish to think of themselves as loving (because the Ego wishes to think of itself as loving), and so desire to associate themselves with those who also seem to represent this quality and will acknowledge and affirm it as present in them; and so the spiritual community becomes an endless effete parade of love, light, flowers, rainbows and sunshine (again, there is nothing inherently wrong with such things—the problem lies in the excess and degree).

There is a peculiar trend among modern spiritual teachers to speak about living predominantly from the Heart Chakra energy center. This is a strange conclusion to come to—that for some reason one of the middle chakras would be the highest and only truly valuable energy center. Given the nature of the chakra system, there are only two possible conclusions that actually make sense: either each chakra is equally valuable, or the Crown is of the greatest value. So much then for the bizarre notion of being exclusively heart-centered.

This trend, however, does serve as an outstanding exemplification of how Love can become a hindrance to higher spiritual development when misplaced in too high a station. If one *identifies* as loving, then all the Ego needs to do to put one off from attaining higher realizations is to label them as unloving, and the individual will therefore immediately reject those paths at the outset because they do not seem to match up with how he thinks of himself, and therefore he will never discover what lies further down such roads. It is wiser to station love in its proper place, below

honesty (the throat chakra), spiritual vision (the third eye chakra), and Oneness with the Divine (the crown chakra). A servant is not greater than its master. One can live a happy and fulfilling life in the energy field of Love; but if one wishes to know the full Truth of Reality, one must be willing to go beyond this energy field—even if this means venturing into the darkness and unknown.

Deliberately trying to be more loving or lovable is a fool's errand that undermines its own intention. Love is most strongly associated with acceptance—that is, to embrace whatever is present and not resist it. Any attempt to be more loving or lovable is a subtle act of non-acceptance—it is akin to saying “I am not good enough as I am now; I need to improve in order to be what I wish and ought to be”. Such a stance implies a lack or deficiency in the present, and a refusal to accept present conditions as sufficient and satisfying; therefore, the very act of trying to become more loving or more lovable actually *precludes* one from the energy field of love. It is therefore far wiser to simply accept oneself as is and allow lovingness to come and go, rise and fall, of its own accord.

When circumstances are appropriate, lovingness will be present; there is no need to attempt to be loving all the time artificially because there is a belief that this mode of being is somehow superior either spiritually or in terms of happiness. Many of the higher energy states are *not consistently sustainable due to their intensity*—spiritual ecstasy, for example, can only be sustained for a matter of minutes—and as such, it is perfectly well and good that these states come and go. There are occasions where one needs to concentrate on a task or study philosophy or meditate, and under such conditions it is not necessary, and I dare say imprudent, to be ensconced in the energy field of love. Be satisfied just to be happy: nearly all worldly tasks can be undertaken in a state of happiness without any hindering effects—indeed, to be in a state of happiness while going about daily life generally enhances everything one does.

Chapter 14: Qualities of Authentic Spiritual Teachers

Unfortunately, there are many illegitimate spiritual teachers in the world; some are knowingly duplicitous whereas others are relatively well-meaning but have been taken in by some trick of the Ego and are therefore not teaching the truth. It can be very difficult for an inexperienced spiritual seeker to spot the difference between an authentic spiritual teacher and a fraud.

The following is a list of qualities that hold true for legitimate spiritual teachers. The hope here is that the reader may use this list as a frame of reference to assess which purported spiritual teachers are worthy of his time versus those which are best avoided. There is an aspect of the mind that is incredibly vulnerable—far more than is generally admitted—and it is easily programmed by what it is exposed to, even when it believes it is shielded and can keep incoming data from making an impression; it is therefore wise to take great care with respect to what one exposes oneself to—curious investigations that seem harmless enough can end up having a powerful and lasting effect. One is responsible for being a good steward to the innocent and mostly unprotected mind. It is not a good idea to stick your hand in the bear trap in the name of figuring out how it works.

1. A legitimate spiritual teacher never charges money for spiritual teachings. This is an essential factor on which one can discriminate, because so many teachers make an exception to this rule and thereby expose themselves as inauthentic. It is worth noting that Jesus, Buddha, and Krishna never charged anyone a single cent for a spiritual teaching—all were given away completely for free, because this is the appropriate ethical approach with respect to teachings on spiritual matters. Jesus said, “you cannot serve God and money”; Buddha spoke of attachment to the material as the source of all suffering; and Krishna forbade his devotees from even touching money. Any teacher who has realized the ultimate truth of reality has no interest in monetarily profiting from it. To even make a small exception

with respect to this rule is to start down the slippery slope—soon enough certain secret teachings are made available only to those who pay a premium, and attention is catered more towards those students who make sizable financial contributions over those who do not. There is admittedly a valid option to make a work available for free and then also create a version with precisely the same information for those who wish to make a financial contribution, such as making a written work available as a free digital copy online and publishing precisely the same text in the form of a book for which one charges fees designed to recuperate the costs associated with the physical assembly and distribution of the book. What is essential is that all the information be made available for free. Nothing should ever be held back from those who cannot afford to pay for the information. In other areas of life there are reasonable opportunities to make money, but when it comes to spiritual truth, in order for one to remain in ethically appropriate standing, one must make all teachings available completely for free.

2. A legitimate spiritual teacher takes no interest in being venerated, worshiped, or excessively adulated. He may possess superior wisdom or communication abilities, yet still he does not consider himself broadly superior to others. This said, it is also not necessary that he be humble. All too often humility becomes a spiritual guise designed to make one more likable and relatable—if one is great at something, one ought to acknowledge he is great at it. There is no need to either downplay or oversell one's abilities. The golden mean here is authenticity, and an honest self-assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses. A legitimate spiritual teacher will be able to unashamedly acknowledge in what aspects of life he is exceptional and in what aspects of life he is deficient. Between the extremes of pride and humility lies honesty.
3. A legitimate spiritual teacher *always* has an excellent sense of humor. Any teacher who presents an austere and serious countenance, such as is typical of people who are either not sincerely happy or are attempting to create a certain

impression of poise, is not the genuine article. Anyone who has realized the underlying truth of reality understands that life is hysterical, and the context of life is comedy. When one sees what is truly going on in this world, one cannot help but laugh at the utter absurdity of it all. Humor as an energy actually calibrates *higher than love!* Consider this: one might go through a day lovingly interacting with various people and having a consistently pleasant experience, but what he will remember most from such a day would be an instance where he and a friend got to laughing about some matter so much that tears came to his eyes—*this* is the higher, more memorable experience of the day. If listening to a spiritual teacher speak does not make you frequently laugh, forget it—he's not worth your time.

4. A genuine spiritual teacher never assigns rank or titles to his students. There may be a realistic understanding that certain students are more spiritually advanced than others, but this is distinct from having defined ranks students are expected to achieve, like “devotee” or “master”. Such ranking systems are not beneficial to others and create a competitive and contentious environment whereas the atmosphere ought to be one of cooperation and compassion. While it is not necessary to go to the opposite extreme where everyone is exactly equal and there is no such thing as “spiritual advancement” (because there most certainly is), such rigid systems of rank are nefarious in nature and lead to inevitable problems.
5. A genuine spiritual teacher does not use strange language, symbols, or terminology, and does not engage in ostentatious fanfare, such as elaborate robes, gongs and incense ; if there is an artistic presentation that is arcane by nature so it can convey a certain meaning or message, it is presented as such; not muddled up with a teaching intended to be literal and informative. There are no rituals to perform and minimal requirements in terms of dress and decorum. A genuine spiritual teacher is relatable and down to Earth, not some ephemeral figure who is detached from reality because he is,

ostensibly, somehow transcendent of reality *as a character*. Different people have different personalities, and so different modes of expression are perfectly permissible; but generally speaking, an authentic spiritual teacher should come off as relatively normal. One is better off with a teacher who enjoys coffee and cigarettes than one who frowns upon such things.

6. With respect to a genuine spiritual teacher or a genuine spiritual community, there is never any obligation to remain with the group, no oaths to be sworn, and no obligatory beliefs which must be held in order to be considered worthy ; rather, all are free to come and go as they please, there is no demand of exclusivity or extraordinary commitment, and beliefs are left to the individual's discretion (it is completely ineffective to attempt to force anyone into a belief—when this is done, the belief is not genuine in nature but only an artificial product of pressure and persuasion, which is of benefit to no one).
7. It is *not* a requirement of a genuine spiritual teacher that he be especially nice or loving. While there is a tendency towards these qualities in spiritual teachers, there are some whose style is more aggressive and direct. Certain Zen masters were famous for being intensely strict and easily annoyed with their students. This is merely an expression of different styles and personality types. There are *countless* inauthentic spiritual teachers who preach love around the clock but have no *real* understanding of the underlying Reality. The energy field of Love is *prior to and lesser than* the energy field of Enlightenment.

Chapter 15: The Trap of Becoming the Savior

Yu cannot *become* what Yu *is*.

Chapter 16: A Brief Overview of the Seven Chakras

The Seven Chakras are various energy centers in the body that correspond to different energetic expressions/modalities/styles. A fortunate characteristic of the Chakra system is that one can verify the legitimacy of the existence of these energy centers directly, rather than having to rely on some external source's testimony about them—if one can mentally locate these energy centers and feel them, this is direct confirmation of their existence. The Seven Chakras are as follows, from the bottom up (all run along the center of the body in alignment with the spine):

1. The Root Chakra (Red) – located at the pelvic floor, the nadir of the upper body.
2. The Sacral Chakra (Orange) – located at the top of the pelvic bone.
3. The Solar Plexus Chakra (Yellow) – located a couple of inches above the navel.
4. The Heart Chakra (Green) – located at the center of the physical heart.
5. The Throat Chakra (Blue) – located at the throat pit, at the top of the sternum.
6. The Third Eye Chakra (Indigo) – located at the eyebrow center.
7. The Crown Chakra (Violet) – located just beyond the physical body at the top of the head.

Each energy center has a particular function and value, and it is worth taking the time to clear stagnant energies from all centers, at first starting from the base and working upwards, and thereafter addressing each as necessary. The following list reveals the nature of the energy field of each chakra:

1. The Root Chakra is associated with groundedness, stability, being able to function efficiently and effectively.
2. The Sacral Chakra is associated with creativity, spontaneity, and sexuality.
3. The Solar Plexus Chakra is associated with emotional intelligence and handling interactions with others well. (This Chakra generally governs the majority of daily experience).
4. The Heart Chakra is associated with love, kindness, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, empathy, and good will.
5. The Throat Chakra is associated with speaking the truth, self honesty, and authenticity.
6. The Third Eye Chakra is associated with Spiritual Vision—that is to say, seeing beyond the illusion into the meta context of what seems to be happening on the superficial, linear level.
7. The Crown Chakra is associated with recognizing and experiencing the Universal Oneness of the Self with God, others, and Everything.

The two highest chakras, namely the Third Eye Chakra and Crown Chakra, are the two associated with Enlightenment.

People often make an error and think of the lower three chakras as “negative” and the higher four as “positive”; however, this is a mistake in reasoning: it is true that the Root Chakra is the anchor of baseness, the Sacral Chakra the anchor of sexually aggressive energy, and the Solar Plexus Chakra the anchor of emotionality, and clearing these chakras can aid in keeping these deleterious energies under control, but there are also the positive associations as promulgated in the list above, and so while these chakras are indeed the anchors of negativity, they also have their positive aspects, which ought not be overlooked.

It is also worth noting that in the world there tends to be an undue obsession with the Heart Chakra, as if this energy center is of greater value than the others. This error likely occurs for at least two major reasons: firstly, the Heart Chakra is the first chakra in the

sequence that does not have a corresponding negative aspect, and therefore stands in marked contrast to the three below ; secondly, society in general tends to preach Love as the highest imaginable quality, when in truth it is but the highest quality which the majority are capable of attaining—most would prefer to adopt a view that is consistent with what is deemed appropriate by society, such that they may find acceptance and admiration among their peers, rather than to stand as an iconoclast against the common tide for the sake of championing that which is actually true. The reader is advised that while there is absolutely nothing wrong with the Heart Chakra, it is also the case that this energy center does not possess some peculiar advantage or significance over the other energy centers, and therefore it is not deserving of disproportionate attention.

There are plenty of excellent resources available in the world with respect to working energetically with the chakras, and so I shall only present a basic but perfectly effective meditative technique for clearing chakra energies here for the sake of brevity: sit with a straight back, close your eyes, focus on your breathing and gradually lengthen the breath so that your heart rate slows down and you relax, and then slowly move your attention from one energy center to the next, pausing for a few seconds at each before going on, moving up and back down the chakra centers (it can be helpful to repeat the name of each chakra mentally as you go, and to visualize the corresponding color). This practice can be done for as long as one feels comfortable doing so (though at times it is worth pushing the boundaries a little bit for the sake of exploration).

Clearing chakra energy centers is beneficial for both spiritual progress and everyday well-being; it is also a useful meditative practice, as it requires taking time off from interacting with the external world and focusing on the inner state for a while : rotating through the chakras, therefore, has a dual benefit, and is certainly worth dedicating 15 minutes to a half an hour to each day for the sake of one's spiritual progress and peace of mind.

Chapter 17: Soul Versus Spirit

§ 1

The distinction between soul and spirit set forth in this chapter and employed throughout this treatise is peculiar to this work and will not necessarily match up with the way these terms are commonly used—in most cases, *soul* and *spirit* are used essentially interchangeably with one another to refer to a sentient being's non-physical and eternal essence; however, since there is a distinction worth making between the authentic and inauthentic versions of spirit, and since it is more valuable that this distinction be clearly grasped than it is to have two words that mean precisely the same thing, e the terms are ascribed distinct and definite meanings. *Spirit* is authentic—it refers to one's essential, eternal, non-physical existence—that is to say, the Self. *Soul* is inauthentic Spirit—the notion of Spirit co-opted and manipulated by the Ego into a subtle variation that is derived from Truth but is itself false: Spirit genuinely exists; Soul does not. Recall that the Ego creates a bastardized version of *everything* that is True, and so it stands to reason that, much as the Self has been co-opted as the self, Spirit has been co-opted as the Soul.

§ 2

Generally speaking, Soul is thought to be locked inside the physical body, as were the body some sort of temporary cage that has somehow bound the eternal and infinite inside spatiotemporal, finite form. This represents a category error that subtly places physical form as having primacy over consciousness, and the intention behind the Ego's confusion here is quite the same as respects its elevation of the scientific, materialistic paradigm over the spiritual as the foundation of reality, thereby reversing the proper arrangement of content and context. When thought of this way, the Soul becomes paradoxically both physical and non-physical—it is held as eternal but treated as time bound; it is non-formal, and yet can be contained. It is not possible to put gravity in a box, much less to contain in form that which is transcendent of spacetime. There is no Soul inside the body; rather, the body manifests inside Spirit (as can best be said). When one peers at the cosmos through a telescope, one is not

contained by the telescope, but is merely looking through it, such that one's field of vision is scoped by its lens. The fact that one registers and experiences bodily sensations and perceptions does not in any way imply that one is *inside* the body—when one puts on a virtual reality headset, one experiences sensory and perceptual feedback through a game character and world, but in truth is never *inside* either. It is incorrect to say, “I *have* a Soul” and particularly incorrect to say, “I have an [adjective] Soul” ; it is correct to say, “I *am* Spirit”. By contrast, it is incorrect to say, “I *am* a physical body” ; it is correct to say, “I *have* a physical body”. And as a reminder, it is incorrect to say, “I *have* a life” ; it is correct to say, “I *am* life”.

§ 3

Spirit is incapable of error—it is untarnished, untainted, and absolutely perfect ; Soul, by contrast, is thought of as being subject to improvement or decline, such that acts of nobility or virtue enhance its worth while acts of degradation or vice detract therefrom. In ancient Egyptian mythology, when one passes away, one's Soul is weighed by Osiris in the underworld—it's weight being determined by the nature of one's deeds in life—and the result determines whether one will proceed to an afterlife of joy or torture. Dante's *Inferno* systematically categorizes and describes the various forms of torture one's Soul will endure for eternity if one commits particular immoral acts. Modern day Christianity speaks of sanctification and salvation of the Soul through faith and works, declaring that when one passes on, one's Soul goes either to Heaven or Hell based on one's actions and beliefs. Eastern traditions often believe that one's karma determines what one's conditions will be in one's next incarnation, and this belief is precisely the same as saying that one's deeds determine the destiny of one's Soul. These misunderstandings arise from the Ego's distortion of the nature of Spirit. Insofar as one is not the thinker, not the doer, not the egoic character, and has absolutely no free will, one cannot possibly be on the hook for the conduct of the egoic character beyond the ramifications associated with physical manifestation. If the body punches someone, it will likely be punched back, but this exchange has absolutely no bearing on the nature of the Spirit, which is neither diminished nor enhanced thereby—much as the conduct of Frodo Baggins in The Lord of the Rings has no bearing on Elijah Wood. Most often the world uses the

idea of the Soul in order to control people—a great deal of people operate primarily based on superstition and fear as opposed to Reason, and as such it can be an effective strategy to use threats of eternal punishment and promises of eternal rewards to command obedience, influence behavior, and extort money.

There is a particularly nuanced Christian teaching directly from Jesus on this topic: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” As is commonly the case with Jesus, this teaching is meant to work on multiple levels simultaneously. For those in the linear, material paradigm of reality, in which others are perceived as independent seats of subjectivity and morality is seen as significant, this teaching means that one ought to be concerned principally with the state of one's eternal soul as opposed to the state of one's physical form. This orientation lends itself to a more traditional view of morality, where selflessness and reciprocity are valued (even when stealing would benefit one in the material sense and one would surely not be caught, one refrains from doing so because such would represent a violation of ethics and damage the standing of one's Soul in the eyes of God). This type of comprehension is applicable at a certain Level of Consciousness, but eventually, it must give way to a more sophisticated understanding. The One who can destroy both soul and body in Hell is merely the wise philosopher who informs you that (1) Earth *is* Hell, (2) there's no such thing as a Soul, and (3) you are not the physical body and it does not go with you when this realm is transcended ; there is no need to fear this One, even though he brings not peace but a sword. There are two primary indicators that hint at the accuracy of this interpretation: (1) the word One is capitalized, which indicates it is a reference to the Self as opposed to Satan, who would not be *The One* but *a one*; (2) this is the only instance in The Bible where Jesus suggests you fear something, which is not consistent with his overall message championing fearlessness, indicating that this teaching likely is not to be taken at face value, but interpreted metaphorically. Don't fear the Reaper. (The Greek *phobeisthe*, which is often translated as 'fear' in English, can also be used to mean 'awe' or 'reverence', with no negative connotation).

There is no Hell in the sense of a realm of eternal torture from which one has no hope of escape—Earth *is* Hell because

anything that is not Heaven, by comparison, is Hell. Schopenhauer deftly pointed out, “It is clear that the only place from which Dante could have taken the materials for his Hell is this actual world.” The First Noble Truth of the Buddha is the acknowledgment that the underlying basis of Earthly life is suffering. The only reason Earthly life is not always perceived as hellish is because the memory of Heaven is typically lost after incarnation, and so one simply gets accustomed to suffering as the *de facto* state of existence. Drug and alcohol addictions represent an attempt to transcend the suffering associated with incarnation, as these temporarily anesthetize the Ego, allowing the radiance of the Self to shine forth; people who pursue these are not degenerates or morally debased, *per se*—they are simply trying to escape Hell and return to their natural, unbound state. Only via severe self-deception can the manifest world be conceived of as anything but Hell. The pleasure/pain dynamic, where pleasure is only the negation of pain, guarantees that the best one can hope for is a break-even, and at worse the pain of life will be considerably greater than the pleasure derived therefrom; further still, Schopenhauer correctly observes that [insert quote]. The suffering associated with the belief in some eternal Hell of punishment far beyond that which might be found on Earth, where “abandon all hope, ye who enter here” applies—that suffering at the hands of the Ego and its imaginings of future punishment is the real Hell. The escape from Hell is not in the world but in transcendence of it, which journey is never wholly complete until one is no longer associated with a formal, physical body and so capable of experiencing pleasure and pain. This journey only truly begins once the Ego has been detected and some faith in what is claims to be true repealed. It culminates in physical death, which, though often thought of as the horror of all horrors, is indeed the ultimate liberation. The Ego has an incredible penchant for getting things exactly backwards—death, which is generally considered to be the worst thing that could happen to one, turns out to be the greatest. That which is commonly called Life is actually Death, and that which is commonly called Death is actually Life.

Chapter 18: On the Purpose of Meditation

“If you are meditating in order to become a better person,
then you are *not* meditating.”

~Alan Watts

There is no greater anathema to the Ego than meditation, for it is through meditation that the Ego is uncovered as an autonomous functioning in consciousness that is not indeed “I” or “self”, and its patterns recognized, that they may be anticipated and transcended – not so much by their cessation as by the withdrawal of belief in their authenticity ; therefore, the Ego fights against meditation tooth and nail, both through stubborn resistance and subversion of how meditation is performed and what its purpose is. One might generously allow that there are multiple types of meditation, one of which involves transcendence of the Ego and others of which are undertaken for other purposes, such as stress-relief; however, making this allowance is ultimately deleterious, for it leaves the door open a crack for the Ego to slip in and being slowly corrupting the practice, and then soon enough one is, for example, meditating solely for the sake of becoming a more empathetic individual and never for the sake of transcending the Ego, that is, rather than overcoming the egoic sense of personal identity with meditation, one reinforces it – *the goal in life is not to be a good person; it is to transcend the illusion of personal identity*. The sentiment that “whatever meditation style one resonates with is right because it is right for him” is utterly fallacious and comes from virtue signaling and moral relativism – folly masquerading as ethical uprightness. *There is indeed a right way and a wrong way to meditate*, and if this statement offends one's delicate sensibilities, it can be said with certainty that one is far from Enlightenment, as “being offended” and defensiveness are always indicative of identification with the egoic character, which hates to have its paradigm of reality threatened by opposing beliefs, regardless of whether or not they represent the truth. If we are to tiptoe around trying avoid offending anyone and making everyone feel comfortable – the Ego has won. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

The single most effective meditative practice is to simply sit comfortably with one's eyes closed and observe the Mind – just watch the Ego and its patterns, and all its plays to create a sense of identity; when it feels as though one has become lost or entangled in thought, simply recognize that this too is merely a projection on the screen and nothing more than the Ego creating a false sense of self. All that is said about the nature of the Ego in this treatise is available to be ascertained directly and immediately through meditation and observation of the Ego/Mind – indeed, it is wise to treat everything one gleans from external sources as at best tentatively true until one has rigorously confirmed for oneself the validity of what has been advanced as true by others. It is unwise to meditate while lying down, as this lends itself to falling asleep as soon as one begins to make any progress; and it is also unwise to sit in a rigid posture in an uncomfortable position, as the resultant physical discomfort will serve as a distraction (the Ego considers the former peaceful and the latter indicative of earnest practice, both of which are merely clever rationalizations designed to deter one from effective practice – it is amusing that in videos of people meditating, there is never displayed an individual comfortably resting or reclining in a computer chair, and yet this is *precisely* the most suitable posture one can adopt for effective practice). Focusing on the breath is acceptable, as it merely serves as a static point of reference for the innate and unconditioned feeling of existence; but it is neither necessary nor wise to engage in convoluted breathing activities as if such will somehow suddenly generate a shortcut to Enlightenment or bliss. Focusing on a mantra is acceptable for similar reasons, but is less efficacious than focusing on the breath, because the wrong mantra can easily be a conduit into a sense of personal identity: “this thought is perceived” is accurate and aligned with Reality ; whereas “I am loving” sounds virtuous, but merely leads one into the sense of identity as a “loving person” (when meditating, it is wise to dispense with the notion of love altogether; it is far wiser to focus on truth, and to observe what is witnessed and felt without assigning any value judgment to it whatsoever – the unspoken inquiry ought to be along the lines of “what exactly is actually going on in consciousness?”). Rotating through the Chakras energetically is a preferable practice to repeating mantras, as it is more aligned with energy (which is an immediate, visceral experience) than conceptual thought (which is filtered through abstraction, and passes through the Ego's domain) ;

furthermore, this practice is advantageous in that it actively demonstrates that the focus of attention can be moved, and so when one becomes seemingly lost in thought, it is more readily ascertained that attention can be withdrawn from the energetic attachment to conceptual thought or emotion and pulled back into the unconditioned awareness of experience. Creative visualization and listening to music can be effective, but these methods are fraught with potential peril, as their efficacy depends on the quality of the visualization or music utilized, and so until one has reached a point where one can confidently discern the energy associated with such things, it is best these methods be set aside in favor of the practices previously described. If one finds oneself distracted by physical discomfort while meditating, the solution does not lie in overcoming this pain mentally, but is far more practical in nature – exercise, go to the gym, or do a practice like yoga to stretch and strengthen the body. There is *absolutely no need* to engage in any meditative practices aside from those just described; all complex, bizarre, and ritualized meditative practices issue from the Ego, and are not truly meditation but a clever deterrent therefrom. There is an exhaustive list of various meditation styles with elaborate and glamorous-sounding names to be found in the world; it is in one's best interest to ignore them all – this parsing into a million different styles with a million different purposes is just the Ego making overly complicated what is indeed quite simple. *Simplicitas est signum veritatis.*

The Ego is extraordinarily crafty when it comes to the matter of deterring one from proper meditation: for example, it will back off and allow the meditator to make some solid progress early on, such that one experiences peaceful and blissful states, only to pull the rug on this progress by raging back in full force, and lamenting (in the similitude of “I”), “I was doing so well, what went wrong?” – thus sending one hurdling right back into identification with the thoughts, emotions, and the personal sense of self (to reiterate a previously established point, the Ego is not the overt enemy, but the scheming, dissimulating villain who is clever enough to gain one's trust in order to lead one astray). It is therefore essential that one approach meditation with the complete and unwavering conviction that, regardless of all appearances to the contrary, one is not the thinker nor the contents of mind, and whatever is beheld in awareness cannot, by virtue of being beheld, be one's identity ;

furthermore, it is essential that one be willing to meditate not only when one is happily inclined to do so, but even when there is resistance, which must be fought through (just as in order to establish an effective workout regimen at the gym, one must attend every day, regardless of whether one wakes up motivated and excited to workout or unmotivated and dreading the prospect).

It must be said that prayer is a less effective variation on meditation and is fraught with peril – it may be useful on the Relative level for one who is less advanced in one's spiritual evolution, but for one seeking the Truth, the Self, and the Absolute, prayer ought to be jettisoned entirely in favor of meditation. The problem with prayer is that it immediately sets up a duality: there is a “me” *here* praying to a “God” *out there*. This arrangement yields two problems that are discordant with truth: firstly, it affirms the existence of a personal self as an egoic character ; secondly, it affirms that one is separate and distinct from God. Many use prayer to ask God for things, like money or a promotion; this practice represents utter foolishness, as it is not one's place to cajole and manipulate God into treating one favorably or fulfilling one's worldly desires – God automatically provides whatever is in one's best interest (the context of which is always one's spiritual evolution and never anything else), and it is a perplexing stance to consider God omnipotent and perfect, and oneself a fallible moral self, only to then turn and advise this all-knowing God what ought to be done. Prayer for the health of others or the salvation of mankind sounds virtuous, but ultimately represents precisely the same trapping just described – *the goal in life is not to be a good person; it is to transcend the illusion of personal identity*. As was once said by another apparent form:

“...when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your inner room, shut the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for

their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

This sentiment might be rephrased in short thusly:

When you pray, don't pray—meditate.

Chapter 19: On Causality

§ 1

David Hawkins boldly and repeatedly declared, “nothing is causing anything”. In other words, causality is wholly illusory. This can be a challenging notion to grasp, but on the level of the Absolute, it is accurate. However, it is worth clarifying the nature of causality further with consideration for the Relative level, which, though ultimately illusory in nature, cannot simply be thought away and dispensed with, much as one in a simulation might become aware that he is in a simulation, but is not by this awareness freed from it, or one in a dream may become aware one is dreaming, but not necessarily therefore wake up.

§ 2

The first and most essential thing to recognize in this discussion is that the Ego co-opts the concept of causality for its own purposes, which, as always, are to enhance the attachment to a false sense of identity; in this case, the ruse is facilitated primarily through using causality to create a justification for blame and guilt: “X caused Y, therefore X is to blame for Y, therefore if Y is undesirable, X ought to be condemned and lamented”. As David Hawkins so adroitly put it, “the moment you say anything is a cause, you imply that it is a fault”. The truth is:

- One does not have free will;
- Others are not independent seats of consciousness, and so too do not have free will;
- All proceeds according to the Divine Script, which is perfect, and from which there is no variation or deviance under any circumstances;
- Everything is always and at all times exactly as it ought to be and could not be any other way.

Therefore, it is correct to conclude that nothing is ever to blame for anything else; and while it can be challenging to avoid

feeling guilt in all circumstances, there is no such thing as justified guilt—it does not have some subtle utilitarian function, like teaching one right from wrong. It is perfectly simple and easy to realize that one turned left when one should have turned right, and to adjust accordingly on the next trip, without needing to “feel bad” about having made a “mistake”. *A Course in Miracles* is incredibly clear and consistent on the point that *all guilt* and *all blame* are only deleterious and are to be cast aside.

§ 3

On the Relative level, causality that is not co-opted by the Ego is applicable, valid, and useful. It is through our understanding of causality that we understand how to produce desired results from the conditions that definitionally give rise to them. Combining Sodium and Chlorine yields salt—not on occasion, but always. In other words, this method is reliable and replicable, and therefore it is not incorrect to say that salt is the *effect* of combining Sodium and Chlorine, which is its *cause*. The coherent functioning of society and the health of the individual are largely dependent on a proper understanding of causality in this respect: to comprehend from the universal and abstract what the results will be of a certain action in a particular case is essential for function, innovation, and survival.

At the most fundamental level (of the Relative levels), causality is merely an orientation of temporal sequence: for any two consecutive moments in time, with respect to the entirety of manifestation and one's experience, the moment that occurs first can be said to be the *cause* of the moment that occurs second, which is its *effect*. This, however, is a nuanced understanding: it is not to say that the first moment is the source or genesis of the second, but only to say that it preceded it in time.

Since here the terms cause and effect are being employed in two different contexts, it might be useful to parse them into more specific terminology governing each case. We might say that, as respects the ability to produce reliable results from conditions known to yield said results, we speak of *inputs* and *outputs*; and as respects the relationship between two consecutive moments in time taken in their totality of expression as manifestation and experience, we speak of *ground* and *consequence*. However, in actual practice on the world stage,

such a fine distinction would rarely be made, and so we are to some extent stuck dealing with imprecise language, and attempting to discern the definition appropriate under the given circumstances based on the context.

§ 4

On the Relative level, the Ego often imputes the notion of causality, in the sense of one condition giving rise to another, when in truth there is only sequence—this is the logical error of *post hoc ergo proptor hoc*. If a pianist runs his hand across the white keys of the piano, the Ego is likely to assume, “ah, there was a sequence, and therefore it is correct to say that A caused B which in turn caused C, and so on.” In truth, here A *preceded* B, but did not *cause* B. None of the notes caused any of the other notes. Every single note resulted from the hand of the musician, here analogous to the Self manifesting every moment in real time. We cannot apply the understanding of causality described with respect to temporal order unless the scope remains the entirety of experience; the moment this full and widest scope is abandoned for consideration of particular conditions taken in isolation, the rule of causality describing temporal sequence no longer applies.

Even when the Ego is not being as malicious as to contort causality into a justification for blame and guilt (and therefore revenge and self-flagellation), it still makes countless reasoning errors with respect to cause and effect. These errors include:

1. Reversing cause and effect
It is raining out and people are carrying umbrellas; therefore umbrellas cause rain.
2. Post Hoc Ergo Proptor Hoc (X preceded Y in time; therefore X caused Y)
I smelled smoke and then my car broke down; therefore the smoke caused my car to break down.
3. Cum Hoc Ergo Proptor Hoc (X and Y happened simultaneously; therefore one caused the other)
There was a loud noise and a lady dropped her purse; therefore the loud noise caused the lady to drop her purse (or perhaps the lady dropping her purse caused the loud noise).

4. Affirming the Consequent (If X then Y; Y; therefore X)
If one is Catholic then one is a Christian; he is a Christian; therefore he is Catholic.
5. The Slippery Slope (If X then Y; if Y then Z; if Z then the apocalypse)
If you don't vote then other people will stop voting and then everyone will stop voting and then we will have anarchy.
6. Circular Causality (X is the cause of Y and Y is the cause of X)
She is depressed because she sleeps all day; and she sleeps all day because she is depressed.
7. Complex/Oversimplified Cause (implying X is the sole cause of Y when Y is actually predicated on many factors)
Crime is caused by poverty.
8. Intentionality Fallacy (Event X must have been caused by Agent Y)
A volcano erupted; therefore it must be God expressing His anger.

§ 5

Now that we have adequately described the nature of causality as applicable to the Relative level, let us return to the Absolute in order to expose why causality is ultimately illusory. What occurs in manifestation and is witnessed as temporal sequence *is actually an already whole and complete story designed outside of the bounds of spacetime*. The Self generates the entirety of the story of manifestation as a single Idea, undivided, and then this Idea is experienced in temporal sequence as if it were only partially complete. This would be akin to how one watches a movie and experiences it sequentially, but the entire film is already contained in the reel, and what happens in the movie, though it seems to be variable, is in fact fixed and definite; or how when one plays a computer game one proceeds sequentially through levels, but the content of each level is already contained in the code, and therefore level four is always precisely level four as written in the code and never something else. Various mystical traditions have poetically attempted to harmonize the Relative and Absolute levels poetically,

such as by saying that, for example, one embarks upon a journey only to find he never left.

§ 6

Evolution is nothing but Creation as it plays out in linear time. They are related metaphorically as the unified sunlight is to the rainbow. Creation occurs on the level of the Absolute, and when it is rendered onto the Relative level, this is called Evolution. All of the consternation and tireless debate over the validity of Creation versus Evolution are instantly and easily resolved by this one simple understanding. It is not the case that “either the rainbow is correct OR the sunlight is correct”—mutual exclusivity is not the nature of this relationship, and this is true of the relationship between Creation and Evolution as well. When the Creationist claims that the Earth is only a few thousand years old because scripture says so, he is making a logical error—it is not correct to claim that what is contained in scripture must be true because scripture by its nature is true. When the Scientist claims that Creation is invalid because fossils confirm that the Earth is much older than what Creationists claim, he too is making a logical error—refuting a clumsy and fallacious argument from a Creationist is not sufficient grounds to conclude that Creation is invalid. Evolution is governed by and subordinated to the law of causality; Creation is not.

Chapter 20: Placeholderu

Chapter 21: On Formal Symbolic Logic

§ 1

The fact that formal symbolic logic is not taught in elementary school is baffling. The fact that it is rarely encountered in the course of one's entire education is even more perplexing. Historically speaking, reading, writing and arithmetic are considered to be the foundation of education—but all of these are predicated upon proper reasoning, which is therefore *even more fundamental*. It is proper reasoning that allows one to comprehend why a mathematical proof or theory is valid, as opposed to just accepting what is written in the text book at face value. It is proper reasoning that allows one to comprehend the significance of what is read, as opposed to being able to parrot back what was read without any comprehension of meaning. It is proper reasoning that allows one to express oneself through writing in a meaningful way, crafting logically coherent arguments and readable sentences. It is one thing to memorize the Quadratic Equation ; it is another to understand how it is derived and why it is valid. It is one thing to read a chapter and recall what happened ; it is another to comprehend the symbolic and archetypal meaning of what was read. It is one thing to write a three line post on Facebook about how one's weekend went ; it is another to craft a philosophical treatise.

As daunting as it may sound, formal symbolic logic is actually a rather easy subject. It can virtually be mastered in a single term college course. There are a handful of basic rules to memorize and a highly systematized format for formalizing the application of those rules into a valid proof. Once one is familiar with the formatting, has memorized the rules, and has had enough practice applying those rules in proofs, the subject is essentially exhausted.

§ 2

The value of studying formal symbolic logic does not lie in the ability to continue completing formalized proofs—this need almost never arises in the course of daily life—; rather, it lies in the fact that a study of the basic rules of reasoning—what operations are

allowed and what operations are not—becomes integrated into one's mind at an intuitive level, such that one need not deliberately think about them—they are instantly and accurately comprehended such that the validity or invalidity of a chain of reasoning is stunningly obvious when one is presented with a particular argument. Clever but flawed reasoning no longer is appealing—the error is instantly recognized and seen through. All of the logical fallacies are comprehended with ease, and it becomes second nature to identify a *petite principii* or a *non sequitur*. One is no longer stuck trying to intuitively feel out if an argument presented to him holds water—one *knows* if the argument is valid or not. One is therefore protected from all varieties of sophistry proffered by this world. With a rigorous intellectual comprehension of formal reasoning, the susceptibility to the influence of emotion to override reason and lead to all manner of spurious conclusions is heavily mitigated.

§ 3

It is beyond the scope and purpose of this treatise to teach formal symbolic logic—one could easily teach oneself the entirety of us using AI or other readily available sources—; however, a couple brief notes on a few of the basic rules of logic that often go overlooked are in order here.

A *valid* proof is one in which the conclusion correctly follows from the premises—regardless of whether those premises are actually true or not—in other words, the structure is: “*if* these premises are true, then this conclusion logically follows therefrom”. A *sound* proof is both valid in its construction and the premises are actually true—in other words, the structure is: “these premises *are* true, and this conclusion logically follows therefrom”. A proof that is sound is by definition valid, but a proof that is valid is not necessarily sound.

If you make the error of assuming your conclusion to be a premise, you cannot construct a legitimate proof, or rather, it means you can construct a valid proof to prove literally anything, which gives away the fact that to do so is an error of reasoning. If a hypothetical assumption is introduced into a proof, one needs to eliminate any dependencies upon that assumption before a valid proof can be completed; therefore, one must take the utmost caution

and exercise the maximum possible restraint when introducing a hypothetical into a proof ; there can be value in the hypothetical, as it can be used in *reductio ad absurdum* to prove that a certain premise cannot be true, because it would lead to a logical contradiction; but all too often people become lost in the hypothetical, and construct invalid arguments that would depend on hypothetical assumptions being treated as actually the case.

The reader is encouraged to read the early chapters of *An Investigation Into The Laws of Thought* by George Boole. This highly underappreciated philosophical and theoretical work establishes the most fundamental rules of reason that are primitive even to formal symbolic logic. Boolean logic, upon which all computers are built, arose from the understandings established in this work.

Chapter 22. On Meaning, Significance, and the Desire for Purpose

§ 1

On the level of the Absolute, nothing has any meaning apart from or beyond the immediate, visceral experience of it; indeed, since meaning implies an explanation or significance beyond immediacy, it is correct to say that nothing in this dream of reality has any meaning at all. Because one is proceeding without free will according to a divine script, in the end nothing matters, because nothing can be other than it is. This understanding ought not be constricting, sending one into apathy and nihilism, but freeing, allowing one to set down the added weight associated with adding superfluous meaning to events and to instead simply enjoy them for what they are. One does not need to know the scientific explanation of how and why the leaves turn various colors in the fall, nor does one need to assume the curmudgeonly stance, “whatever, it doesn’t matter” about it—one can simply enjoy the fact that the leaves turn colors and look beautiful.

§ 2

The Ego's desire for meaning, significance and purpose stems from its core intention to create a compelling false sense of individual identity. The more one becomes energetically invested in the story ascribed to events, the heavier they become, and the more difficult to let go of. To own a car as a means of conveyance carries much less weight than to think of one's car as, “my iconic ride that was gifted to me by my late father and has traversed the continent.” The Ego fuses story, narrative, and perceived significance into all events with the intention that they be held tightly rather than loosely. While most consider it wise to take life seriously, to find purpose and meaning, and to contribute to society something that is impactful and endures; true wisdom lies in non-attachment, and to “wear the world as a loose garment”. From the soil arose the body and to the soil it shall return; all of one's possessions will eventually have to be given

up; all relationships, no matter how beautiful and intimate, eventually come to an end. In this light, the events of this world can be seen as passing and temporary phenomena to which one need not be excessively attracted or averse to. One can simply enjoy the aesthetic of looking at the animals in the zoo without needing to attach a whole narrative about how they function and interact—knowing the animal's name and backstory do not enhance the appreciation of it. To fail to see the forest for the trees means that one becomes so transfixed on the details (the trees) that he overlooks the big picture (the forest).

Shakespeare's Hamlet is a cautionary tale of the consequences that come from ascribing too much significance to an event. In the play, Hamlet becomes so obsessed with righting the wrong of his father's murder that he is consumed by endless plotting and scheming, and even feigns losing his mind, which in many ways results in him losing his mind for real. Hamlet's tragic downfall is the result of his attaching excessive significance to events and becoming consumed by the narrative surrounding them. The character Fortinbras serves as the counter-point to Hamlet in the play: unlike Hamlet who obsesses over his story and is mired in indecision, Fortinbras is not overcome by the narrative of his story, and takes simple, decisive action—in the end, Hamlet is killed whereas Fortinbras becomes the ruler of Denmark.

§ 3

In modern society, most believe it is valuable and important to set goals and work towards them, to create a plan of what one wishes to accomplish and then to drive deliberately towards that destination. This is an Ego inversion—the truth is the exact opposite. The best way to proceed in life is with virtually no goals and no plan. Setting goals and making plans implies one believes that one is the architect and controller of one's life and destiny ; by contrast, proceeding spontaneously and without intention is an affirmation that the universe can be trusted. It is the difference between, “I need to determine where I am going” versus, “I trust the universe will place me wherever I am meant to be”. This does not mean one need be averse to planning *entirely*—but only that creating goals and making plans ought to be kept to a minimum. One cannot

control life, and the winds tend to blow in unanticipated directions, such that the best laid plans of mice and men rarely come to fruition. One musician goes into the studio thinking, “I need to get this album written and recorded in two weeks, I have a deadline and I want to release the album as soon as possible;” another thinks, “I’ll work on this album whenever I am inspired, and whenever it is done is when it is done;”—the latter is virtually guaranteed to create a superior work of art than the former. The value of trust and spontaneity over planning and pursuing goals is elucidated by the Christian teaching:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Many in modern society are also fooled into believing that they need to change the world for the better, or save the world, or reshape the world in their image. This much is purely a trick of the Ego, and the stance is flawed on several levels. Firstly, it flouts the correct understanding that everything is perfect as it is, regardless of one’s opinion about it. Secondly, it presumes out of grandiosity that one has more influence on the world than one actually does—managing oneself or one’s household well is a tall enough order.

Thirdly, it places the blame for the perceived imperfection of things upon others: “I’m wise and understand how things ought to be, they are all misguided and are the cause of needless suffering, therefore, they ought to listen to me and behave in accordance with my beliefs and directions”. Finally, it encourages identification with the character as an important, virtuous individual—there is an “us” who are morally upright and have the proper understanding of how things ought to be, versus a “them” who are morally corrupt (or at the very least ignorant) and are misguided as to how things ought to be.

Socrates deftly noted, “each man does at all times what he believes to be the good; the problem lies in his ignorance of what the good actually is”. All number of atrocities have been committed over the course of history in the name of making the world a better place—was this not the underlying intention of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Karl Marx, and Chairman Mao? Truly, it is much wiser to just allow the world to take care of itself—it is not your responsibility to keep the world on the rails, just as it is not your role to control the weather, even if you think it would be better if it were always sunny.

The desire to create a legacy and to be remembered is a particular bit of foolishness introduced by the Ego. He who seeks to be remembered misunderstands both memory and the Self—there is no continuity of identity in the dream, and no observer to retain it. There is no world that endures in absence of the Individual. A flower does not bloom in order to be remembered or to be thought well of by the other flowers—it blooms because it is its nature to bloom. Likewise, the wise individual creates not to be remembered, and not to make the world a better place, but for the sheer joy of creativity. If he enjoys the music he creates, this is sufficient—whether that music is universally beloved or reviled is of no concern to him. So often, the proper order of operations is reversed: people are taught to focus on externals, seeking to change the world and leave a lasting impact without first attaining the wisdom to comprehend what changes might actually be beneficial to others ; it is wiser to begin with introspection, with a refinement of one's understanding of ethics, reasoning, and philosophy—once this foundation is in place, one will automatically radiate that energy into everything one does and produces. This is the meaning of the Christian teaching:

“If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Seeking purpose subtly implies that there is something *lacking* or *deficient* in the present ; in truth, the present is always whole, complete and perfectly adequate. The pursuit of purpose results in an endless chase to achieve a different state in which one can at last be happy, rather than realizing that all happiness occurs in the present. The grass is always greener on the other side. Seeking happiness in an imagined future state or circumstance is self-defeating; it removes one's attention from the place where happiness actually is and places it upon a destination where it can never be found. Genuine happiness does not issue from accomplishing or achieving objectives—these yield a cheap and fleeting self-congratulatory payoff from the Ego only. One can walk in the woods and appreciate nature for what it is without needing to change it or re-purpose it. One need not think, “If I cut down all the dead trees and make a clear path, then it will be beautiful and I can at last enjoy the woods”. One need not think, “Only when these trees are turned into paper, which has utility and benefits mankind, have they achieved purpose”. The reason so many people feel hollow and empty is because they have identified with the ego and detached from the recognition of the Self: this naturally lends itself to a feeling of inadequacy, as one becomes identified with a flawed and limited sense of self as a common mortal, which is a far cry from what one truly is. The Ego then seeks to fill this sense of emptiness and lack through purpose and meaning in the world, but this pursuit only leads deeper into illusion and can never achieve its intended purpose —the void cannot be filled with dream-stuff. Hence why it is written in A Course In Miracles:

The ego, though encouraging the search for love very actively, makes one proviso; do not find it. Its dictates, then, can be summed up simply as: “Seek and do *not* find.” This is the one promise the ego holds out to you, and the one promise it will keep. For the ego pursues its goal with fanatic insistence, and its judgment, though severely impaired, is completely consistent.

The search the ego undertakes is therefore bound to be defeated. And since it also teaches that it is your identification, its guidance leads you to a journey which must end in perceived self-defeat. For the ego cannot love, and in its frantic search for love it is seeking what it is afraid to find...

The ego will therefore distort love, and teach you that love really calls forth the responses the ego *can* teach.
⁵Follow its teaching, then, and you will search for love, but will not recognize it.

Do you realize that the ego must set you on a journey which cannot but lead to a sense of futility and depression? To seek and not to find is hardly joyous.

§ 4

Perhaps the most sinister trick of the Ego as regards ascribing significance and meaning is the inordinate value that is placed upon procreating and raising a family. In modern society, raising a family is seen as the most noble of acts, and anyone who chooses the solitary life is looked upon with suspicion, or else it is at the very least thought that he is missing out on some essential life experience. The decision to procreate is not one to be made lightly —very few decisions in life have as much impact as the choice to procreate, and once one has made that decision, there is no going back, no way to undo it if you do not care for the result. And yet so many choose to procreate with almost no consideration for the consequences and the responsibility that must be assumed—“Well, we figured, we’re in our mid twenties and have been married for a few years, so it seemed like the right time”. While procreation does not definitionally prohibit one from attaining Enlightenment, the chances of it happening do fall to essentially zero once this choice has been made. Once one has a family and children, one’s attention is primarily directed at the external world: one needs to make enough money to support the family and make sure the child is taken care of, which ends up roughly requiring all of one’s time and energy ; one typically no longer has the time available for meditation and a study of philosophy. Often times the true underlying motivation behind

procreation is akin to: “I wish for a part of me to endure in this world beyond my physical death”. This is an intense affirmation of the Ego—of the idea that there is a world that endures apart from the subjectivity of the Individual, and that one's function in life is to significantly impact that world. It is as if to say, “I wish to render my egoic character immortal,” as opposed to recognizing that one already *is* immortal because one is *not* in truth the egoic character. Just as is the case with Love, the value of family is championed because it is realistically attainable by the masses, something the average person can aspire to; but one who is interested in Enlightenment and transcending the Ego to realize the Self is cautioned that the decision to procreate ought not be taken lightly, and that one must be stalwart against the societal pressure to conform to this standard if one elects to commit to the spiritual path full stop.

§ 5

This all said, it must be noted that not all meaning is of egoic origin. The meaning ascribed to mathematical operators, for example, does not issue from the Ego but rather represents a comprehension of the nature of reason and the design of the manifest universe. A plus sign means that the two operands are to be combined—there is absolutely no implication in this as to whether addition is morally right or wrong. The meanings of words are defined so that there can be successful communication between individuals, and there is nothing egoic in this. The best way to discern between harmless meaning and Ego-driven meaning is to (1) inquire as to whether the meaning ascribed is fact or opinion, and (2) check if there is emotion driving the ascribed meaning. Do be aware, however, that the Ego will try to slip in opinion as fact through clever dissimulation: “that every child deserves the right to a quality education is not a matter of opinion—it is a matter of fact!”

§ 6

In the film *The Point!*, the main protagonist, Oblio, is born without a point on his head in a world where everyone else has a point. Despite Oblio being a kind, honest child, he is nevertheless met with derision from a society that believes it is important to have

a point. And so Oblio is banished to the Pointless Forest with his only true friend, his dog Arrow, who couldn't care less whether Oblio has a point or not, and simply loves him without judgment, as a true friend ought to. There, Oblio meets a Rock Man, who represents the wise sage—he says little, but speaks volumes in his few words. He also meets The Pointed Man who represents the Ego—speaking in riddles and frantically pointing in many directions at once. The purpose of Oblio's journey is not to find a point, but to come to terms with the fact that he never needed one to begin with. The symbolic conclusion to the story is summed up thusly:

“You don't need to have a point to have a point”

“The meaning of anything *is* what it is—what did you think it was going to be?”

~David Hawkins

“The meaning of life is just to be alive. It is so plain and so obvious and so simple. And yet, everybody rushes around in a great panic as if it were necessary to achieve something beyond themselves.”

~Alan Watts

“There's nowhere you can be that isn't where
you are
meant to be.
It's easy!”

~The Beatles

Chapter 23: Introverts and Extroverts

In popular culture, Introvert are typically thought of as shy, quiet individuals who largely prefer to be alone and struggle in social situations; whereas Extroverts are thought of as outgoing, boisterous individuals who are more socially inclined and adept. This assessment is far more of a vaguely applicable tendency than it is a reliable delineation: there are countless Introverts who are perfectly comfortable in social situations, and many Extroverts who enjoy solitary creative pursuits. What truly differentiates Introverts and Extroverts is precisely this: each has a reservoir of what might best be called *psychic energy* – not in the mystical sense, but as the mental and emotional vitality that governs focus, vitality, and presence –; however, Introverts recharge their energy in private, and their energy is gradually drained in public; whereas Extroverts represent the exact opposite orientation: they recharge their energy in public, and their energy is gradually drained in private. The Introvert, after a night out on the town with friends, is exhausted, and needs to retreat into isolation in order to recharge his batteries ; the Extrovert, after several hours spent in isolation, finds his energy waning and seeks a social setting for the same purpose. In public, the Introvert is like a capacitor being gradually *drained* by its use, as if energy were flowing *out of him* into his surroundings; in public, the Extrovert is like a capacitor being gradually *charged*, as if energy were flowing *into him* from his surroundings. This is the true quality that delineates the two types, such that it can rightly be said that *every* Introvert recharges privately and drains in public, whereas *every* Extrovert recharges publicly and drains in private. This distinction may also reflect differing orientations of awareness: the Introvert's energy flows inward and is taxed by outward dispersion; the Extrovert's energy flows outward and is replenished by external stimulation.

This said, it is true that there is a fairly strong tendency for Introverts to be more oriented towards introspection and extroverts to be more oriented towards worldly engagement. Amusingly, these tendencies often yield the following asymmetrical understanding: the Introvert recognizes through introspection that there are some people who recharge in public and others who recharge in private, and sees neither as superior to the other, but simply as distinct and

incidental modes of expression ; the Extrovert, by contrast, tends to map his own experience onto others, and thus assumes that everyone – or at least everyone functioning correctly – ought to, recharge in public. If an Extrovert is depleted, the Introvert, recognizing the Extrovert's nature, may advise, “you ought to go out on the town for the night with friends and recharge your energy” ; but if an Introvert is depleted, an Extrovert, failing to recognize the Introvert's nature and assuming they are wired essentially the same way, may offer the exact same advise, even though it is not applicable in this case: “you ought to go out on the town for the night with friends and recharge your energy”.

This lack of introspective awareness in Extroverts is what gives rise to the stigma associated with being “anti-social”. The Introvert does not think of himself as anti-social; he simply values isolation because it is essential to his well-being – he is not opposed to social interaction and indeed sees value in it; he simply requires regular time alone to maintain the balance in his psychic energy. An Extrovert forced into isolation for a week would become frayed and restless; an Introvert denied solitude for a week would feel precisely the same way. Neither modality is superior: the world needs both types to function effectively, just as it needs both diurnal and nocturnal types to cover the spectrum of labor.

Nevertheless, it can be said with reasonable confidence that Introverts are statistically more likely to embark upon the authentic path of spiritual awakening, whereas Extroverts are more likely to find themselves on the path of the family, career, and worldly success. This difference arises as a result of their inherent energetic orientations: the Extrovert would find it draining to sit alone reading and contemplating philosophy for hours; the Introvert, by contrast, would find this invigorating. For the Extrovert, reality tends to be defined by what is affirmed and validated by the world at large; for the Introvert, reality is more often defined by his own inner experience and understanding. The Extrovert says, “I believe to be the truth what the world confirms to be the truth” ; the Introvert says, “I believe to be the truth what I have myself discovered to be the truth”.

Chapter 24: On Conspiracy Theories

“I thought you said it wasn't real?”

~Neo

“The mind makes it real.”

~Morpheus

The Matrix

§ 1

The Ego adores conspiracy theories, and at the heart of this adoration is but one simply gambit—to keep one's attention fixed upon the world such that it is never turned inward and the deeper nature of reality investigated. There is only *one* real conspiracy in this world: the false sense of self perpetuated by the Ego to keep one from realizing the Self and transcending identification with the egoic character. There *is* a voice in the mind that is not you or yours whispering, “this is who I am”. There *is* an elaborate scheme designed to keep one tethered to a false sense of self. There *is* a grand illusion aimed at keeping one's attention fixed upon any number of meaningless worldly distractions rather than looking inward and investigating the deeper metaphysical nature of Reality. There *is* an aspect of consciousness that has twisted every single Truth into a bastardized forgery and now holds these up in front of Reality, proclaiming, “*this* is the authentic version”. Every single worldly conspiracy theory is but a mechanism to distract one from realizing *this*. So long as one is looking for the corruption *out there*, one will overlook where the true corruption dwells: in consciousness itself—not in *their minds*, but in *The Mind*.

§ 2

The truth is, the population of this world is far too stupid to pull off a real conspiracy. Even those who have worked in pro wrestling their whole lives, whose entire career has been dedicated to honing the craft of keeping secrets, misdirecting the audience, and comprehending the psychological chess game, struggle to keep scripted outcomes from leaking out prematurely and often fail to correctly predict how the audience will react to a storyline—if *they*

can barely pull the wool over the eyes of an audience of generally average intellect, is it at all realistic to imagine that the DMV, which *barely functions*, is perpetrating some high end scheme bent on global domination of which no one—except of course the select few who have “done their research and investigation”—is aware?

There is an inherent mechanism in place that keeps conspiracies from happening: those who *would* perpetuate a conspiracy if they could are too stupid to pull it off; and the rare few who reach a level of intelligence where they might be capable of pulling one off simultaneously realize the futility and stupidity of doing so, and so do not. As one becomes more intelligent and wiser, the idea of perpetuating a conspiracy becomes totally unappealing:

“Why would I possibly want to do that? What real benefit could there be to me in doing such a thing? The risk-to-reward ratio is atrocious, and I would have to be constantly on guard and keeping tabs on everything—even if I somehow got away with it the stress of managing it would destroy my quality of life. Trying to control people is a chore and there are millions of other, far easier ways to make money.”

§ 3

The maximum the world is capable of is clever scams. Though there are countless scams being pedaled by the world, most of them are fairly pedestrian and nearly all of them are essentially the same in their construction. If one is aligned with Truth, such scams become easy to detect, as they always admit of certain tell-tale signs that give away the fact that the underlying intention is non-integrous and not what is being held outwardly to be the case. How many times does one need to see the slashed price on the display with bold colorful letters declaring, “SALE!!! 75% off! Limited time offer! Act now!”, before one realizes that this is not really a sale in the traditional sense but a way of making people who can barely do math and have no sense of market value believe they can get a good deal and “save money” if they buy quickly, while prices last? This type of rudimentary gamesmanship goes on constantly, but it is generally quite easy to spot and avoid. Every once in a great while, a particularly impressive scam emerges, like Madoff’s investing pyramid

scheme. But as impressive as this was on a purely conceptual and architectural level, what was the ultimate result? He was caught! Not by some brilliant anonymous counter-terrorism unit with unimaginable surveillance technologies, but by average people who eventually noticed that something was amiss.

It only takes one tiny slip for a scam to be revealed—a trusted confidant who turns out to have his own agenda, an email one forgets to encrypt before sending, a text message to the wrong recipient. The type of people who are attracted to creating scams as teams are by definition nefarious—and there is no honor among thieves. Eventually they bring themselves down by their own hand. The more elaborately built is the scam, the shakier its foundation becomes.

§ 4

No one with above average intelligence would ever work for the government. Politics is the Ego's favorite playground—the whole nature of it is to create a false image and narrative that is appealing to others. Only those dominated by greed and desire for power would pursue such a career, and to be so dominated precludes wisdom—anyone with even a shred of wisdom would realize to not throw himself in the swamp, *even sincerely in the name of trying to clean it up and help the world* (beyond the error of material gain, status and control lies the error of becoming the altruistic savior of the world—the force or righteousness against the tide of corruption: identity is identity, bad or good). If a person lacks the simple wisdom to conclude, “I am not going to subject myself to one of the most poisonous environments on the world stage,” how could he possibly be capable of engineering some grand conspiracy at a global level? So much then for the conspiracy theories about the government. Their lies, subversions and manipulations are no different than anyone else's. Are the motives of the man who writes a blog post about government conspiracies and abuses of power really pure, or is he perhaps just seeking attention and looking to affirm his identity as a good, noble citizen and champion of truth? Truly I tell you, he is only playing a variation on the same egoic game.

§ 5

Everyone has a subconscious suspicion that he is being deceived and conspired against at an unseen level, because that is *precisely* what is going on—only the conspiracy is not *out there* in the world, but in the Mind. Yet the Ego, to disguise itself and keep one preoccupied with trivialities, whispers, “I am the one who knows the truth and has integrity—*they* are the deceivers and evildoers”. Then, rather than meditate or contemplate philosophy, one spends one's time reading countless pages of Q Anon and fretting over concerns about nothing, and which, even if somehow they were true, one could do nothing about. If the government were truly capable of what so many conspiracy theorists presume, one would be hopelessly screwed—it is as though people imagine up an impossibly oppressive villain, and then go on to assume that they can somehow overcome it! If you are a novice chess player of average intellect you are not going to defeat Deep Blue.

All of the grand conspiracy theories about elite shadow governments, alien technologies, cults of lizard people, and the like are a fiction invented by the Ego. What has been said of the nature of the Ego thus far in this treatise?

- It loves to find fault in the world.
- It loves to see itself as righteous and judge others as morally corrupt.
- It prefers what is exciting over what is factually accurate.
- It loves to fret about what might happen to it and attempts to control reality so as to avoid potential pain and feel safe.
- It likes to focus on the circus that is the external world rather than look within.

Does not a preoccupation with worldly conspiracy theories lend itself to reinforcing every last one of these tendencies?

“There is a high pass in the upper levels of consciousness, and the temptation there is presented thusly: now that you realize you are beyond all karma and there is no external God to be answerable to, all power is yours—own it. I thought to myself, “What would I want with power? What would be the purpose—to make people behave the way I want them to?”

~David Hawkins

*Chapter 25: A Critique of
The Four Noble Truths
and
The Eightfold Path*

§ 1

The translation of Buddhism into English is outright ruinous, to the point that the English translation is barely comprehensible and is mostly divorced from its original meaning and intention. This failure of translation occurred for several reasons. Firstly, certain Eastern concepts are highly nuanced and do not translate readily into English, especially in the case that a direct one word for one word translation is employed (the translation of sunyata into emptiness, for example, completely fails to encompass the meaning of the Buddhist term, and represents a sophism, and is akin to classifying a comet as a 'big snowball'). Secondly, early translations were done by Christian missionaries and British scholars, and the quality of their translations was heavily influenced by their own biases and agendas (such as maintaining the sovereignty of the church or championing the superiority of the western style of philosophical reasoning). Thirdly, the masses typically prefer a simple, watered-down, memorable version of philosophy and spirituality, even at the expense of truth and integrity, and so often rudimentary, overly-simplified phases that fail to reach the depths of the underlying philosophy are employed (the notion "that which is impermanent does not exist" requires far more refinement to even approach a genuine truth). Finally, it never fails that authentic spiritual teachings are misunderstood, mistranslated, altered under political motivations, and wind up co-opted by the Ego. Even still, the basic tenets of Buddhism, even properly understood, are deeply flawed. Let us then embark upon a critique of Buddhism, adjusting what needs to be adjusted, and discarding whatever is fallacious. The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path are provided here for reference:

The Four Noble Truths

- 1) **Dukkha** – *"Life is suffering."*
Suffering (dukkha) is an inescapable part of existence.
- 2) **Samudaya** – *"The cause of suffering is craving."*
Suffering arises from desire, attachment, and aversion.
- 3) **Nirodha** – *"There is a cessation of suffering."*
It is possible to end suffering by relinquishing craving.
- 4) **Magga** – *"There is a path to the cessation of suffering."*
The Eightfold Path is that way.

The Eightfold Path

1. Wisdom (Prajñā):

- **Right View** – Understanding reality and the Four Noble Truths.
- **Right Intention** – Commitment to renunciation, non-ill-will, and harmlessness.

2. Ethical Conduct (Śīla):

- **Right Speech** – Speaking truthfully and kindly.
- **Right Action** – Acting ethically and non-harmfully.
- **Right Livelihood** – Earning a living in a way that does not cause harm.

3. Mental Discipline (Samādhi):

- **Right Effort** – Cultivating wholesome states, abandoning unwholesome ones.
- **Right Mindfulness** – Deep awareness of body, feelings, mind, and phenomena.
- **Right Concentration** – Meditative absorption (jhāna/samādhi).

§ 2

The First Noble Truth is sometimes translated as “Life is suffering” and sometimes is translated as “Suffering exists”; the former translation is simply incorrect and the latter is technically true but insufficient and lacks any philosophical depth—the wise man and the utter fool are both equally cognizant that suffering exists, having experienced it, which in this case is the indelible proof. We cannot say that life is *only* suffering, for suffering can only be understood in contrast to a state of non-suffering, and so to have experienced suffering is both the proof that it exists and the proof that there is an alternative.

A less pithy but far more accurate expression of The First Noble Truth would be: there is a pervasive unsatisfactoriness to life as ordinarily lived.

One's reality is the Self, not the egoic character, and by its nature the egoic character cannot provide meaningful satisfaction, for it is a severe limitation upon one's essence—true satisfaction can be found in regularly Earthly life to the extent that Beethoven could find true artistic satisfaction in writing commercial jingles. All of life tied to the pleasure/pain dynamic has at its root suffering. In this light, attachment is “I want this for its pleasure” and aversion is “I do not want this for its pain”. Most beings bounce between these poles without noticing that this very bouncing *is* dukkha.

It is essential to recognize that Earthly life lived as an egoic character will always yield dissatisfaction and suffering, for once this much is understood, the glitz and glamour of indulgences like wealth, fame, and status, from which many people attempt to extract lasting happiness despite it not residing there, is no longer compelling; however, this fact does not yield the conclusion that all of life is suffering—there is great happiness to be found in the appreciation of music, nature, and art, for example.

§ 3

The Second Noble Truth, that “*The cause of suffering is craving*”, is not accurate—craving is *a* cause of suffering, but is not the sole cause. To reduce or eliminate craving may substantially reduce suffering, but it will *never* do away with suffering entirely. The

proposition of The Second Noble Truth, in abstract, would be that all suffering comes from desiring the present state to be different than it is (craving). This understanding admits of the error of being consumed in abstract conceptualization and overlooking the visceral, immediate felt reality. If there is a vice on one's hand and there is intense pain as a result, one may declare "My suffering is resulting from my desire for this situation to be different than it is"—but the implied change in disposition that would remedy this matter is not really available. Pain cannot simply be "thought away".

It is one thing to alleviate the suffering of fretting about the future by setting those concerns aside and focusing on something present. It's another to try to think away pain immediately felt—that is just self-delusion. The statement made by some supposedly-advanced spiritual teachers, "I am experiencing pain but not suffering" is a failure to grasp the meaning of both terms. Suffering is known through pain and only in this way. One never says "I am suffering in my pleasure". It is the presence of pain that yields the experience of suffering. In this claim, the speaker has drawn an arbitrary distinction between two things that are indeed precisely the same, and the statement is really "I am experiencing suffering but not suffering", which obviously is a logical contradiction.

A great deal of suffering can be alleviated by avoiding clinging/craving—but not all. No matter how detached one becomes from the desire to eat, when the indulgence in the sensory experience of it has been transcended and it has taken on a purely utilitarian value, nevertheless, the pains of hunger persist; indeed, it is precisely the pains of hunger that alert one to the need to fuel the body. Just feeling the effect of gravity upon the body is suffering—when one disconnects from the body temporarily in meditation, and the aches and pains associated with the body—those present even when it is healthy and at rest—for a moment fade, and this felt as a great relief. Were there not suffering, no such relief would be felt in this case.

A superior phrasing of The Second Noble Truth would be: much of the suffering of embodied life arises not from pain itself, but from our resistance to pain, and from craving for it to be otherwise; however, suffering is also inherent to embodiment itself—even absent craving. This acknowledges that certain forms of suffering can be ameliorated without claiming a magical immunity

from suffering altogether. The reason Siddhartha Gotama ultimately rejected the path of aestheticism is because it was causing him to suffer—for real. Even in his attempt to be completely free of all craving and desire, suffering prevailed.

§ 4

The Third Noble Truth, that “*cessation of suffering is possible*” needs to be adjusted to: *it is possible to reduce certain types of suffering*. The flame of suffering cannot be extinguished—one can learn to not throw additional tinder and gasoline on it, and that is *all* that is at one's disposal. The pain of having been in an automobile accident cannot be eschewed ; The *added* pain of guiltling oneself over the mistake that led to it or stewing in blame and rage at the other driver *can* be eschewed—the Ego's narrative can be seen as false and jettisoned (i.e., "In truth, it was no one's fault, and everything happened exactly as it had to happen, as is always the case."). Refusing to invest in the reality of the Ego's narrative about the situation minimizes the suffering but does not eliminate it. The broken bones still hurt and trying to conceptualize one's way around that is utter foolishness. Physical pain is non-negotiable. What *is* negotiable is the *story* that coils around it: guilt, blame, identification, self-flagellation, and resentment.

The value of pain medication is not that it reduces pain but that it temporarily cuts off the experience of it. This much is obvious based on the fact that when the medication wears off, the pain level returns to the level it was at prior. No mental gymnastics can accomplish the same feat. That is to say, the function of the mental with respect to pain is always and only to eliminate the superfluous pain generated by the Ego's narrative. The purely mental cannot be used to reduce the visceral experience of pain one bit. (Seen correctly, this much is stunningly obvious).

The notion that a complete cessation of suffering is possible has glamorous appeal, and is likely more compelling to most than the more measured and accurate statement that suffering can be reduced, and perhaps here the Buddha played the trickster in compelling via the false promise, which in Buddhist terms would be classified as *skillful means (upaya)*.

There is a famous parable from Buddhism:

A wealthy man's house catches fire while his children are inside, absorbed in their games and unaware of the danger. He urges them to come out, but they ignore him. Knowing that reason and warnings won't work, he tells them he has special new toys—goat carts, deer carts, ox carts—waiting for them outside.

The children rush out excitedly.

Once they are safe, he doesn't give them the individual toys he promised, but instead gives them a single far superior cart drawn by a white fox (symbolic of the higher teaching).

In this analogy, the burning house represents samsara, the children represent the ignorant masses, and the father represents the wise sage employing skill means to attain a favorable result even if this requires a bit of trickery.

Gotama Buddha is trustworthy—but keep an eye on her.

§ 5

The Fourth Noble Truth, that the path to the cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path—is patently false. Moral prescription and conduct is not guaranteed to reduce suffering—indeed it is not even the case that it is likely to reduce suffering. When one gives oneself over to the Superego from the Id, the Ego just shrugs, adjusts, and carries on—this is still an error of identity, and suffering flows just as easily from the excessive scrupulosity and self-condemnation of the Superego as it does from the consequences of actions arising from the Id. Many criminals are on average happier and suffer less than the "morally upright individual" who is bogged down in analysis and judgment of every little action he and others undertake.

The Eightfold Path might be useful for the masses in the lower levels of consciousness, but ultimately it represents just another identity trap and must be discarded. The goal in life is to realize the Truth, not to function harmoniously in society. A common error of reasoning is, "this ought to be true for others, and therefore it must be true for me also, for they and I are humans, and so the rules applicable to humans apply in both cases". Very clever, this—we wouldn't want to except ourselves on the basis egotism,

admitting to hypocrisy and narcissism, yes? While this sounds reasonable and wholesome, the cold hard fact is that the Individual is an entirely different category and class than other people, and therefore *the same rules do not apply to both classes!* Let other people grind their teeth over morality. The Self is perfect and has no need for that nonsense. The One is *not* the many, which is the actual implication of *E Pluribus Unum*.

Recommending the Eightfold Path is like advising someone to move from the city to the countryside to escape suffering. Maybe it helps—maybe you get some fresh air, fewer car alarms, and a cow to look at. But perhaps you also get isolation, boredom, mosquitoes, and a well that dries up in the summer. Perhaps you trade the suffering of being routinely in trouble with the law for the suffering of self-condemnation as a lowly sinner who simply cannot seem to meet the moral standards he aspires to no matter how hard he tries. The Buddha's recommendation of the Eightfold Path is akin to making a concession along the lines of, “Okay, if you want to reach Enlightenment, you're going to have to traverse this slough of morality until you finally recognize it for the farce it truly is.” Huang Po, who wrote for a smaller, more spiritually erudite audience, advised that one skip over the entire moral slough by instantly eliminating all belief in the authenticity of conceptual thought. Gotama told those in the Newtonian paradigm, “the shortest distance from here to there is a straight line and there is by definition no better option available,” whereas Huang Po said to those capable of comprehending Quantum Physics, “just take the wormhole and you're Home in a snap”.

§ 6

It has been said numerous times in this treatise, but bears repeating because of just how insidious the ruse is—morality is a *massive Ego trap!* Mistaken identity is mistaken identity, no matter what peculiar form it takes—the saint or the sinner, the beggar or the thief—and suffering issues forth from misidentification without exception. As one ascends through the Levels of Consciousness, up until LOC 600, the Ego dominates and only becomes more and more vicious. The closer it is to being exposed, the more sinister it becomes, both in cruelty and in treachery.

In the 400s (Reason), the Ego takes on the role of the academic, the intellectual, and the “rational” philosopher, full of certainty, analysis, and conceptual mastery, but lacking in context or wisdom. Here, it is certain that it has everything figured out and that it is smarter and more correct than anyone who advances a perspective not essentially aligned with what is already believed to be the case. It will tolerate the reclassification of Pluto to a Dwarf Planet but will never consider Pluto to be an object wholly dependent upon the subject in order to exist—that is to say, it will not consider that there is no independent objective material universe, nor will it suffer considering consciousness is the *a priori* condition for objectivity as opposed to a phenomenon emerging therefrom. In this paradigm, the Ego clings to logic and the importance of being right, even as it utterly fails to apply logic correctly and falls into argumentative sophistry only a bit more refined than that wielded by religious zealots declaring that what is written in scripture must be true because it is written in scripture. It is *very proud* of how reasonable it is. Most scientists who consider themselves to represent the apex of the intellect would not know a *petite principii* if it bit them in the ass.

In the 500s (Love), the Ego becomes ethereal and seductive. It weaponizes compassion, morality, and beauty. It presents as loving, but there is still *clinging*—still identity wrapped up in the goodness of the self-image. In the lower levels of the paradigm, it is the loving, caring family member, employee and church-goer who nevertheless commits countless ethical violations in the name of compassion (e.g., “I’m doing this for your own good because I see you don’t know any better”)—the smugness of the 400s in one’s intellectual prowess merely transfers to the pride in one’s moral uprightness and heartfelt concern for others. In the upper levels of the paradigm, the Ego becomes the “spiritually enlightened persona”, full of subtle superiority, and addicted to being seen as “kind” or “evolved”. This is the realm occupied by so many spiritual teachers who pedal sophistry over truth because it is more appealing to listeners. This is where the teachings that obsess over the Heart as the pinnacle of reality live. This is where one is ethically infallible because of one’s “good intentions”. This is wherefrom is engendered the perhaps most hollow spiritual platitude of them all:

Before you speak, ask yourself:
Is it true?
Is it kind?
Is it necessary?

Only at 600, when one crosses into the formless domain of Non Duality and impersonal Being, does the Ego get exposed as something *completely other*—a foreign body, as it were. One no longer says “I am doing this wrong” but rather “This mechanism is doing what it does, but it’s not me.” It’s seen in the same way one might observe a fever, or a parasite. Not with hate or fear, but clarity. At this point, it is no longer plausible to mistake the Ego for the Self. Even then, the Ego doesn’t surrender—it just can’t hide anymore. It’s like a shadow cast in sunlight. It no longer blends in with your identity, so its tricks stop working as effectively. But until that point, the Ego has a million masks.

In the famous short story *A Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian is told to go to the Village of Morality to ease the burden from his back, rather than continuing toward the Wicket Gate (which symbolizes the true path to salvation). On the way, he’s directed up Mount Sinai, but the mountain looms and threatens to crush him, because he cannot climb it without falling or being destroyed. That’s morality: a mountain you’re told to climb, but which is *designed* to crush you—because you can never truly ascend it. It is overwhelming, terrifying, and yet people are told, “This is your ladder out.” It isn’t.

A Critique of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics

Arthur Schopenhauer was decidedly one of the few truly great philosophers, and his system of metaphysics, as detailed primarily in his chief work *The World as Will and Representation*, is exceptionally clean, accurate, and precisely communicated. However, Schopenhauer did make certain errors in his metaphysics which we may address and adjust in order to render the system fully sound and coherent.

§ 7

Schopenhauer's most glaring error is that he failed to distinguish between the Self and the Ego with his concept of the Will, which in his system represents both simultaneously. He quite rightly defined the first aspect of the World as Representation—that is, manifestation not as an independent, objective reality but as only representation of and for the knowing subject. But his concept of the second aspect, the Will, conflates the Ego and the Self into a single force. For Schopenhauer, the Will is a blind, irrational force that is the source of all of life and manifestation, permeating through it as a drive towards survival. The primary confusion here lies in a subtle but significant distinction between the Self and the Ego: the Self operates without motive (unless we find it funny to say its only motivation is humor), and moves spontaneously without any thought as to “why” it so proceeds (it therefore could be compared to the spontaneous dancer or hot jazz improv musician) ; the Ego, by contrast, represents a survival drive laced with an ironic desire to no longer exist, and is *often* irrational, but is in no way precluded from rationality. The Self is not blind—it is merely unrestrained— ; the Ego is not blind—it is merely an idiot (it sees, but interprets what it sees incorrectly). It is a contradiction in terms to claim a force is both blind *and* strives for survival. A truly blind force could not strive for anything; pursuing survival implies an intention, a goal, a value-judgment, and deliberate action taken in accordance therewith.

Because the Ego simulates the Self, only rarely is the distinction between them recognized, and here Schopenhauer errs in conflating the two as Will. In order to achieve an accurate and coherent metaphysical system, we must understand that there are *two noumena* that form the foundation of manifest reality: the Self, which

is the true source of everything; and the Ego, which is the counter-force that claims to be the Self and the source of everything, but in truth is not.

Schopenhauer speaks of the Will as the primitive, blind, uncaring drive towards survival that defines all of life; but he also speaks of how a contemplation of art and nature can lift one temporarily out of the grasp of the Will into the realm of the divine. If the Will (as Ego) were truly the sole basis and substratum of life, there would be no escaping it, and there would be no appreciation of nature or beauty. If there were no counterpoint to the Ego, it would not need to cede joy in nature and beauty; the fact that there is such joy necessitates the existence of a noumenon that is distinct from the Ego. There would be no need to create a prison if there were nothing beyond its confines; nor would there be any reason to placate the prisoners—Yaldebaoth is not the Monad. If one has experienced both joy and suffering, this is sufficient grounds to conclude that there must be two forces in opposition to one another. The reason this simple fact is nevertheless so often overlooked is that *one of those forces is hell bent on creating the illusion that there is only one force*. The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he does not exist.

§ 8

Because Schopenhauer made the error of conflating the Ego and the Self as the Will, he also made the subsequent error of concluding that aestheticism—starving the Will-to-life—is the wisest course of action. There is certainly wisdom in reducing the egoic attachment to the external world—the desire to accumulate many possessions and amass great wealth, etc.; however, it is not correct to presume that a complete abandonment of the world is necessary or wise. Non-attachment is not the same as complete abstinence—it means one might have a preference, but if circumstances are such that the preference is not fulfilled, one is not disturbed by this, and simply rolls with the punches. One may prefer to drink French Vanilla coffee, but if all that is available is Hazelnut, one's day is not ruined thereby—indeed, this yields virtually no disruption to one's mood. Since Schopenhauer saw the Will (the Ego) as the only underlying force in life, his conclusion to apply strict aestheticism as

the remedy was, based on that premise, a reasonable and valid conclusion ; however, the Ego is in fact *not* the sole underlying force, and therefore the extreme conclusion of aestheticism as the best way is invalid—the proper conclusion is to merely reduce desire to the point that it no longer controls or vexes one. The Ego's game is one of identity, and the 'spiritually advanced', pious, humble, aesthetic sage is just as much an identity as is the hedonistic worldly consumer. The worldly fool wears a suit and tie; the spiritual fool wears fancy or filthy robes, depending on his unique style of Ego enslavement; but the Enlightened One wears sweatpants and a tee shirt, because he does not care about his social image—he just wants to be warm and comfortable.

§ 9

Schopenhauer also erred in his offhand dismissal of Solipsism, stating that the position is neither provable nor disprovable, and therefore has the signature of many fallacious arguments that represent cleverness of the intellect more than a rigorous comprehension of reality. It is correct that there are many spurious arguments the intellect can manage whose only real foundation is that they cannot technically be disproven; however, while this concern is reasonable cause for caution, it is not sufficient grounds to dismiss an argument as false.

It is simply not possible to create a fully coherent philosophical system until the Solipsistic comprehension is embraced —conclusions that follow from faulty premises serve only to build an elaborate castle on quicksand. The proposition that there are several discrete subjectivities out in the world somehow simultaneously functioning to define reality leads to so many philosophical quandaries and conflicts where one must engage in mental gymnastics and contortions of reasoning to attempt to justify it ; the proposition that there is only One mind and One subjectivity (the one that is directly accessible and immediately experienceable not as a hypothetical proposition but as a visceral and irreducible reality) is far cleaner, far more aligned with what can be known through direct experience or perception, and simply makes much more sense.

Humans have managed to grasp that when engineering a video game, it is far more efficient and perfectly effective to simply

animate what the player is currently beholding—surely then, God is not engaged in the wildly inefficient and inelegant strategy of animating the entire universe at every moment. The Ego feeds on complexity but the nature of the Self is simplicity: electricity takes the path of least resistance; objects in motion remain in motion unless acted upon by another object; the shortest distance between two points is a straight line;—and there is *no need* for there to be multiple subjects, because the entire story of creation plays out for the One.

§ 10

Aside from these few essential corrections, Schopenhauer's metaphysical system is absolutely brilliant and almost wholly reliable. Many Eastern mystics who had experienced profound, direct, first-hand insights into the Non Dual reality did an outstanding job expressing the nature of things, but none of them ever provided the *why* behind it all ; for most Eastern spiritual teachers, the explanation was little more than, “this is just how it is”. Schopenhauer was the first to truly decode and distill the explanation for *why* reality is as it is, and was one of the only Western philosophers to incorporate, infuse, and recognize the legitimacy of Eastern teachings. He saw through the corruption and stupidity of organized religion, but also recognized the validity of the underlying teachings, frequently quoting from The Vedas, Buddhism, and Christianity. His reward for so courageously and uncompromisingly telling the truth was to be marginalized and largely ignored in his own time, and only years later was he vindicated and his work recognized as deserving a place amongst those of history's greatest philosophers—but as he said, “Genius is never recognized in its own time, because it is by definition ahead of its time, and the world has to catch up”.

The stigma attached to Schopenhauer's name of being a pessimist and a dark philosopher is wholly baseless: his wit and sense of humor is virtually unmatched, and reading his work does not feel heavy—it feels light and cathartic. Schopenhauer was simply a realist who refused to compromise on the truth: when a philosopher was mistaken, he called out the mistake ; when a person behaved stupidly, he called it stupid. His stance that ordinary life is principally characterized by suffering is an accurate assessment of the nature of

manifest reality, and is ultimately no different than Gotama Buddha's First Noble Truth. For anyone who is philosophically inclined and cares to do a deep dive into the metaphysical nature of reality, there is no better source available than *The World as Will and Representation*, and many of his other works are exceptional as well. As far as philosophers and authors go, only David Hawkins can compete with Arthur Schopenhauer. The handful of issues not resolved by Schopenhauer are resolved in the works of David Hawkins, and whatever remains has been resolved herein.

You know what they say about catching the bird
When you can't make it sing?
You lose the bird the second it loses its wings;
Just like I reckon you will lose your herd
To choirs of "I am",
And mountains and mountains of money and things!

~*Pain of Salvation*

Everything Comes Full Circle

§ 11

The tricks of the Ego do not come out of nowhere—in nearly all cases, they are distortions of basic Truths, subtly manipulated so that the context shifts and what was true becomes false. This is perfectly sensible trickster behavior—if the goal is to keep one from reaching the truth, clever reframings and variations would in most cases be more effective than overt lying. If one wishes to steal a nugget of gold from another, offering him a larger nugget made of fool's gold in trade is a wise option. Amusingly, a result of this style of dissimulation is that, as one ascends the levels of consciousness and achieves greater spiritual vision (discernment), one finds oneself often in a disposition remarkably similar to the disposition typical of a much lower level of consciousness dominated by the Ego.

§ 12

At low levels of consciousness, selfishness prevails. One thinks of oneself as a person among people, but one perceives oneself as having greater import than they, and cares primarily about one's own well being, even when it comes at the expense of others. Here, one steals from others when one can get away with it because doing so represents selfish gain and the harm visited upon the other party is ignored; one breaks a contract with another if it is advantageous for one to do so, without any heed paid to the virtue of honoring contractual agreements; one takes the biggest piece of cake because one's own pleasure is more important than that of others. As one progresses to a higher level of consciousness, one shifts in allegiance from the Id to the Superego, and one now decries selfishness, and champions selflessness—setting aside one's own interests in order to help others (reversing the lower level arrangement). Here, one does not steal from others and indeed becomes charitable, giving to those in need; one honors one's contracts even when they turn out to be disadvantageous, because it is comprehended that it is important for societal order that there be faith in contracts, and therefore to honor the contract is morally correct; one takes the smallest piece of cake and allows others the

superior pieces. But when one reaches the levels of Enlightenment, the orientation shifts into what might be called *divine self interest*. One no longer sees oneself as a person among people—one is the Self among objective projections of the Self (the grand parade of lifeless packaging). Further, one realizes that the error common to the prior two paradigms is that of misidentification: in the former case, it is as a person bent on animalistic survival who spends his time trying to achieve maximum gain for himself ; in the latter case, it is as a morally upright person who conducts himself with integrity as defined by society. And so here, one realizes one literally cannot steal because everything that exists is one's creation; one avoids contracts whenever possible because one realizes one has no control over reality and cannot know with certainty that one will be able to honor a contract (Christ said, “swear no oaths”); and one simply takes whatever piece of cake one is attracted to without any further thought or hand wringing over the matter.

As such, one finds oneself in an orientation remarkably similar in appearance to the orientation that defines the low level of consciousness, only the subtle distortions of the Ego that created the derivative paradigm have been resolved and now the orientation is pure and true. It is almost universally the case that the individual in the middle “morally upright” paradigm in this progression will be unable to discern the difference between one in the lower paradigm and one in the higher. A person in this middle paradigm pictures one who is Enlightened as one who is morally pure and socially polished, essentially a more advanced and refined version of himself—he does not realize that Enlightenment involves neither morality nor immorality, but transcendence of the duality entirely: things are neither right nor wrong, they simply are whatever they are. Many venerated spiritual teachers who have large followings and make a great deal of money selling spiritual teachings are still trapped in the middle paradigm of moral uprightness. They water down and compromise the truth in order to be liked and respected—and to make sure book and lecture sales stay strong. They bring peace and not a sword—but their peace is not authentic, it is the cozy comfort of illusion and safe spaces where feelings are not hurt and all at treated as equals. This is why Christ clarifies, “My peace I give unto you—I do not give to you as the world gives to you.” The mystics who have transcended the duality of good versus evil are rarely

treated with veneration by the masses; indeed, they are persecuted and despised, thought of as mentally unwell or at the very least foolish, and seen as rebellious outsiders who refuse to get with the program of accepted societal norms and standards. While a relative handful of people followed and revered Christ during his first incarnation, large, powerful groups despised him and constantly challenged him for breaking societal conventions; they did not simply disagree with his teachings, but found him so reprehensible that they sought to kill him—and eventually they so did. This is why it is written, “Blessed are you when you are persecuted, when they slander you and say all sorts of evil against you, for so too did they treat the prophets who came before you”.

§ 13

In the lower levels of consciousness, sex, drugs, alcohol and tobacco are indulgences that contribute to the definition of one's identity. There is typically over-indulgence and addiction involved, and as a result, health deteriorates. The man who goes to the bar every night and knows everyone there has made drinking part of his identity; the man who tracks how many women he has slept with and how attractive they were, bragging to his friends about his sexual adventures, has made sexuality part of his identity. In the middle levels of consciousness, sex, drugs, alcohol and tobacco are typically seen as immoral and are generally avoided—the emphasis shifts to living a clean life and not indulging in things associated with disreputable behavior or damage to one's health. But this is just another identity—the one who lives a clean, responsible life who is 'above' such indulgences that vex those in lower levels of consciousness. As one ascends to Enlightenment, one is once again comfortable engaging in sex, light drugs like psychedelics, alcohol and tobacco, but the perspective on them is different. There is no longer addiction and craving in play—if they are present, they may be enjoyed; if they are not, that's not a problem, there are plenty of other things to do. They are no longer an escape and no longer define identity—they are just things that may or may not happen in the course of life unfolding. But it is very much seen that there is nothing morally wrong with these activities, and one simply takes care to participate in them wisely (i.e., not over-indulging, not taking unnecessary risks like drinking and operating an automobile).

Indeed, it is understood that these things have utilitarian value: life can be very stressful, even for one who has realized the Self and the ultimate safety inherent in the Divine Script, and sometimes a little de-stressor or shift in one's thought patterns is a welcome relief.

Nisargadatta Maharaj and Alan Watts both smoked regularly and made no apologies for it; they did not see it as a character flaw or a fault that ought to be worked on. And both these teachers were well known for their stark honesty and directness—they were not prone to coddling people or sugar-coating matters, which is precisely what made them so effective and authentic. Jesus Christ was decidedly okay with wine. Too much of *anything* is a problem, and excessive attachment to *anything* is a problem; but *most things* can be enjoyed in moderation and under appropriate circumstances.

In *The Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus is asked, “What is the sin of the world?”. Jesus replies, “there is no sin—but you create sin when you do things like the nature of adultery”. The term “adultery” here is not used in the sense of infidelity to one's spouse—it means to behave as an adult. A young child does not even conceive of sin—he does not consider any action right or wrong, he simply plays; dogs are precisely the same way—when two dogs get into a dust up in the park they do not go home feeling guilty about having foolishly lost their tempers. But adults *believe* in sin. Adults believe there are right actions and wrong actions. Adults believe there are good choices and bad choices. And Adults believe that life is something to be taken very seriously—it is principally work with a tiny bit of leisure mixed in just to provide relief therefrom. There is no sin except in the mind. An action is only sinful if one labels it so—no action can be sinful *in and of itself*. Everything that happens in manifestation is of Divine Ordination and Origination. All of it is precisely perfect and there is never anything wrong. The Self, which is everything, does not make mistakes; and the egoic character, which does seem to make mistakes, does not actually exist. To “be like little children” in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven is to reclaim one's innocence—not as one who is well behaved and so is “not guilty” of immoral action or thought, but as one who understands that *all actions and thoughts* are inherently innocent. It is to reopen the eyes of childlike wonder at the beauty of the world, where the value of having a cool looking stick to play with is not overlooked. The Enlightened individual is not the shepherd keeping a watchful eye over the children—he is the

one playing with the children as if he were their age, while their parents look on with concern over this seemingly strange behavior.

Often times,
standing for Truth
requires at least calling an assumption in
2question.

Chapter 26: The Price of Manifestation and The Pain of Salvation

The true nature of the Self is infinite and of infinite power. Manifestation, taken generally, involves expression as distinct, persistent, solid form, and thus is by nature finite; this is to say, in order for a particular object to be what it is, it must forego being everything else it could possibly be: as unmanifested potentiality, it would be of infinite power, but as a particular thing and expression, it is by definition of finite power. In order to experience objective manifestation, the Self must express in a finite form of localized perception, for to experience a particular object, or even to experience the whole of what is impressed upon the senses at any given moment, means selecting from all potential experience one particular experience, and thus this process too is one of transitioning from infinite power to finite power. As such, there is an inherent *cost* involved in experiencing manifestation, as this requires a drop from infinite power to finite power: in the case of indirect objectification, as the expression of a particular object, and in the case of direct objectification—that is, the subject expressed in form, namely, the body—as scoped subjective perception which is capable of experiencing a particular object. While subjectivity in its pure form is infinite and beyond the confines of time, space, and causality, in order to experience a particular object or set of objects, it must be scoped to a limited field (somewhat in the way one can look at distant celestial objects through a telescope but in so doing is limited in what is perceived by the size and shape of the telescope's lens, though this is not a perfect analogy, because looking through a telescope occurs entirely within manifestation whereas what is being spoken of regarding objectification of the subject and of form concerns the transition from the infinite to finite manifestation and the experience thereof generally).

We might reasonably theorize that there was something akin to a decision (more accurately a natural movement of energy towards the best possible outcome) which resulted in manifestation occurring (as opposed to not occurring); and it would not be unreasonable to assume that in the context in which this event occurred, it was

understood clearly and certainly that it would be better that manifestation occur than it not occur—and hence the situation we find ourselves in today (though from the limited perspective available while bound in manifestation, one is no longer privy to the contextual understanding of 'why' this was the case, and thus one is compelled to endure while not knowing the particulars but holding on to the faith that this whole trial of manifestation, complete with suffering and uncertainty due to the presence of outrageous illusion, will in the end be 'worth it').

It is well to bear in mind that the state of manifestation with its inherent properties of limitation and suffering is a *temporary arrangement*—this is to say, there is *not* a possibility that manifestation will endure forever. This much is commonly understood on one hand from the broad scientific perspective, which forecasts that eventually all matter in the material universe will disperse to such a degree that each object will be infinitely far from every other object, and therefore have no frame of reference to mark its position or source of energy to sustain it (this is related to the heat-death of the universe) ; and on the other hand is commonly understood based on the fact that the human body begins to decay at some point in the mid twenties and gradually deteriorates until the individual “dies” (or, more accurately, the physical apparatus ceases to function and play host to the knowing subject), which historically lasts in nearly all cases not much longer than a hundred years, and in many cases far fewer. It is amusing to note that physical death, so often a source of great fear and anxiety as the presumed dreadful end of existence, is indeed the great and final liberation from all suffering, at which point whatever the payoff for having endured this necessary excursion into manifestation will be realized.

But let it be understood that the reason for the grand illusion and all the suffering one has to endure in the course of Earthly life is the dropping from infinite power to finite power, which, as one might imagine, is quite a severe drop ; and let one be assured that in the end, this experience will be proven to be worth it, as will be revealed and made clear once the broader context can be seen.

Chapter 27: The Contexts of Everything and Nothing; the Relative and the Absolute

In ignorance I am something.

In wisdom I am nothing.

In love I am everything.

Truth is Absolute in nature—that is to say it is not relative to the individual as is held to be the case in moral relativism, but fixed independently of the opinions of any particular individual such that it is consistent—but, Truth is context-sensitive, meaning that a statement can only be evaluated as true or false if there is a proper understanding and disclosure of the context in which that statement is being made, and this feature can very much seem contradictory to the assertion that Truth is by nature Absolute. As an example, for a person who is operating from the paradigm of reason where he believes that he and others possess free will, it is appropriate that he abide by an ethical code of conduct, such as can be developed from a study of philosophy or religion; but for one who has reached the higher understanding that there is no free will and everything happens precisely as it must happen, the applicability of operating from a defined code of ethics ceases, for at this stage ethical conduct occurs automatically, and any attempt to deliberately influence such action would represent an error of trying to control life and operate as the egoic character. We might also note that a very young child is not in need of an ethical code from which to operate, as such would not yet make any sense to him, and so he is free to behave in whatever manner comes naturally without reviewing and considering his actions. Thus, we find that at one level, an ethical code is not applicable, at a higher level, an ethical code becomes applicable, and then at a higher level still, having an ethical code ceases to be applicable it is appropriate that he abide by an ethical code—in other words, what is the correct answer to the question “ought one to operate from an ethical code?” depends on context, and so varies—that is, the question cannot be answered with a firm “yes” or “no”—that transcends all contexts and situations—“it depends”.

A great deal of paradox (or at least seeming paradox) is

introduced by the contexts of the Relative vs the Absolute (the former being the story of the individual character, about which practical advice applies, and the latter being the Individual as the Self, which involves a different understanding entirely), as well as by the contexts of Everything vs Nothing (the former being the Self expressed as all things, and the latter referring to the self being illusory and non-existent). In order to form a complete picture of Reality, all these levels must be spoken on from time to time, and as such it can easily come across to the reader that there is therefore inconsistency and contradiction among what is being said; in truth however, no such problem exists, and what one is actually reacting to is the legitimate variation in truth that occurs when the context in which whatever the proposition is held changes. In this work, there is a concerted effort to specify which context we are speaking in whenever there is a potential for confusion or misunderstanding; however, to overtly state the full context every single time there is a shift would be tedious and detract from the flow of the work, and so at times it is left up to the reader to intuit which context is being spoken of at a given time, particularly once the primary contexts have been elucidated and a familiarity with their nature has been attained.

The expression of the Self as Everything yields several significant understandings. Firstly, that there are no 'others'—all is merely the One Self expressing in myriad forms, first as the Individual with whom the subjective sense of experience is directly and immediately associated, comprised of the body, the mind, awareness, and the faculties of sense perception; and next as all persons who are not the Individual, but with whom the Individual interacts (the languaging around this matter can be a bit tricky—we might say that there are 'others' in the context of highlighting the difference between the Self expressed as immediate object and as mediate object, but there are not others in the context of highlighting the fact that there are not indeed separate individual selves, each with a soul and mind of their own, existing wholly independently and separately from the Individual whose subjectivity is immediately known). To this end, Schopenhauer proclaimed “the world is my representation” and again “the wise man looks at himself and says 'me', looks at the world and says 'me again'”. Secondly, we arrive at the understanding that everything is precisely perfect and as it ought

to be, that all is well and nothing is wrong, and that in the context of Eternity, one's absolute safety is guaranteed (it is stated in the outset of A Course in Miracles as the primordial and summarial truth: "that which is real cannot be threatened; that which is unreal does not exist —herein lies the Peace of God").

The Self expressed as Nothing generally pertains to the context of the false sense of self and identity. Anything that is beheld cannot be identity. This is clearly the case because with respect to anything beheld that is considered identity, be it the body, the content of mind, the memory, or the conceptual sense of a character, it would then have to be asked "but what is doing the beholding?". That which beholds *cannot possibly* be other than or separate from what one is, but *absolutely must be* distinct from that which is beheld: and this beholding is by nature non-formal, non-conceptual, and not bound by time and space—in a word, no-thing. The process of Enlightenment involves disentangling oneself from the false sense of self generated by the Ego, which is generally quite tenacious and treacherous in its refusal to energetically release its attachment to its sense of identity (for it associates this with a loss of control, and the potential for suffering and ultimately death). As such, releasing attachments to identity and beliefs is often accompanied by tremendous fear and resistance, and one must operate on the basis of great courage and persistence to transcend such firmly entrenched attachments. This process of letting go is on occasion quite expeditious, but in many cases requires a great deal of time and many iterations, especially with respect to beliefs and attachments that are particularly treasured or have been in place for many years, and as such it is reasonable that there be considerable discussion on the process of letting go, including techniques, best practices, and clarifications about the nature of the undertaking (upon which the Ego will attempt to cast as much confusion as possible in defense of itself). Learning to recognize the Ego and its patterns, and training oneself to quickly energetically detach therefrom, is a considerable endeavor and study, and much can and shall be said on this matter in the course of the work ; the reader is reminded that a list of fundamental traits of the Ego and their reversals was provided early in this text, and is encouraged to frequently review that chapter until it is memorized, and to put into practice what is written there.

Both the contexts of Everything and Nothing lend themselves to the understanding that there is no free will. In the context of Everything, all of Creation is seen as a singular expression of the One Self, and all the happenings in the manifest universe as an automatic consequence of this expression, occurring wholly independently from the real influence of any willing individual. Subjectivity is narrowed to the primary expression of the Self, the Individual, rendering assurance that all other expressions of the Self that appear to have subjectivity but are in fact only objectivity simulating the qualities of subjectivity cannot in fact be free willing agents ; it is then further ascertained that the knowing subject expressed in objective correlative as the body/mind mechanism is also and as such subordinated to the law of causality from which nothing objectively expressed is exempt, and therefore in this case also there is no free will. In the context of Nothing, the sense of self as an individual, separate, willing agent who makes real choices is seen to be illusory—nothing but a phantom image presented to subjectivity by the Ego as a dissimulation of identity. As one learns to dis-identify with what is beheld in perception—that which therefore cannot possibly be identity—it gradually becomes clear that the character who seems to be a free willing agent is merely conceptual and imaginary: it has no real existence, and one is not that imagination but rather the observation of it, much as one can imagine oneself to be Superman but is in truth not.

Traditionally, the Everything context is primarily associated with *love*, whereas the Nothing context is primarily associated with *wisdom*. The Everything context involves an embracing and accepting of all that is happening at all times (even if this includes states of non-acceptance), and as such is affiliated with *love*, which itself is all-embracing and never-rejecting ; one can marvel at the sheer beauty of all there is in the Universe and the incredible elegance of how all the processes that make manifestation possible intertwine and support one another in a staggering display of complexity. The Nothing context involves discernment of the false sense of self created by the Ego and disidentification therewith, and so is affiliated with *wisdom*, which involves the recognition of what is false and what is true, and appropriate action and understanding emerging therefrom.

It has been said in Non Duality that the Everything or love

aspect is more closely associated with the feminine and the Nothing or wisdom aspect more closely associated with the masculine; however, this is an error and does not hold up to scrutiny. In truth, Everything includes both the masculine and the feminine, and Nothing is devoid of gender, including neither. Thus it is inaccurate to say that the feminine is more loving and the masculine wiser—rather, it is correct to say that love is applicable to both genders equally whereas wisdom is to recognize oneself as beyond the confines of gender ideology, gender-less in essence, and not bound to any stereotypical convention associated with gender. The historical notion that females are more loving is overturned by the recognition that males have traditionally been willing to go to war and face death for the love of their country and fellow men; great in number are the male poets, artists, and even philosophers who express profound lovingness; and finally it should be noted that any man who is willing to work grueling hours every week to support his family while still finding time to spend with them happily in other activities, such that he is left with very little time to himself, is expressing exceptional lovingness : the historical notion that males are wiser in overturned by the recognition that intuition, generally more dominant in the female, is a greater expression of wisdom than is the intellect, which is generally more dominant in the male; and that because females in general do not have the physical advantage over males, they have evolved to become masters of manipulation and coercion, and thus it can rightly be said that it is unwise for a male to attempt to match wits with a female, as she is capable of gaming the situation on a level not even imaginable by the male.

The Absolute level contains both the Everything and the Nothing, and concerns the true nature of the Self (the Atman) ; The Relative Level involves the story of the apparently separate, free willing individual self, and addresses practical remedies within the confines of that story. Thus, it might be said on the Relative level that it is wise to practice meditation; but on the Absolute level, everything that happens is automatic and predetermined, and therefore meditation either happens or does not, and it cannot be said that there is one path that is wiser than the other, for there is but one path, and that path is perfect and ideal.

Chapter 28: In Defense of Solipsism

Epistemological Solipsism is the understanding that one cannot know with certainty that anything beyond one's own consciousness, such as other minds or objects, has existence independent of of one's consciousness – and this much is most certainly true: there is absolutely no way to verify with certainty that anything exists independently of one's consciousness, as all experience is always and without exception perceived through one's consciousness, from which it is completely inextricable. Metaphysical Solipsism is a stronger form of Solipsism which does not simply acknowledge the uncertainty regarding a reality independent of one's own consciousness, but affirms that there *is no reality apart from one's own consciousness*. This latter view is in most cases scoffed at both in philosophical and spiritual circles, and marginalized as originating simply from speculative musing and skepticism, having no real substantive basis as a viable philosophical outlook. However, it is *precisely* Metaphysical Solipsism which is professed in this work to be the truth of reality, and it is the only way in which Non Duality can be truly Non Dual, as opposed to a self-contradicting pose in which there are somehow both individual minds (subjectivities) and One Mind.

Many Non Dual teachers hold that there is One Mind but it is localized into the plurality of multiple individual minds of sentient beings, such that each person is an emanation of a singular source Mind that is then experienced only in part as a particular individualized subjectivity. This is a contradiction in terms, for if the proposition is that there is only One Mind – a Universal Mind that is distinct from the mind of any particular person – how then can we resolve the fact that this creates a duality in which there is on one hand the Universal Mind and on the other hand the discrete Mind of the individual which is not precisely identical with the Universal Mind (from which all independent minds are said to emanate)? And so we see a great contradiction present in many Non Dual teachers who hold this view, as on one hand they profess to be the Universal Mind, beyond and distinct from the particular mind of the individual, yet on the other hand continue to operate as a particular individual with a unique body and history. It is not as though when the Buddha

attained Enlightenment, he transcended the individual mind of Siddhartha Gotama and was no longer affiliated with that particular body and memory because he became realized as the Universal Mind, and was then somehow experiencing reality from an amorphous cloud with no affiliation with a particular body, somehow capable of perceiving from all viewpoints at once simultaneously ; rather, Gotama remained Gotama, and if one wished to speak with the Buddha, one would have to interface with the particular mind/body mechanism with which the name Gotama was associated. To realize that one is the Universal Mind, the One Mind, is to realize that the mind of the Individual Self *is precisely* the Universal Mind, that is to say, there is not some greater Universal Mind beyond the mind of the individual who reads these words at present.

Much of the confusion regarding this matter likely emanates from the fact that there is within the mind the egoic sense of identity as a separate self, and this sense of identity is wholly illusory. Thus, when a Non Dual teacher says “I am not the individual”, what he really means is “I am not the mind's conception of self, nor am I the mind's conception of itself”, which is correct, but it would be more accurate then to say that one is not the *egoic character* (the conceptual sense of a particular self who has various qualities, such as being clever) – one is *not* that conception of self, but one still very much *is* the Individual – that is to say, one's consciousness is tied to a particular body and mind and is indivisible, such that it never wakes up in the body or mind of another, but rather there is a continuity of one body and one mind, and all that is experienced is experienced through this particular body and mind. So while it is correct to say that one is not the *egoic character* (that being the mind's conception of what it is and what the self is), it is incorrect to say that one is the Universal Mind if by this one means some singular One Mind greater than the mind of the Individual ; rather, it is correct to say that the Individual Mind *is precisely* the Universal Mind, if by Individual Mind we mean the visceral subjective awareness of existence which is *a priori* to all experience, requires no proof, and is certain beyond the duality of real vs unreal; and by Universal Mind we mean the One Mind, or subjectivity, that actually exists. This understanding represents a legitimate Non Dual framework, whereas the less radical form of Non Duality in which there is one Universal Mind (which no one has ever experienced) expressing as a plurality of individual,

independent minds and subjectivities (which immediately creates a duality between the Universal Mind and the mind of any particular individual) is in fact inherently dualistic. It cannot be the case that there is One Mind and also a plurality of distinct individual minds: that is not One – that is many.

The Ego always attempts to maintain its sovereignty, and it does this by keeping one away from the Truth, such that its treachery is not uncovered and exposed ; one of the primary ways it keeps one from the Truth is by using emotionality to supplant reason and so deter one from reaching proper understandings. It is therefore the case that whatever proposition one reacts to with emotional indignation (as opposed to level-headed reasoning as to its validity) – or which people generally react to in this manner – likely has at least a kernel of truth to it. Given this, one can intuit the probable validity of Metaphysical Solipsism based on the commonly found emotionalized reaction against the belief. When a belief is false, it can be exposed as false through reasoning without any emotional investment in the process ; with respect to Solipsism, there is almost never offered a sound argument against it, but rather such counter-argumentation regularly takes on the form of emotionalized and sensationalized reaction: “only a madman would believe that!” or “that belief would be a slippery slope into moral relativism and unbridled egotism!” or “that is a preposterous belief born out of skeptical conjecture!”. This type of emotion-based resistance tends to be representative of the Ego attempting to dissuade one from what is actually true – it is not so very different from how, if one asserts that the Self is God, there is often a reply “how dare you, that is blasphemous, you are a lowly moral being and God is an omnipotent perfectly Good Creator who lives in the clouds!”, or if one asserts that there is no free will, there is often a reply “how dare you challenge the sovereignty of the individual soul, just imagine what the world would be like if everyone believed there is no free will – there would be anarchy and no one could be held accountable for anything!”.

It has been said before in this work, but it bears reiterating: the anticipated consequences associated with the affirmation of the truth of a proposition have absolutely no bearing on the validity of that proposition – what is true is true regardless of one's opinion on the matter. That said, we can further debunk the merit of the claim

that a belief in Solipsism would result in moral relativism or unbridled egotism: when one sees all beings as oneself, that is to say, when one does not believe there to be others who possess their own mind and subjectivity, one is not therefore inspired to harm or exploit others, for what is done to another is done to oneself. Life is set up in such a way that the pain of another is felt as one's own pain (for example, to witness the suffering of a dog who has a thorn in his paw immediately triggers an emotional pain in oneself, such that one is compelled to remove the thorn from the dog's paw expeditiously), and the joy of another is felt as one's own joy (for example, when a good joke is shared with a friend, his laughter triggers a sense of happiness and lightheartedness in oneself); ergo, whether one considers others to be authentic individual subjects or merely objective representations emanating from the One Individual, one remains naturally compelled to avoid causing suffering in others, and indeed to amplify their well being, even if the only real experience of such actions is what one feels as a result. In a role playing video game, one does not attack one's own party; indeed, one attempts to protect and preserve all members of his party in spite of the fact that he knows they are only of simulated consciousness and are not truly suffering – for such is the nature of the game. When a beloved protagonist in a movie dies, even though one is aware that it is just a film and no real character has truly suffered and died, there is nevertheless a genuine feeling of sadness and remorse at the loss of the fictional character.

It is probably worth making a few points of clarification here. It *is not* correct to say '*my* mind': this would imply the existence of a character who owns the mind, which character could only be a concept of the Ego – no such character capable of owning a mind exists. It *is* correct to say '*the* mind': this is an appropriate acknowledgment that there exists a mind, apart from which one has never experienced, and so the definite article applies. For identical reasons, it *is not* correct to say '*my* body' and *is* correct to say '*the* body': there is a flawed argument often made in Non Duality in an attempt to break egoic identification with the body which states that because the body has grown and changed over the years, therefore it cannot be what one is (as if strict permanence of form were a condition for identity, such that one might say 'the car received a new paint job, and it is therefore no longer the car'); it is not the fact that

the formal expression of the body changes that leads to the conclusion that one is not identical with the body, but rather the fact that one is *aware* of the body; whatever one is aware of cannot be the whole of identity – this would imply that the awareness of the body is somehow distinct from what one is. It is also *not* correct to say '*my* life', as such would imply that life is something one *has*, and therefore is something that one could feasibly *lose* or *not have*; under no circumstances can one be separated from life, because life is not something one *has* but rather what one *is*; and what one *is* cannot also be *mine*, for to own or posses something is to be distinct from that something. The mind's conception of itself, that is to say the mind's idea of what the mind is, is not valid and does not have real existence, for the mind can only ever see itself in a reflection, that is, indirectly, and therefore what it sees is never the mind, but only an approximation thereof, which may be almost wholly inaccurate, such as when the body is viewed in a convex mirror. The mind's conception of the self as a character is also not valid, and this character, the separate finite self, does not actually exist (much as were Scrooge to fancy himself as a generous man, this generous man would only be an imagining in his mind and such a character would have no actual existence). The Self, meaning the One Mind and One Consciousness, the anchor of all subjective experience that has ever been experienced, certainly does exist (the Buddhist teaching of No Self is a mistranslation and misunderstanding – it is meant to refer only to the separate conceptual egoic self, and is confined to the Nothing context, where one would rightly affirm “whatever is beheld cannot be the entirety of what I am, and indeed may have absolutely nothing to do with what I truly am”). The immediate objective expression of the Self – that is, the one undivided subjectivity – is the body, and the mediate objective expression of the Self is all other objects, that is, taken as an aggregate, mediate object; and it is the interaction of the immediate object either with itself or with mediate object that gives rise to all experience conditioned by time, space and causality. Subjectivity is beyond the limitations of space, time, and causality; however, subjectivity can only experience manifestation by expressing in finite form within the domain of space, time and causality, that is, through the body (this would be analogous to saying that the light from the projector can only be witnessed as a film if it is able to register on a screen). Other people, animals, plants, and crude matter are all expressions of the Self (as Everything) at

progressively diminishing levels of energy and complexity; and the nearer in proximity the expression to the Individual, the more convincingly the expression appears to possess an independent consciousness and subjectivity separate and distinct from that of the Individual; however, this represents illusion, as all expression that is not the Individual is completely devoid of independent subjectivity, and is in truth purely objective expression, representation for and wholly dependent upon the Individual, and is knowable to the Individual only as such. The notion that there exist subjectivities distinct from the subjectivity of the Individual is in all cases an *ignis fatuus*. There is no objectivity that exists independently of subjectivity, and likewise subjectivity is unrecognizable without reference to objectivity – there is no object in absence of subject and no subject in absence of object; both are ever-present, and there is never a case where both subject and object are absent. It is *not* correct to say that subject and object are identical ; it is correct to say that subject and object are mutually dependent upon one another in order to exist. Non Duality does not require complete homogeneity, such that all things are rendered completely indistinguishable from one another (this is an absurd notion that is nevertheless on occasion championed), but rather speaks to inseparability and mutual dependence (this much is also in accord with Gotama Buddha's doctrine of dependent origination).

Chapter 29: Enlightenment Defined

§ 1

Everyone defines the term “Enlightenment” a bit differently, and this inconsistency, along with differing opinions generally, has led to a great deal of controversy with respect to what Enlightenment actually is. It is therefore worth my clearly defining what I mean by the term as it is used in this work.

Enlightenment is a *process*, and as such there are several levels of Enlightenment to which one might attain. However, it is also correct to say that there is a basic *threshold* which, when crossed, one can be rightly said to have transitioned from unenlightened to Enlightened. As an analogy, consider a light bulb on a dimmer switch: if electricity is flowing through the light bulb—that is to say, the light bulb is on—, regardless of the luminosity, the light bulb is enlightened; however, as the dimmer switch is raised towards maximum luminosity, this process would rightly be called enlightenment.

The fundamental threshold of Enlightenment involves the following four understandings:

1. That one is the Self (the Atman), and therefore is One, undivided, eternal, immortal, without beginning or end, incapable of being extinguished, and Divine.
2. That what one truly is (the Atman) is in no way separate or distinct from God (Brahman).
3. That one is *not* the *egoic character*, that is to say, the mental conception of oneself as a separate, free willing agent who is human, mortal, finite, subject to birth and death, and the product of a linear Earthly story—all this is understood to be illusion conjured up by the Ego in the mind.
4. That Enlightenment is *not* a state that might be attained one day by effort or grace, but rather is a condition that is *already the case*—it is not to be *achieved* but *remembered*, which is accomplished not by the acquisition of knowledge or

experience, but by the clearing away of all that is false in the mind and so stands in the way of accessing the natural state. (In analogy, Enlightenment is not the construction of a glorious temple, but the removal of clouds so that the sun, which was always present and shining behind them, can be revealed and shine forth—it is a process of subtraction, not addition ; it is negative, not positive).

Once these four understandings are in place and have taken root, one can rightly be said to be Enlightened. It should be noted, however, that this understanding must exceed a merely intellectual comprehension of what has been said; in other words, it is not enough to understand the meaning of the four prior statements—these truths must be experienced as indelible *felt knowledge*, such that one intimately knows the truth of them directly and with complete conviction. It is for this reason that meditation is so highly recommended in this work—it is the best known path for immediate and direct realization that transcends the superficial understanding associated with reading the works of others, understanding concepts, and holding beliefs (in meditation, when one crosses the threshold of Enlightenment, it is literally announced to one in no uncertain terms that he has attained Enlightenment).

§ 2

Enlightenment, as it is used in this work, does not imply a complete cessation of suffering; nor does it imply perfection of the character, as if one becomes a person who never makes any mistakes, has flawless interactions with others, and handles all situations with unmitigated grace; nor does it imply omniscience or the possession of supernatural powers.

A complete cessation of suffering does not occur when one crosses the basic threshold of Enlightenment; rather, there is a considerable and profound reduction in certain types of suffering at this moment, such that the transition is marked by a memorable change in disposition and baseline experience of life—for example, a great deal of the anxiety associated with the fear of death or the striving to better oneself and to ensure one's survival falls away; but it

still hurts to stub one's toe (a complete cessation of suffering, if possible—which is highly unlikely—would occur at a higher level of Enlightenment).

With Enlightenment, the character is not perfected, but rather is (1) seen to be illusory, and (2) accepted as perfectly sufficient and not in need of modification, including all characteristics which might be considered to be 'good' or 'bad'; one realizes that one was never in control of the character (much as one has no control over whether one is an introvert or an extrovert), and that the purpose of life was never to somehow manipulate the character to improve, but only to recognize the character as an aspect of one's relative manifestation that is as matter-of-factly the case as is one's gender or the color of one's hair. (There are stories that Nisargadatta Maharaj would become infuriated when devotees would spill rice on the floor of the ashram; this does not imply he was not Enlightened, nor did it represent a deficient aspect of his character that called for remedy and polishing—rather, it was just a particular trait of his particular character, and he was fully at peace with and accepting of this trait).

Omniscience is not possible: there are simply far too many things that can be known in this Universe, and the number of things that can be known is constantly increasing as new events occur, new art is created, and new inventions are constructed. Wisdom is not tantamount to knowing everything, or even a great deal of things, but rather to understanding the essentials very well; an Enlightened individual is perfectly comfortable with the statement "I don't know that" (which stands in stark contrast to the attitude taken by most individuals, who would in most cases prefer to improvise a feasible answer or politic their way out of directly answering the question rather than simply admitting a lack of knowledge on the matter). Psychic abilities, including telepathy, psychometry, and the ability to interact with the astral plane—traditionally called *siddhis* in the Vedic tradition—*may* occur in connexion with Enlightenment, but also *may not*, and whether these states occur or not is completely irrelevant to Enlightenment (just as winning a trophy for most improved player is completely irrelevant to the sportsman's actual performance).

§ 3

Some in the Non Dual tradition claim that there is no

Enlightenment and that no one becomes Enlightened. This is not correct. It is correct to point out that the *egoic character* does not become Enlightened, because the egoic character is illusory and therefore can never possess the quality of Enlightenment; and it is true that many people are foolishly attempting to become Enlightened *as egoic characters* (that is, they are trying to add the quality of Enlightenment to the list of traits attributable to the egoic character, as opposed to recognizing the egoic character as illusory, and in this recognition being Enlightened); however, neither of these two valid points yields the conclusion that no one becomes Enlightened—that would be a *non sequitur*.

While there is wisdom in recognizing that the qualities of the egoic character (e.g., mortal, fallible, etc.) do not pertain to what one truly is, this understanding is overextended when it attempts to dispose of the individual entirely; amusingly, every person who claims there is no Individual also operates from the basis of a specific body with a particular story and consistent mode of expression—it is not the case that such people arrive each time to satsang in a different body with a new backstory—and as such they are presenting a complete and obvious contradiction: claiming there is no individual while simultaneously presenting *as* an individual. Generally speaking, the claim that there is no such thing as Enlightenment is a spiritual pose designed to make one seem more relatable (a proclaim of Enlightenment is often met with skepticism, challenge, and the assumption that one is simply being arrogant, grandiose, and egotistical), and tends to be associated with the overly saccharine and effete version of spirituality that appears to be humble by championing equality, when in truth no such equality exists. Claims that there are no levels of consciousness and no such thing as spiritual advancement issue from the same egoic motivation and represent the error of applying what is true on the level of the Absolute to the level of the Relative—it is true that Dorothy is not really in Oz and is simply at home in Kansas dreaming in bed; however, she still has to travel through Oz and achieve various objectives in order to get Home (or to wake up, depending on how one wishes to contextualize it).

Gotama Buddha proclaimed his Enlightenment as an individual, and Jesus, in equating himself with God the Father, did the same; both taught Enlightenment with the intention that

devotees could actually attain it themselves—Buddha specifically stated that non-attachment leads to Enlightenment.

There are some who believe that to proclaim that one is Enlightened is a sure sign of arrogance, grandiosity, and egotism—in other words, that claiming to be Enlightened implies one is not (which is an obviously ridiculous stance)—; this belief results from the inaccurate conception of what Enlightenment actually is; the presumption held by those who have not attained it and therefore have no first hand knowledge of it beyond their own imagining of what it must be like. Generally, this unenlightened conception of the nature of Enlightenment places it in far too lofty a station, such as associating it with supernatural powers, omniscience, or perfection of character ; when Enlightenment is actually attained, it is seen to be a significant discovery, but not nearly as extreme and lofty as it is commonly thought to be— it requires only a genuine knowledge of the four truths elucidated above. This might be likened to a novice pianist who, as he struggles to master the very basics, listens to Chopin and thinks, “it would take me a lifetime to reach that level”, but then in five years of dedicated practice finds himself capable of that level of performance, much to his surprise and delight, and so realizes it was not quite as difficult to attain as it had appeared when he was inexperienced and unpracticed.

Chapter 30: Self, Spacetime, Subject, and Object

Now that the definitions of Self, Spacetime, Subject, and Object have been clearly articulated in this text, a brief word describing the relationship between the three is in order for the sake of clarity. The Self is beyond the duality of Subject vs Object, and is the irreducible ground or source from which these arise. Both Subject and Object are expressions of the Self. The Self is also beyond the division of One vs Many; the expression of the Self as One is Subjectivity and the expression of the Self as Many is Objectivity. Spacetime is also an expression of the Self and represents the relationship between Subject and Object (or One and Many). It is interesting to note that there can never in Reality be only two things – there is a jump directly from one to three –; this is the case because the moment two independent things exist, there also exists a third thing which in neither of them but represents the emergent properties of their relationship (much as saltiness is not a property of Calcium or Chlorine, but *is* a property of them in combination). Hence the most immediate expression of the Self, from which all else is derived, is into One vs Many (Subject vs Object), and then also as the relationship there-between (Spacetime), and so the first and fundamental division is trinary in nature.

Because pure Subjectivity (as unexpressed potentiality) is not a phenomenon within space or time, but rather the necessary precondition for either to appear, it admits of no internal division, regardless of its expression. It expresses outside of time, space, and causality as *awareness* or *consciousness*, and within time, space, and causality as *immediate object*, that is to say, the body (this is not division, but rather a singular expression viewed from different angles, similar to looking at a person who is standing in front of a mirror and seeing both his direct form and reflection simultaneously). Awareness might be called *knowing subjectivity*, and the body *objectified subjectivity*. As such, subjectivity represents the bridge that unites that which is bound by time, space, and causality with that which is beyond them. In both expressions, subjectivity remains undivided: awareness is always unified and the body cannot be divided (if the body or brain is severed in half, it is not the case that both halves become independent seats of consciousness). This much represents the

entirety of the expression of subjectivity; that is to say, subjectivity does *not* express also in objects that are not the body, regardless of appearances to the contrary. *Mediate object*, that is, all objectivity that is not the body, including both physical form and non-physical form, such as thoughts, mental images, and ideas, is the expression of the Self as Many. It is the interaction of the *immediate object* with itself or with *mediate object* that gives rise to all experience, and all experience is conditioned on the presence of subjective awareness. Spacetime is the modality through which manifestation is experienced via the interaction between Subject and Object, and while it is by nature a unity, the result of Subject and Object interacting through it yields the perceivable distinction between Space and Time. All experience is conditioned on the presence of Spacetime, Subject and Object, and all three necessarily and always appear together – they are not identical but are mutually dependent upon one another.

Everything, without exception, is an expression of the Self.

Chapter 31: Non Dual Myths of Non Existence

Non Dual traditions, particularly Neo Advaita and those that tend to be more radical, often tend to take the valid truths that “just because something is imagined or conceptualized does not therefore imply it surely exists”, and “the egoic self as a character is illusory, imaginary, and does not really exist”, and overextend them, such that spurious conclusions are drawn, such as “there is no one, there is no I, there is no time, there is no space, and there is no Ego” All these cases represent erroneous reasoning – an attempt to be excessively philosophically clever and simplistic at the expense of truth.

The claim that “there is no one and there is no 'I'” is false. It is correct that there are not 'others' who are independent expressions of discrete subjectivities; however, this does not imply that 'others' do not exist – 'others' most certainly do exist (they are perceivable and extended in space/time): the proper understanding is not that 'others' do not exist, but that they are objective expressions of the Self and representation for the knowing subject, as opposed to objective expressions of subjectivity who have an existence, either as object or subject, independent of the subjective awareness of the Individual. It is correct that the egoic sense of self, that is, the conceptual sense of self as a character (i.e., “I am a brave, intelligent, loving man”) is imaginary and has no existence beyond its conceptualization and the belief infused therewith; and it is also correct to point out that typically this egoic character is what is referred to when the term “I” is employed, for it is through this usurpation of “I” that the Ego creates its false sense of identity (if someone asks another “who are you?”, rarely is the reply, “I am the Self” – generally the reply is along the lines of, “I am John, male, 5'8”, a father of five and banker in North Dakota”); however, it is not correct to therefore conclude that there is no 'I' whatsoever, or no 'Self' : the immediacy of 'I' in the sense of 'I am' is certain and exists beyond all skepticism or need for proof, and only loses its integrity when additional traits are ascribed to it (“I am this, I am that”); the Self can in a sense be said to be beyond even existence vs nonexistence (even so it is more accurate to say that the Self exists than to say it does not), but its primary and most fundamental expression as the Individual, a self-evident actuality not derived from

inference or conceptual designation, certainly does exist (this is Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*).

In Buddhism, there is a common misconception that something must be permanent, unchanging, and unconditioned in order to exist. None of these qualities are in fact conditions necessary for existence. Anything that is perceivable exists (and we can make the clarification that while the snake the rope is mistaken for does not exist as a tangible formal object in spacetime, it does exist as an imagining and conceptualization). Both formal objects (like rocks and people) and informal objects (like thoughts or mental images in the inner world, and gravity or magnetism in the outer world) are perceivable, and therefore exist. Space and Time are, in mutual dependence and inseparable union as spacetime, the modalities through which objectivity is expressed and made perceivable by subjectivity; they are perceivable (one can easily recognize the difference between empty space and space that is occupied, and one can track the progress of time with relative ease) and therefore exist (*intangible* and *invisible* do not imply non-existence). (Amusingly, many Non Dual teachers who claim time does not exist will declare "I am doing a live stream at 7:00pm", and then everyone knows precisely when to tune in to hear him – it is not as though there is utter confusion over this and no one is able to coordinate arriving at the same location at the same time). Particularly amusing is the claim that nothing withing space and time exists but only the Self does, as this is precisely the opposite of the truth: existence is in fact wholly conditioned by space, time and causality, and has meaning only in connexion therewith (the very word 'existence' and concept thereof is only perceivable and knowable through spacetime); the Self, beyond the confines of space, time and causality, as the irreducible ground which potentiates and gives rise to these, in the strictest terms cannot be said to exist, for language and concept cannot truly penetrate to that which is primordial to spatiotemporal manifestation (as can best be said, the Self does not *exist* but simply *is* – and even this description admittedly comes up shy of perfect accuracy).

The belief that the Ego does not exist is one of the Ego's greatest tricks – it is precisely the true expression and meaning of "the greatest trick the devil ever performed was convincing the world he does not exist". It is true that the Ego does not exist as a formal

entity or character – one will never run into the Ego in the park –; however, this does not imply that the Ego does not exist. As a mental process and collection of patterned thinking – claims of 'I' as the thinker, claims of ownership and control, fretting about past and future, constantly seeking validation and praise, wanting to be superior to others, etc. – the Ego most certainly does exist. The term 'spiritual bypassing' is very often misused – such as when people claim that not engaging in karma yoga or participating in spiritual communities is spiritual bypassing, and that you need to 'put in the work', as if there were something to be earned by meritoriousness – but denying the existence of the Ego is the truest and most prominent example of spiritual bypassing. The Ego constantly attempts to disguise itself (most people are so fully identified with it that they do not even know it exists) and the claim that the Ego does not exist comes *from* the Ego and is but another clever attempt to disguise itself and throw one off the path of truth. Dealing with the Ego is precisely what is one's role in life, for overcoming Ego and realizing the Truth are essentially one and the same thing, and it is wise to accept this unfortunate aspect of life, for it is wholly inescapable – wherever one goes, so too goes the Ego. Beware of anyone who claims to have no Ego; transcending the Ego involves recognizing it, understanding that its claims are false, and seeing beyond it to the Reality it attempts to dissimulate; it is not gotten rid of – its claims are just no longer automatically ascribed validity. When the Ego seems to be dead and gone, it is truly just behaving like Michael Myers, lying dormant, allowing itself to be forgotten and for one to believe one is safe, and waiting for the perfect time to strike. As an opponent, it is no fool. It does not tip its hand needlessly. It knows when surreptitiousness is the better tactic than direct aggression. It knows how to play the “good cop, bad cop” game. It will literally use every dirty trick in the book with zero hesitation or remorse—could there be fairer warning than that?

Chapter 32: On Judgment and Comparisons

On one extreme are those who are constantly judging themselves and others, forming almost instantaneous opinions of everyone they encounter and then heavily investing belief in the accuracy of these opinions – who is good, who is bad, who is right, who is wrong, who deserves to be rewarded, who deserves to be punished –; on the other extreme are those who embrace being non-judgmental to the point that they go into denial about the nature of reality and human beings, such as those who claim that everyone is equal and everyone is innately good : as per usual, both extremes are problematic. Judgment, taken on the whole, cannot be said to be entirely good nor entirely bad; rather, a distinction needs to be made between *egoic judgment* (which is malignant and to be avoided) and *reasonable judgment* (which is perfectly acceptable and indeed beneficial) ; however, making this distinction in practice is not always easy, as the division between the two classes is not crystal clear and it is quite easy to mistake one class for the other in particular cases; regardless I will attempt to define both classes as clearly as possible such that accurate discernments between the two can be generally made.

Egoic Judgment involves opinionation – not of the variety associated with preferences or loosely held beliefs about the likely nature of reality (such as one's favorite food or whether or not string theory is valid), but those in the style of needlessly-formed positionalities imbued with an undue degree of import and confidence; those which are almost universally tinged with defensiveness and emotionality, and reflect the biases of the individual more so than the actual way of things (e.g., “anyone who agrees with the other political party is foolish and evil”). Egoic Judgment arises from the Ego's desire to know everything, to be right, and to feel superior to others. The Ego never wants to admit it does not know something, for it sees this as weakness and vulnerability whereas it associates knowing things with safety and control, and so when the mind does not know the answer to a question it will often simply improvise a feasible-sounding answer rather than simply admitting the answer is not known; indeed, studies have shown that people interviewed about their position on an entirely fictional matter will more often take whatever position on the

matter seems to make them appear as a good person than admit they have never heard of matter in question and therefore have no opinion on it. Nearly identical rationale governs the Ego's desire to 'be right', though here a distinction ought to be made: it is perfectly reasonable to seek the truth and so desire to have correct understanding (e.g., it is reasonable to care to perform well on a math test, because this indicates that one has a solid grasp of the material being learned), and so in this context it is reasonable to see value in being correct; where the desire to be right becomes problematic is when it concerns the likes of winning arguments or having the 'correct' opinion on a matter that is of no importance or cannot realistically be known (as is so often the case, the key factor that differentiates between the healthy and unhealthy versions is the absence or presents of excessive emotionality attached to the matter). The Egoic Judgment of others as bad or less successful or less intelligent (that is, of one's superiority to others) issues from the Ego's narcissistic pridefulness, insecurity, and need for validation so that it can hold itself in high esteem ; once again, a subtle but important distinction needs to be made: there is on one hand having a healthy and realistic understanding about where one stands as regards a particular skill (e.g., "I am a more talented pianist than person X but I am not as talented as person Y"), and on the other hand unrealistically inflating one's abilities and standing or underselling those of another, or drawing spurious conclusions about overall rank from unrelated particulars (e.g, "I am a better teacher than he is because I make more money and am more popular").

Reasonable judgment, by contrast, is perfectly acceptable and simply involves navigating life effectively. As one goes through one's day, one is constantly making quick little judgments about every situation one encounters. For example, when driving, countless little judgment calls are being made from moment to moment: am I safe to merge here, do I need to speed up or slow down, can I make that light or do I need to stop, should I stop and let this driver in front of me, etc.. All this is nothing more than normal navigation of the world, and it is an error to look with derision upon any judgments made on this level in the name of being non-judgmental. It is also worth noting with respect to reasonable judgments that actual results are rarely indicative of the quality of the judgment made: when you go all in on pocket aces and lose to a flush draw, this in no way

signals that a poor judgment call was made – were the same circumstance to arise again, one would make precisely the same decision because, regardless of what happens to be the outcome in a particular case, it is the wise choice (that said, if a particular judgment is routinely leading to undesirable results, a change in strategy might very well be in order). The Ego is masterful at taking a truth out of context and misapplying it, and in the context of judgment, once it has heard that it is bad to judge, it will often over-extend this understanding from the type of judgment involving opinionation and superiority, which is indeed deleterious, to reasonable judgment, which is indeed quite okay. When a person says “I don't judge anyone – I see everyone as equal and good”, this is non-judgmentalism taken too far in the name of 'good-person-ness', which also issues from the Ego. As has been demonstrated many times by now, the Ego very often holds conflicting and even diametrically-opposed positions at once, and one sense in which it exemplifies this is in the fact that it likes to look down on others, and so judges them too harshly, but simultaneously, it wishes to think of itself as good and loving, and so also claims to hold others in high esteem and think well of them, and so will often depart from being realistic into idealism, refusing to make appropriate judgments, such as that the career thief really is a thief and cannot be trusted with one's wallet.

The distinction between egoic judgment and reasonable judgment is on occasion pronounced, but can sometimes be quite subtle. “I'm not going to let this driver in front of me because I have the right of way and there are people behind me” is a reasonable judgment ; “I'm not going to let this driver in front of me because I want to get home quickly” is an egoic judgment. “Pragmatically speaking, that man needs to go to prison” is a reasonable judgment ; “That man deserves to go to prison!” is an egoic judgment. The best and most consistent indicator of which type of judgment is being made in a particular instance is the presence of emotionality. Reasonable judgments are made almost entirely in absence of emotion: there is no emotion attached to the decision “I ought to use the restroom now because I am going to be stuck in the car for the next four hours” ; egoic judgments are almost universally accompanied by some emotional energy that supplants the capacity for reason and a grounded sense of reality: the indignation

accompanying the declaration “people who are intolerant need to see a therapist!” is the hallmark sign that the Ego is the one offering up the opinion. It is well to note that egoic judgment happens automatically and without one's consent, and so it would be an error to condemn and deride oneself when this happens, and it would also be an error to try to stop egoic judgments from happening: the solution is not to stop egoic judgment, nor is it to wallow in guilt over the occurrence of egoic judgments, but rather to simply see egoic judgments as false when they arise, and understanding that they are coming from the Ego and not oneself ; when seen in this light, one is able to keep such judgments at arm's length and merely smirk about their presence – “there goes the Ego being the Ego”.

Chapter 33: Christianity Via the Non Dual Lens

Generally speaking, the myriad religions of the world are treated as competing spiritual philosophies, all of which are attempting to achieve precisely the same goal (that is, to correctly describe the underlying spiritual truth that governs reality), and while there may admittedly be some overlap in commonly held principles and understandings between them, nevertheless, only one can ultimately represent the truth. This understanding is flawed in two ways: firstly, it presumes exclusivity of the full truth to one religion, when in fact every religion features points on which it is correct and points on which it is mistaken; and secondly, it presumes that the intention and target audience of every religion is the same, when in fact each has a unique intention, style, and demographic in mind. The mystical and metaphysical traditions of Hinduism such as Advaita Vedanta, for example, are intended principally for the spiritually advanced. They do not venture into an elaborate system of proper moral behavior nor do they prescribe elaborate rituals to be followed ; rather, they speak in often poetic terms about the metaphysical nature of reality. Buddhism is sharply focused on prescribing a practical methodology aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating suffering ; it generally avoids venturing into metaphysical considerations, and indeed does not hold itself in opposition to any religion, but rather considers itself an adjunct that can be seamlessly added to any particular religion in the name of reducing suffering without there being any conflict in prescribed beliefs (in Japan, temples often contain both Buddhist and Shinto shrines because there is not seen to be any conflict between Shintoism and Buddhism) : Siddhartha Gotama was notorious for refusing to comment on metaphysical matters when asked, instead electing to maintain noble silence ; this is because the intention of Buddhism is principally the elimination of suffering, to which such matters are seen to be superfluous.

Christianity is a wholly unique and incredibly ambitious spiritual teaching. Jesus, as a teacher, taught and spoke in a style that was meant to straddle two layers of reality simultaneously: on one hand, he was prescribing a moral code fit for the masses – the intention was to provide those operating from a dualistic perspective,

lacking in spiritual sophistication, a framework for how to conduct themselves in order to be decent people (hence the value placed upon avoiding sinful behavior and embracing Love as the highest ideal) ; on the other hand, he was simultaneously describing a deeper and more profound layer of reality that could realistically only be grasped by the more spiritually advanced (which is why so often the disciples completely failed to comprehend the meaning of his parables, which were often more oriented towards the deeper layer that aligns with Non Dual teachings). As an example of this simultaneous conveyance, consider the teaching “love thy neighbor as thy self”: on the more shallow level, this teaching would be interpreted as “love your neighbor *as if he were yourself*”, which involves a method of moral abstraction where one reasons that the way he would like to be treated (which he knows intimately and directly) is analogous to the way others would like to be treated (which he knows only via abstraction and comparison) ; however, on the deeper level, this teaching would be interpreted as “love your neighbor as yourself because he *is yourself*” – that is to say, he is not a separate willing independent entity with his own unique subjectivity, but rather is the Self expressing purely through objectification, and as such is merely another mode of the same Self that expresses as the Individual (only in this case it is Self expressing through Subjectivity). In the former case, treating others well is “the right thing to do” and in the latter case it is “the sensible thing to do”. Which understanding is more appropriate for a given individual depends upon where he is in his spiritual evolution: the former applies so long as he is still holding God to be a separate entity, considering himself to be mortal being with free will, and treating others as independent agents with their own subjectivity, capable of making meaningful choices and suffering ; the latter applies once he has recognized the Non Dual nature of reality and the primacy of the Self (which is in no way separate or distinct from God). This exemplifies the style of Christ's teachings, where the phrasing is such that both interpretations are available, and the interpretation that will be recognized in any particular case will depend upon the sophistication of the reader.

As such, Christianity is meant to have a wide-ranging applicability and appeal that spans the spectrum between the simple and the spiritually erudite. There is, however, an inherent downside associated with a teaching style of this nature: though there is value

in the fact that the singular teaching is valid for multiple levels simultaneously, there is also therefore an increased chance of misinterpretation by those at either level: the simple are prone to misunderstanding the more poetical and metaphysical language whereas the spiritually erudite are prone to literally and rigidly interpreting the moral prescriptions, which, in their case, would be better treated symbolically and interpreted esoterically. A radical Non Dual teaching, such as “whatever you do is perfect and you are incapable of doing wrong” (the Christian equivalent of which is “be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect”), might not be suitable for someone at a lower level of spiritual understanding, which is precisely why the Christian phrasing of this teaching allows for the interpretation that *one is to attain to perfection*, as opposed to the interpretation that *one inherently is perfection* (the Non Dual phrasing of this teaching is far more direct and does not readily admit to multiple interpretations).

When interpreted through the lens of deeper spiritual comprehension, Christianity is wholly compatible with Non Duality. “I and the Father are One” is no longer seen as a statement about Jesus personally but as a statement about the nature of the Individual – the Self is God. The same holds true of the statement “I am the way, the truth, and the light”, which describes the nature of the Self. Jesus’s body as bread and blood as wine becomes a reference to the fact that all is an expression of the Self (the Everything context in which “I am that”). The saying “flesh gives birth to flesh, but spirit gives birth to spirit” is a way of distinguishing between the false egoic sense of self (self as flesh) and the true sense of I (self as spirit, that is to say, as transcendent of physical manifestation); and the continuation regarding spirit that “no one can say where it comes from or where it is going to” references the fact that all is predestined and there is no free will. “God is not mocked” no longer means “deriding God will land you in hot water” – it means “God is One and there can be no valid separate and distinct copy made”. The Gospel of Thomas, which was removed from the canonical bible, is particularly Non Dual in nature, emphasizes inner knowledge and direct experience rather than external authority, and focuses entirely on teachings, as opposed to lineage or historical data.

It simply cannot be denied that over the years Christianity was heavily subverted and reinterpreted for often less than noble reasons

– the institutionalization of Christianity was in part borne out of deliberate manipulation for the sake of greed, politics, and power, and in part out of ignorance due to the influence of the Ego. Emphasis was shifted from the metaphysical aspects and individual sovereignty to a more rigid system of dogmatized belief: the church is the authority; beliefs are no longer up to the individual but are prescribed by church officials; spurious rituals and superstitions (like Confession and not eating meat), which have nothing to do with what Jesus taught, have been added; and the intended primary focus on Love and Unity has been subverted into a primary focus on Sin and Exclusivity. The appending of the Old Testament to the New Testament is problematic, as many of Jesus's teachings modify or even outright contradict what is taught in the Old Testament, and the God of Love and Perfection described by Jesus is radically different than the Old Testament God, whom Sigmund Freud correctly identified as merely a projection from the unconscious of the authoritarian father figure archetype: here God is jealous, judgmental, prone to fits of anger, erratic, plays favorites, domineering, coercive under the guise of doing 'what is best' and 'for their own good'. The validity attributed to the words of the disciples contained in the epistles completely ignores the fact that throughout the entirety of the gospels, they are consistently baffled by Jesus's teachings, and he routinely has to correct their understanding – Jesus was an Enlightened teacher ; the disciples were just ordinary people. Why, then, are the words of Paul treated with essentially equal reverence to the words of Jesus? Paul, by his own admission, was once a violent persecutor and harsh enforcer of religious laws who had a spiritual awakening and reformed – this does not place him at the level of a Buddha ; it means he reached basic integrity. Such an individual is like a reasonably skilled pianist: he is useful for teaching children and novices, but is certainly no where near the talent level of Chopin or Rachmaninoff, and therefore is not a true authority on advanced matters of composition and performance.

With respect to Christianity, the reader is advised thusly: rely upon what Jesus Christ himself said – all the rest is suspect –; avoid becoming embroiled in the spurious elements that have been added in later years, many of which are not aligned with Christ's teachings; understand that there are multiple levels of interpretation available, and so do not become rigidly attached to one particular

interpretation; dispense with the officious obsession with exclusivity and recognize the valuable contributions present in many other religions, which, when understood correctly, do not conflict with the Christian teachings, but rather contribute to the complete picture of spiritual reality; align with Christ's actual teachings and not those prescribed by the church or championed by the masses; and finally, give up on the primacy of Jesus Christ and recognize the primacy of the Self (for most tenured Christians, this change in perspective will likely be the most difficult, as the conditioning to see Jesus as God and oneself as a lowly mortal sinner runs deep, and to place oneself as equal or above Christ seems utterly blasphemous and representative of a complete betrayal of the religion). If Jesus says "I and the Father are One", and also says "I am in you and you are in me", then by the transitive property, the implication is unmistakable. The correct understanding is there to be perceived by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Chapter 34: Science and Religion

The Ego is well aware that genuine spiritual truth is anathema to its continued dominance, and therefore it targets spiritual truth with ferocity, doing everything it can to discredit, disparage, manipulate, and corrupt anyone and anything that stands for it. Institutionalized religion reflects the results of the Ego's efforts to subvert spiritual truth, and what is prescribed in institutionalized religion is almost never genuinely in accord with the spiritual principles on which it is ostensibly based and founded. Modern day mainstream Hinduism has widely abandoned the metaphysical spiritual truths found in traditional ancient texts like The Bhagavad Gita and in Advaita Vedanta, and now is characterized by devotional practices and rituals (bhakti) ; the emphasis is no longer on spiritual truth or the individual's quest for spiritual awakening – it is on posturing, worship of external figures, and conformity. Mainstream Christianity has consistently devolved over the years, becoming increasingly rigid in its orthodoxy, placing emphasis on church and external authority, demanding conformity of belief and exclusive allegiance, and accentuating the fear of eternal damnation in order to coerce rather than utilizing the power of love to inspire ; the Bible has been heavily edited: several gospels – such as those of Mary and Thomas – have been removed, and The Old Testament has been appended to The New Testament as if the two were a singular work of equal authority. Buddhism has probably endured better than any spiritual belief system over the years, but its translation into English is deeply flawed and riddled with errors: “empty” does not mean “impermanent, dependent, and mutable” – it refers to having the capacity to be full of objects but at present not containing any objects ; “aggregates” are collections and “constituents” make up aggregates, and so you do not have five aggregates, you have five constituents (form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness), which together form an aggregate of experience ; “No self” is true only in the sense of the egoic sense of self and is not meant to imply that there is not reality to the Self and the visceral sense of “I am” ; “Nothing” is not the ultimate state or the underlying nature of reality – that which is transcendent of spacetime is “No-thing” meaning “not a thing” and is beyond the duality of

nothing vs everything. All of this is a product of the Ego slowly corrupting and manipulating spiritual truth over time, and as the teachings are distorted and become ossified as institutionalized religion, not only is the connexion with spiritual truth lost, but indeed the religion winds up operating in service of the Ego. For this reason, the reader is advised to approach religion and any allegiance to a particular religion with extreme caution. Spirituality is one thing and religion is something wholly different – though it is based on spirituality, it is not an authentic representation thereof.

The Ego now looks upon the mess it has made with institutionalized religion, and declares to those more logically and scientifically inclined “the reasoning and practices of these religions are deeply flawed; therefore, there is no validity to spirituality – the logical, linear, material world is what is real” (obviously this is flawed reasoning – if a mathematical proof is presented incorrectly this does not imply that the mathematics underlying the proof are invalid – but the argument is nevertheless compelling for many, even those who consider themselves particularly adept with reason and of high intellect). For those viewing life from the logical, rational, linear, literal, materialistic scientific paradigm, the Ego twists spirituality into a psychological phenomenon with no underlying reality that may nevertheless be vaguely useful as a coping mechanism or way of maintaining mental well-being and balance – here meditation is seen not as a way of transcending the Ego and realizing the Self, but as a mechanism for reducing stress and increasing equanimity.

And so, in the great debate between Science and Religion, amusingly, both sides are incorrect. Mainstream science contends that God does not exist because there is no proof ; mainstream religion treats God as a separate entity from the individual, often touting deeply flawed logic to justify God's existence, such as, “God exists because scripture says God exists”. Science views the individual as ultimately material in nature, as decidedly mortal in all respects, and posits that when a person dies, he no longer exists ; Religion sees the individual as having an eternal aspect, but contends that the quality of his experience beyond the manifest realm depends upon his behavior, and he will be rewarded or punished in accordance with his works or with which faith he aligns himself. Both Science and Religion ascribe subjectivity to objects that have none (people, animals, etc.) based on the argument from analogy:

Science views consciousness as a phenomenon arising as an emergent property of sufficient complexity in objective expression ; Religion views 'sentient beings' as each being divine creations with individual souls, all independently conscious and enduring. Science holds to be real that which is provable by scientific standards, replicable in lab settings, and supported by the scientific method ; Religion takes to be real that which is written in scripture and proclaimed by religious authorities. Science treats the origin of the Universe as issuing from purely mechanical properties, such as described with respect to the Big Bang Theory, and as something that occurred long ago in time ; Religion treats the origin of the Universe as issuing from the will of a Divine Creator, also having occurred long ago in time : both here overlook the complete dependence upon the presence of the Individual knowing subject for manifestation to have reality – any history posited to have occurred in absence of the Individual knowing subject is merely a backstory with no intrinsic reality (similarly to how in Star Wars the opening text describes a history that predates the present in the film, but such is not part of the film and the events described never actually happened).

It should be noted that the ancient traditional texts of several religions, including The Upanishads, The Bhagavad Gita, The Zen Teachings of Huang Po, and The New Testament do indeed contain and promote spiritual truth; that science, while incapable of penetrating to the nature of spiritual reality (for such is not its purpose or scope), does point to it in the context of Quantum Mechanics, where the form of objective expression is dependent upon the observer, and examples of superposition and non-local coherence can be found, such as in the case of quantum entanglement; and proper Reasoning – that which is associated with the Logos and metaphysical, ontological, and epistemological insight, such as can be found in philosophy – also supports and affirms spiritual reality, even when the term 'spiritual' itself is not employed (as is the case with respect to Plato's Ideas, Plotinus's concept of The One, Kant's thing-in-itself, and Schopenhauer's transcendence of the will-to-life (the Ego) to the divine realm of the noumenal).

The purpose of the natural sciences is to describe the mechanical nature of the phenomenological world and the way in which the various objects function and interact. It is not within the domain of the natural sciences to speak on or take a position on the

metaphysical and spiritual context that gives rise to manifest reality – that is the domain of philosophy. As such, the domain of science is limited, which is perfectly fine if recognized and appreciated; but far too often modern science attempts to extend its ambit beyond its limitations, making commentary on the validity of spiritual or philosophical ideas, and attempting to formulate a “theory of everything”, which is a preposterous notion for a field that inherently does not extend to a scope as wide as “everything”. The intellectual arrogance present in mainstream science is quite obvious, particularly when scientists engage in debates where they claim that science disproves the validity of the spiritual domain (were there humility in the field, the scientist, with respect to metaphysical, philosophical, and spiritual matters, would behave as would the plumber who is asked about the electrical wiring: “that matter is beyond my knowledge, and so I cannot speak to it with any authority”). The Ego's dominance in the practice of mainstream science is evidenced by the fact that scientific studies almost always follow the money, and whatever interested party funds a research venture is guaranteed to receive results in line with the desired conclusion of the study (it is quite easy to manipulate supposedly objective and pure scientific studies via the selective inclusion and exclusion of data, and the subtle bending of subjective inferences drawn therefrom) ; furthermore, scientists are notoriously guarded and secretive with respect to any theories they are working on, as there is a great deal of money at stake for whomever gets the credit for a meaningful discovery – were the field actually after the truth, there would be open collaboration on all ventures, with no special emphasis placed upon who happens to figure what out. The mainstream scientific field is, ironically, extremely similar to a religion in its demand for conformity to its accepted dogmas, its claims of exclusivity to the truth, and its veneration of prominent members of the field who are treated as celebrities and as authoritative.

Chapter 35: The Ego: Enemy or Opponent?

Paradoxically,

it is an error to say that the Ego is your enemy,
but it is also an error to say that the Ego is not your enemy.

When the Ego is cast as the enemy, as if it were a demon-esque anthropomorphized agent of evil, it automatically sets up a duality and another self-identity: there is a 'me' here in opposition to the Ego 'there'. In this schema, the Ego will simply play both roles and fool the individual into casting itself as the victim:

Ego (as Ego): You're worthless and no good and
destined to fail!

Ego (as "me"): Oh my God, the Ego is attacking me
again! I'm so sick of this! Why won't it stop?

When the Ego is cast as not the enemy, its insidiousness will be overlooked. The severity of the situation will not be rightly comprehended. In such cases, the Ego becomes cast as "a harmless mechanism useful for interacting with the world" – this is a clever warping of the truth. The mind/body mechanism is indeed a useful tool for interacting with the world ; but the Ego is not that – that erroneous conflation is deliberately crafted by the Ego to disguise itself. The Ego is far more perfidious than that: it is not the neutral activity of thought, but a network of self-referential and often painful mental patterns that maintain the illusion of a separate self. These patterns range from overt self-judgment, resentment, and fear to subtle narratives that quietly reinforce identity.

The Ego is best understood not as evil and not as one's enemy, but as one's *opponent* (or, more accurately, *the opposition force*, since the Ego is not a solid entity but a process). When one plays against the computer in chess, there is no enemy, there is no evil entity who hates you – but the program *is* going to oppose you in the game as adamantly as it can: it will make the optimal moves against you, it will try its best to deceive you, and it will not cut you slack if you make a poor move. To cast the Ego as enemy is to think "this computer program dislikes me and wishes to upset me by defeating

me” ; to cast the Ego as not the enemy is to naively think, “if I accidentally leave my queen unguarded, surely the program will not take the piece remorselessly”.

Perhaps the single best analogy of the nature of the Ego is the heel in professional wrestling. It is not inherently evil – it is playing a role that is necessary as part of a broader storyline. Ric Flair's character was the embodiment and personification of the Ego: charming, persuasive, charismatic, incredibly skilled – and *totally* untrustworthy. Ric Flair is not evil, but he *is* going to use every dirty trick in the book against you, and you absolutely cannot trust him under any circumstances. If he gets down on his knees and begs off, you're about to get a low blow. If the referee's vision is obscured for a moment, you're getting a thumb in the eye. If he says 'let's form an alliance and gang up on that guy' it's only going to last so long as it benefits him, and the moment you let your guard down he's going to turn on you while you are vulnerable. That's not malice; that's just classic heel psychology – and that's *what makes the match good*. The Ego is the brilliant antagonist written into the plot – one does not need to vanquish it with finality but only learn to stop trusting it. One must reach a point where one can say “I see you, I know what you are, I know your playbook, I know every false promise and fake alliance – I am not falling for it anymore”.

Amusingly, deep down the Ego doesn't even want to win (though this may seem paradoxical, because, like Flair, it will fight tooth and nail to win regardless – the Ego takes no issue with being hypocritical or contradictory in its positions). Non Duality teacher Naho once explained the situation brilliantly in about as few words as possible: 'me' is an illusion, and 'me' does not want to exist, but at the same time, 'me' does not want to die. This is the deep, inherent conflict present in the 'psychology' of the Ego. Like Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*, the Ego both hates and loves itself: it does not want to be what it is but also fears being extinguished. Deep down, the Ego wants to be melted in the fire of Mount Doom more than it wants to possess the Ring of Power.

Ric Flair ultimately wants his opponent to win – he wants Sting to eventually dethrone him as champion and become the face of the company. But he will not just hand the victory to Sting – they have to go through a story arc first, and that arc will be as follows:

time and again, Sting will come up just short because he falls for some trick: he shows compassion for a feigned injury and lets his guard down only to be caught in a roll-up; he gets counted out because Flair's buddies attack his friend backstage and he goes to the rescue; he wrestles a steel chair away from Flair, who then drops to the ground pretending to have been struck with it – and Sting is disqualified. But eventually there comes the match where Sting has learned: he is onto all the tricks and doesn't fall for them. He finally outwits Flair at his own game – and only at this point does he at last triumph. Flair's clandestine desire for his opponent to win is never revealed to his opponent or the audience: he will battle with everything he has, cheat at every possible opportunity, and in defeat skulk away rejected and bitter. Only when they are behind the curtains – when the match is over and no one else is watching – will Ric Flair say to his opponent, “Fantastic match brother, congratulations – you've earned it”.

Chapter 36: A Critique of Psychology

Firstly, I would like to reiterate and emphasize that the way in which the term “Ego” is used in this work is entirely distinct from the way in which that term is used by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Freud and Jung were both brilliant psychologists who made profound contributions to the field, and essentially pioneered psychoanalysis. Their work with dream analysis is profound and Jung's descriptions of universal archetypes has great merit. However, neither transcended the level of the Relative to the Absolute – that is to say, neither realized the Self or recognized the true nature of the Ego as an illusory play of false identity, and therefore the value of the work presented by each, though relevant and potentially valuable on the level of the Relative, lacks utility for one aligned with the Absolute and freedom from illusion, for it remains wholly entrenched in describing and confirming the illusion rather than transcending it – they are describing the nature of the Dream without recognizing *it is a dream!* Everything within the dream supports the apparent reality of the dream, and therefore the contents of the dream are valid within a limited scope: they may have relevance within the context of the dream scape, but ultimately they remain only the various stylistic mechanisms designed to perpetuate the illusion that the dream is reality.

In Freud's model of the individual psyche, there are three components:

1. The Id – the base drives
2. The Superego – the overly-critical moral judge
3. The Ego – the healthy aspect of the psyche, associated with reason and rationality, that moderates between the Id and the Superego.

So, when someone cuts you off in traffic, the Id exclaims, “I should run that asshole off the road!”; the Superego responds, “Oh

my God, how could I have such a horrible thought! Why am I not more compassionate?! I'm such a bad person!"; and then the Freudian Ego steps in and says, "Okay, I don't need to think of myself as horrible for getting upset, he did indeed rudely cut me off; but at the same time, I don't need to run him off the road, he was probably just distracted or made a mistake, I can just let it go, it's not a big deal". In this interplay, the Id and Superego are seen to represent inappropriate opposing extremes, whereas the Ego is the healthy voice of reason representing moderation and mediation.

In truth, *this entire schema is the Ego making a clever play of false identity!* It cannot be stressed enough that one's goal in life *is not to be a good person*, it is to *see through the false sense of identity* – and that false identity can be the loving, pious, spiritual saint just as easily as it can be the perfidious sinner. In the context of Freud's mapping of the psyche, the Ego's gambit is this: I don't wish to identify with the Id, for it is cruel to others; and I don't wish to identify with the Superego, for it is cruel to me; therefore, *I must be the Ego* – the balanced, moderate voice of reason – *that* is who I truly am! This is a variation on the "good cop; bad cop" routine – by making the extremes so unappealing, there is an unquestioned allegiance to what seems to be the voice of reason amidst the chaos. One is not that either!

Freud is absolutely correct that the Id and the Superego are part of the psyche, and they are as he describes them. The error Freud makes is treating the (Freudian) Ego as the healthy identity center, when in truth, identification therewith is merely another error, another trick of the illusion of personal identity as a separate causal self. Do not underestimate the Ego! (As a side note, Freud correctly identified the God of the Old Testament as a projection of the feared authoritarian figure, but then erroneously concluded that therefore God does not exist, whereas the correct conclusion is that the false depictions of God are invalid).

In Jung's schema of the psyche, the Self includes both the Ego and the unconscious, and the process of Individuation involves integrating both the Ego and the various aspects of the unconscious – like the shadow, and the animus/anima – into a healthy composite whole. Just as was the case with Freud, Jung's approach admits to the error of personal identity, of being the imagined character who

possesses an Ego and an unconscious. In Jung's terminology, the Self is the individual character and the whole of his psyche ; in truth, the Self is completely transcendent of character – it is the “I am” that is not a person who thinks and makes choices. And the Ego, in Jung's schema, much as is the case with Freud's employment of the term, represents a healthy part of what constitutes an individual's legitimate identity. These understandings of the psyche may be useful for someone who is in an earlier stage of his spiritual evolution, but eventually there comes a time when such schema need to be transcended and discarded, for they reinforce the false sense of individual identity, and therefore are ultimately illusory in nature – they lead to more-pleasant territory, but still not in the direction of Truth. The Buddha said: “Just as a man would use a thorn to remove another thorn and then throw both away, so too the Dhamma [teaching] is used to remove wrong views, and then it too is discarded.”

Though Freud and Jung failed to recognize the true nature of the Ego and the level of the Absolute, their work nevertheless has some merit on the Relative level; modern day mainstream psychology, by contrast, is an utter nightmare, almost entirely driven and developed by the Ego, and anyone who believes there is validity in what has been elucidated in this work is strongly advised to avoid engaging with so called “professional” psychologists under nearly all circumstances. Much like mainstream science, psychology has widely adopted the belief that all truth must be evidence-based, and that only that which is provable in scientific terms is real ; this perspective is profoundly problematic, for by assuming this position, it draws for its evidence and reasoning entirely from the contents of the illusion, and therefore its credibility is entirely suspect. Rudimentary platitudes, kindergarten level advice (like, “why don't you draw a picture of the feeling?”), and hollow affirmations (like, “if you believe in yourself you can accomplish anything”) have replaced the rigor and depth of valid (on the Relative level) psychological assessment, such as symbolic dream analysis and the Socratic method of inquiry – both of which, though still limited, at least aim toward inner truth rather than outward conformity. The system has shifted from genuine concern for the mental well being of others to an orthodoxy of standard protocols and decision-flow-charts that lack entirely in courage, flexibility, and genuine compassion. The

unspoken rule of modern times, both in psychology and in several other career fields, is, “don't concern yourself with the well being of the individual at all – just follow protocol without deviation so you do not risk your job or reputation – cover your ass”.

As an exemplification of how the Ego has corrupted mainstream psychology, consider what psychology classifies as a “dissociative disorder” – dissociation from identification with the thoughts and the egoic character is *precisely* what is in the best interest of the individual, but here once again the Ego has reversed the situation and labeled what is beneficial as malignant. *There is no such thing as a dissociative disorder!* – it is a nefarious concept created by the Ego to keep one from recognizing the truth that he is not the thoughts and not the character, and nothing more than this. As another exemplification, consider Attention Deficit Disorder ; this diagnosis presumes that the mentally healthy individual ought to be constantly focused and dialed in to the linear story of the world – as one advances spiritually, the *less* one is dialed in to linear story, and the *more* he is willing to allow his attention to drift wherever it will – the ability to let attention drift is not a disorder; it is the beginning of freedom. On what comparative basis could anyone say of himself his ability to focus his attention is deficient? What exactly is the benchmark one would compare oneself to? If it is a comparison to the “average person's attention span”, one is comparing oneself to the masses – if the masses were heading in the right direction, peace and Enlightenment would be the norm, not the rare exception. So much, then, for the purported value of modern day psychology. It is but another profession like doctor or lawyer that considers itself lofty and admirable, but is indeed profoundly naive, lacking in wisdom, and under the influence of the Ego's desire to consider itself smart, successful, wealthy, and and virtuous. Such individuals know so much about nothing at all.

Chapter 37: On Morality

It is quite easy to errantly imagine the Ego as an overtly evil character, for at times it does behave in line with this archetype; however, the Ego, as the villain or opposition force, is stylistically far more akin to the clever, scheming, dissimulating character who knows not to show his cards, to play everything tight to the vest, to retreat when it is advantageous to do so, and to feign goodness whenever this strategy is suiting. The Ego is less like Sauron and more like Saruman: Sauron is the overt, openly declared villain bent on destroying all who stand for good through sheer tyranny of will and overwhelming brute force – The Fellowship know precisely where they stand in relation to Sauron –; Saruman, by contrast, is more deceptive and cunning – he does not attempt to win power by sheer force but by clever strategy, which includes convincingly playing the friend and ally of The Fellowship until the opportune time to strike arrives. While it seems like Saruman is subordinate to Sauron, this is merely Saruman playing the long game: he will feign fealty and loyalty until circumstances are favorable, at which point he will make the best play for his own personal ambition – in other words, despite appearances, he is only ever operating from his own self interest, he is just clever about how he goes about it. The Ego isn't always the villain in black — quite often it shows up dressed as the savior, the moralist, and the voice of reason.

On the level of the Absolute, morality is seen as entirely superfluous, and ultimately nothing more than another mechanism through which the Ego attempts to create a false sense of identity ; at this stage of spiritual evolution, it is understood that everything that happens is exactly perfect as is no matter what and could not be any other way. All is predetermined, God's divine play of form (*lila*), and there is no causal agent making real and meaningful decisions – there is nothing wrong, there never was and there never will be. On this level, we cannot say that anything is “right” or “wrong” – everything merely *is*, and so there is no place for real moral judgment to apply. People are often keen to say that God is unconditionally loving, but in most cases they fail to realize that in order to be unconditionally loving, God must approve of *everything* that happens – God must be all-embracing, not picking and choosing what is 'good' and what is

'bad'. It is worth here noting that the proper interpretation of the fall of man is that by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam and Eve became aware of the concepts of "right" and "wrong", as opposed to innocently accepting everything as perfect, which cognition gave rise to all manner of problems for them ; were they to then eat from the Tree of Life, meaning abandon the belief in the duality of Good vs Evil, they would become as Gods – which is *precisely* what they ought to do –; however, the serpent, now disguising himself as God, convinces them that they have committed a sin, for now they believe this is possible, and so tells them that they are banished from The Garden of Eden. God does not banish Adam and Eve from the Kingdom – they are tricked and exile themselves because they have believed in something impossible: that God could disapprove of that which he created. This is consistent with the origin story presented in A Course in Miracles, which states: "Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh".

On the Relative level, the correct understanding of morality is established by Arthur Schopenhauer with stunning precision in his prize essay *On The Basis of Morality*. His system far surpasses all other ethical systems the world has ever advanced, including Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and Kant's categorical imperative, and it can be summarized almost entirely in a single sentence: never subvert the will of another to serve your own; rather, as much as possible, deny your own will and affirm it in others. Following this one simple rule is sufficient to resolve all moral quandaries – it is even more precise and effective than The Golden Rule. Schopenhauer goes on to make a few important clarifications on the topic of morality that are valuable to comprehend. Firstly, he clarifies that there is no special distinction between the case where another's will is subverted by physical force and where it is subverted by coercion (that is, deceit and manipulation). This is to say, whether I physically rob a man or trick him into giving me his money is irrelevant to the moral violation, because what matters is that in both cases I have subverted his will to serve my own. This understanding is particularly valuable and relevant considering that in our modern day society, a special emphasis tends to be placed on rebuking physical violence more severely than injustices done through cunning and coercion. Secondly, he clarifies that when someone trespasses upon your will,

you are therefore granted a right to rectify that transgression, even if the mode of so doing would under normal circumstances be considered a moral violation. This is to say, if a robber breaks into my house and is threatening me, I am well within my moral right to either forcibly remove him from my property or to trick him into leaving, such as by claiming to have already called the police – because he has trespassed on my will, I do not owe him the normal moral duty of doing no physical harm or speaking honestly until the situation has been rectified. Schopenhauer's moral system also nicely accounts for cases such as in combat sports, where individuals are attempting to deceive and damage one another – because both have entered into the contest willingly knowing the risks involved, there is no transgression against the will of either in this case.

It is most likely that anyone reading a work such as this is far more susceptible to Ego trickery in the style of moral righteousness and scrupulosity than he is to Ego trickery in the style of inspiring over acts of hostility or criminality – that is to say, the reader is likely more at risk from the Superego than from the Id. Individuals who are career criminals and revel in the misfortune of others are at a low level of spiritual development and are decidedly not reading philosophical treatises about Enlightenment and the realization of the Self ; those who would be reading a work such as this are far more likely to fall for tricks in the style of excessive condemnation of those at lower levels of spiritual evolution or needless fretting about what the reaction of such individuals would be to reading a work such as this (as if criminals are looking for a lofty philosophical contextualization to justify their continued criminal activities). Therefore, in this work, most attention has been directed towards considerations on levels relevant to the intended and expected audience, and as such there will be far more critique of morality and all that issues from the Superego than there will be focus upon extolling the Relative-level virtues of morality and matters relating to the Id. As a caveat, this style may lend itself to the appearance of an imbalance in ascribed philosophical gravitas on matters of morality; the reader is advised to understand that this seeming imbalance is merely a product of focus, intention, and an understanding of the level on which the primary audience for a work like this is functioning.

Chapter 38: Religious Scrupulosity, Moral Superiority, and Superstitious Behavior

Schopenhauer's explanation of morality, explained in detail previously, but here again summarized in short as a reminder – never subvert the will of another to serve your own; rather, as much as possible, deny your own will and affirm it in others – is simple, precise, and easy to follow: if this were treated as the entire basis for moral consideration by the world, the matter would be far less complex than it is perceived to be by the majority of society. Most ethical systems in this world issue principally from the Ego, which, as has been stated many times, is extremely clever and skilled at twisting the context and wearing the mask of righteousness. The Ego's subversion of morality to serve its own ends comes in three primary modes: (1) it creates hypocritical systems in which it engages in behavior that is actually unethical under the guise of rationalized moral behavior (e.g., “I'm forcing you to do this for your own good!”); (2) it uses morality to justify feeling prideful superiority over others and excessive condemnation of those whom it considers inferior (e.g., “I am such a rare loving and charitable person; people who do not agree with my correct understanding of what is right belong in mental institutions!”); and (3) it creates systems of morality that are actually nothing more than superstitious beliefs – that is, false correlations between ritual or belief and moral virtue – that have nothing to do with actual ethical behavior (e.g., it is immoral to eat meat). On the level of the Absolute, all three of these modes of expression are merely identity plays, aimed at creating allegiance to a fixed archetypal identity, like “the moral arbiter”, “the virtuous loving individual”, and “the social justice warrior” – in all cases the underlying play is to create a sense of personal identity to which one is strongly attached. But here we are primarily speaking primarily on the Relative level for the time being in hopes of exposing and untangling some of the Ego's moral knots.

Most religions and spiritual traditions proffer ethical systems that are deeply flawed: even the relatively simple and clean system presented in The Eightfold Path of Buddhism ultimately represents another form of attachment and a pitfall of personal identity, for

even here, the Ego finds a way to reframe spiritual diligence as a personal achievement, a moral identity, and a ladder of virtue — all of which reinforce the illusion of separation. It is for this reason that in The Zen Teachings of Huang Po, he advises that ideally one would skip the entire tedious path of devotion and simply eliminate all belief in conceptual thought in one sudden flash¹. Po offers the following analogy on the matter:

Suppose a warrior, forgetting that he was already wearing his pearl on his forehead, were to seek for it elsewhere; he could travel the whole world without finding it. But if someone who knew what was wrong were to point it out to him, the warrior would immediately realize that the pearl had been there all the time. So, if you students of the Way are mistaken about your own real Mind, not recognizing that it is the Buddha, you will consequently look for him elsewhere, indulging in various achievements and practices and expecting to attain realization by such graduated practices. But, even after eons of diligent searching, you will not be able to attain to the Way. These methods cannot be compared to the sudden elimination of conceptual thought...it is by preventing the rise of conceptual thought that you will realize Bodhi; and, when you do, you will just be realizing the Buddha who has always existed in your own Mind! Eons of striving will prove to be so much wasted effort; just as, when the

1 “As to performing the six paramitas and vast numbers of similar practices, or gaining merits as countless as the sands of the Ganges, since you are fundamentally complete in every respect, you should not try to supplement that perfection by such meaningless practices. When there is occasion for them, perform them; and, when the occasion is passed, remain quiescent. If you are not absolutely convinced that the Mind is the Buddha [that the Individual is the Self], and if you are attached to forms, practice and meritorious performances, your way of thinking is false and quite incompatible with the Way. The Mind *is* the Buddha, nor are there any other Buddhas or any other mind. It is bright and spotless as the void, having no form or appearance whatever. To make use of your minds to think conceptually is to leave the substance and attach yourselves to form. The Ever-Existential Buddha is not a Buddha of form or attachment. To practice the six paramitas, and myriad similar practices with the intention of becoming a Buddha thereby, is to advance by stages, but the Ever-Existential Buddha is not a Buddha of stages. Awake to the One Mind, and there is nothing whatsoever to be attained. This is the *real* Buddha. The Buddha and all sentient beings are the One Mind and nothing else.”

warrior found his pearl, he merely discovered what had been hanging on his forehead all the time; and just as his finding of it had nothing to do with his efforts to discover it elsewhere.

It must be said, however, that the predominant religions of the Western world operate in practice from a system of morality that is almost entirely a product of the Superego – the aspects of the Ego that internalizes rigid social rules and inherited moral norms, and castigates itself and others relentlessly for any perceived violation thereof – and often borders on insanity. The radical Islamic notion that one is doing a great service to Allah by slaying infidels and non-believers is abhorrent and completely unjustifiable – it is merely another baseless justification for harming and killing others like so many that have preceded it. Jewish traditions are rife with beliefs that either subtly or grossly reinforce the notion that it is somehow pious to suffer, as if suffering were somehow indicative of moral uprightness and strength of character – this notion is another instance of the Ego getting things backwards: suffering is *never* a virtue and all suffering that can be avoided ought to be avoided – on this matter, Gotama Buddha was of the correct understanding (on occasion, doing what is virtuous entails suffering, but the suffering is always a circumstantial byproduct and never a reliable indicator of virtue, nor is it virtue's source – cooking can create smoke, but smoke does not necessarily imply cooking, nor does it cook).

It must be said that no modern religion is more deeply entangled in Ego-based moral perplexity and hypocrisy than Christianity – at least with respect to how it is broadly practiced in our current age. The theology of Christianity clearly states that Jesus's sacrifice as God taking on human form, suffering and dying, represents salvation from sin for all of mankind – all has been forgiven, the matter has been eternally resolved. Why, then, does there continue to be such an obsession with sin in Christianity? Why the endless sermons on what constitutes sinful behaviors and the dangers of being damned to hell for all eternity? Why the insistence that non-believers are doomed to hell when scripture says that Christ came to save mankind from sin, never qualifying this as a specific subset of mankind, like only those who believe in him or only those who behave in a sufficiently virtuous manner? Christianity ought to be a celebration of the fact that God has already taken care of things, sin has been defeated, and Salvation is guaranteed – this

understanding should come as a great relief and a reason to rejoice: the focus ought to be on fellowship, love, and appreciation of life and what God has created – not a wallowing in self-condemnation, judgmentalism, and excessive moral scrupulosity.

It is one of the greatest merits of the authentic Christian theology that Salvation is presented as not something one earns, and not something that can be lost, but rather as a free gift bestowed upon man by God: though dualistic in its presentation, this aligns with the eternal truth that the Self is by nature eternal and indestructible, and that everything that unfolds in manifestation is precisely perfect as it is – these matters never hinge upon the agency, behavior, and decision-making of the individual self (all of which is ultimately illusory). Over time, however, the Ego has slowly crept in and subverted this essential understanding, such that Salvation is now no longer seen as the birthright of all but as something to be won or lost based on individual behavior and choices. John 3:16 spuriously adds the qualification that Salvation applies specifically to “all who believe in [Christ]”. In the epistles, Paul goes even further, declaring that faith, though crucial, is not alone sufficient, but that works too are to be considered in determining the ultimate fate of one's soul. In modern times, the discordant ritual of Confession has been introduced as essential for the purification of one's soul – if Jesus has absolved you of all sin, why are you nevertheless confessing to sin? The true message of Christian theology is not that we *might* be saved, but that we already *are*. Sin has been defeated—there is no longer anyone left to sin, and nothing left to atone for.

And so, in the modern practice and preaching of Christianity, we see a constantly-reinforced contradiction with the basic tenets of the theology, where Salvation, which is a birthright and is guaranteed, is treated as something that must be earned lest it be lost; while sin, which Jesus overcame for and on behalf of mankind, nevertheless persists. (To believe that sin persists as a Christian is blasphemous – it is tantamount to saying that God's sacrifice as Jesus was insufficient and did not accomplish its intended purpose). These contradictory and hypocritical stances reflect the Ego's warping of valuable theology into a system of control and condemnation. Recall that the Ego loves to wallow in its self-denigration as a lowly sinner, but simultaneously loves to revel in its own virtuousness and moral superiority. It is the influence of the generally-undetected Ego that

has resulted in such absurd contradictory practices and beliefs finding their way into Christianity over the years at the hands of church authorities and politicians who were not themselves Enlightened like Christ and therefore were susceptible to the Ego's nefarious introduction of falsehoods into the foundational spiritual theology.

While organized religion is likely the predominant source of Ego-based morality systems, moral righteousness, indignation and superstition permeate popular culture and secular systems as well. Many contemporary moral standards are baseless and tend to be arbitrary or symbolic in nature; for example, the recent trend towards veganism and vegetarianism being hailed as morally superior diets – Jesus insightfully noted, “it is not that which goes into a man's mouth but what comes out that defiles him”, and yet this teaching has been widely ignored or given no credence, even in Christian circles, which are riven with perplexing moral dietary laws. Much of what is proffered as morally upright in society comes from “virtue signaling” – upholding an image of oneself to others as good and righteous in order to be thought well of – and what passes for morality associated therewith is always whatever is trending as appropriate in the eyes of the masses – the masses historically have never had a strong grip on proper ethics and do not represent a reliable barometer for determining what is right and wrong. The contemporary emphasis on the ethical significance of “social justice” is precisely inverted from the truth – in Reality, everything is at all times in perfect karmic balance and there is absolutely zero injustice to be found in this Universe. Often moral stances are presented cleverly such that the underlying implication of the position is obscured, as is the case with the declaration “we believe: science is real”, for this phrase, exposed in its true light, actually means, “we believe spirituality and faith are a baseless fiction” – it is not an affirmation, it is an attack; disguising hostility in the form of smug benevolence.

The common thread that underlies all of this supercilious moral conviction is that it is in all cases at its root an Ego identity play. Every fallacious moral belief exposed in this chapter has as its purpose the reinforcement of a sense of identity, in most cases as a virtuous and just individual. It has been said before in this work, but bears repeating: *the goal in life is not to be a good person; it is to see through the illusion of individual identity and so realize the truth of the Self.* So often, people cling desperately to their moral beliefs out of fear that, were

they to loosen their grip, they would descend into depravity ; in truth, the exact opposite is the case: when one at last relaxes on the matter of moral scrupulosity and radically accepts that both he and the world are precisely as they ought to be, life begins to flow naturally, and the inherent qualities of the Self such as lovingness, compassion, humor and inner peace arise organically in their authentic and unforced expressions (and if for some reason they don't, well, who cares? – you were never the doer to begin with). The individual deliberately striving to be morally righteous is like the man caught in a Chinese finger-trap: he believes his efforts will yield freedom and comfort, but they only serve to tighten the grip of the trap – it is only when he relaxes and quits efforting that he is able to find release from the trap and acquire the state he was aiming for but was in fact precluding by the very manner in which he was attempting to attain it.

Chapter 39: Psychological Projection

Psychological Projection, a concept applicable on the Relative level, occurs when an individual goes into denial about the presence of a quality he does not like in himself, and instead sees that quality as being outside of himself, attributing it to others instead of to himself (especially to those who do not possess the quality to any considerable degree). Projection is absolutely rampant in the world; it is something most people are engaged in nearly around the clock. Most people are obsessed with attempting to hold up to the world an image of themselves that is morally good, happy, and successful; socially, they attempt to hide all their negative qualities and inflate the value of their positive qualities. Rare is the individual who is capable of making a truly honest self-assessment and accepting both his negative and positive character traits for what they realistically are. The ultimate purpose of Psychological Projection, which issues entirely from the Ego, is of course to create a false sense of individual identity, just as is the case with everything the Ego does. Being attached to the character as identity is always an error, but being attached to an unrealistic assessment of the character is doubly foolish, as the unrealistic character must be untangled before the realistic character can be untangle (or, one could skip that whole process and simply realize in a flash that one is not a character, period – whatever floats your boat).

In truth, there is not a single quality that is solely “out there” in the world. All of manifestation flows from the Self through the Individual and then re-presents as others and the world, and so every quality that is present in the world is inherited from the Individual, though in certain cases the quality is magnified and in other cases the quality is diminished. Insofar as there is only one subjective knowing – that of the Individual –, in order to recognize any quality in objective manifestation, that same quality must be present within the Individual (to a greater or lesser degree, but always greater than zero), and so on a certain level it can rightly be said that the Individual has every mental disorder, possess every negative quality and potentiality, and is the ultimate source of all of the world's absurdity and stupidity. If a man tells you that he feels ashamed, you only know what he is feeling based on having felt shame directly yourself; you

cannot understand what shame means and simultaneously say “other people feel that way, but I myself am shameless and always have been” ; by contrast, if a man tells you he feels borknogar (a made-up word), you have no way of understanding how he is feeling based on this information, for there is no frame of reference for it to be found in consciousness : therefore, any quality you can meaningfully comprehend is definitionally within you. This truth is further corroborated by the universal applicability of David Hawkins' Scale of Consciousness, which identifies every human emotion and its corresponding energy value ; this scale applies equally to everyone and it can be said with certainty that every emotion listed on the scale is present in every individual, just in varying degrees of intensity and regularity. On the Relative level, there is not one person who has not felt fear, desire, anger, pride, apathy, shame and guilt; and on the level of the Absolute, it is certain that all of these have been felt by the Individual, and are therefore within him.

On the Relative level, wisdom is to accept oneself exactly as-is, warts and all, and to cultivate the ability to make accurate self assessments – those which reflect not what one *wishes* one were, but what one *actually is*. When one embarks from a realistic self-assessment, one's ability to learn and develop is greatly magnified: a person who understands he is a novice computer programmer, for example, will seek the sage advice of more experienced programmers and be flexible in changing the particulars of how he codes ; if that same person is a novice programmer but considers himself elite, he will not seek out the valuable advice of more experienced programmers and will be rigidly attached to how he approaches coding – the former's learning will be accelerated and his technique refined, whereas the latter's learning will be retarded and his technique will remain ponderous compared to what it could be. A Non Duality teacher once made a simple but very astute observation: if someone insults you, the insult is either accurate or inaccurate – if what he said is accurate, then who cares? and if what he said is inaccurate, then who cares? So if someone says, “you have a terrible sense of direction”, either that statement is false, in which case one's reaction is merely to be amused at its inaccuracy, or that statement is true, in which case one's reaction is simply to laugh and acknowledge that this is indeed the case – in neither circumstance is indignation, outrage, and denial of reality necessary. If one can simply own one's

entire downside and learn to laugh about it rather than trying to diminish it, and acknowledge one's upside not as a matter of pride but as matter-of-fact recognition of reality without needing to feign humility, one will bypass the need for Projection entirely, and one will be able to make an accurate assessment of oneself and others. This is what was meant when another manifestation of the Self said:

“How can you remove the speck from your brother's eye when there is a log in your own? You hypocrites!

First remove the speck from your own eye and then you will be able to see clearly enough to remove the log from your brother's eye.”

The reason for this relatively brief description of Psychological Projection is that in the context of other discussions in this work, matters relating to Projection sometimes arise, and so with this chapter the reader has been given the background for reference when Projection comes up in some particular context, where it would otherwise have to be explained there in detail.

Chapter 40: Humility and Arrogance

The Ego has an incredible penchant for getting things exactly backwards

The majority of the world considers Humility categorically a virtue and Arrogance categorically a vice, perceiving the matter, as per usual, in overly-simplified, black and white terms. The reality of the situation is far more nuanced than this, and a great many fall into Ego traps derived from subtly perverting these concepts.

Humility is not a quality worth aspiring to. It is not a *positive* quality, but rather is the condition that prevails in the absence of Arrogance (much as darkness is nothing but the dearth of light, and cold nothing but the dearth of heat). Therefore, one does not need to *try* to be humble – one only need avoid being arrogant. The world is rife with pseudo-humility, both in secular and spiritual circles, and in nearly all cases the underlying motivation is to maintain a sense of identity as a good, virtuous person. *The goal in life is not to be a good person; it is to transcend the illusion of identity as the egoic character.* Once again, the theme of people wishing to fit in with the herd and adhere to what is considered socially acceptable rather than stand boldly for the truth arises – “society considers humility a good quality, I am a good person and a good member of society, therefore, I must be humble”. Underneath the superficial guise of humility lie narcissism, self-righteousness, and scorn for those who are genuinely wise, talented, bold, and successful. In most cases, “humility” is just the glossy coating used to disguise sloth, fear and incompetence; and those who think of themselves humble are almost categorically jealous of those who exhibit genuine excellence. Friedrich Nietzsche distinguished between the herd and the higher man – the former being those defined by mediocrity (the vast majority) and the latter being those defined by creativity, competence, courage, compassion, talent and wisdom –, and quite rightly pointed out that the herd, frustrated by their inability to ascend to the level of the higher man, attempts to drag the higher man down to their level in the name of equality in hopes of sating the self-loathing associated with the deep recognition of their own authentic inferiority. To the humble, the rich and powerful are categorically evil and could only have become

that way through moral corruption and exploitation of the poor and disadvantaged. Self-deprecation and flagellation for them become twisted into their opposite value – now seen as a virtue rather than a vice. Humility is the faux-virtue of the incompetent, and the man who earnestly declares, “I am humble” is indeed declaring, “I am a fool”.

True Arrogance is almost always masked as humility and meekness. The spiritual joke “no one is more humble than I!” reveals the inherent arrogance and pridefulness associated with thinking of oneself as humble. Maddeningly, those who in one breath declare themselves to be humble, simple, and common (as if mediocrity were somehow meritorious), will in their next breath claim to know better than or be morally superior to those who are clearly wiser, more intelligent, more talented, and harder working; and in these boasts their underlying arrogance (and inability to perform basic reasoning) are revealed – by their fruits, ye shall know them. Indeed, the humble are the very definition of the wolf in sheep's clothing: underneath their external coat of innocence, simplicity, and harmlessness lies that which wishes to ravish and harm others (the very moment a news report comes out claiming that someone of wealth and power has done something morally questionable or committed a minor indiscretion, the humble are found crying, “he deserves to go to prison!”). It has been said that no one who is truly Enlightened would call himself Enlightened, treating any proclamation of Enlightenment as egoistical and arrogant ; this represents abhorrent reasoning and a perfect example of how the Ego recasts simple honesty as arrogance, while treating as virtuous so-called-humility which is indeed just deceitfulness (i.e., to be Enlightened but to claim you are not) : when Gotama Buddha was born, he declared “I alone am the World-Honored One; this is my final incarnation,”; Jesus Christ declared, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light,” and, “Whoever has seen me has seen The Father – I and the Father are One”; Krishna declared, “I am the Self...seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings” and, “Whatever is glorious, prosperous, or powerful—know that it arises from a spark of My splendor.” Whoever considers humility a great virtue is in quite the conundrum in light of these statements – will he dare call the great Avatars of history arrogant for these remarks? Arrogance is indeed categorically

a vice; but much of what is considered arrogance is indeed justified and appropriate confidence.

Modern society champions and rewards mediocrity while castigating and punishing excellence, all the while claiming to do the opposite. While truth, courage, and individuality are touted publicly as virtuous, what is actually encouraged are deceitfulness, obedience, and conformity. The foolish, incompetent, talentless, and unremarkable are heralded as wonderful people while the wise, capable, skilled, and exceptional are cast as arrogant, morally bankrupt, iconoclastic, and in many cases outright evil. This perversion arises out of the Ego and its desire to maintain its self-image and sense of identity: as is so often the case, the Ego assumes a completely contradictory stance most people nevertheless buy into – on one hand, they wish to see themselves as exceptional, even when they are not, and in this light all who are truly exceptional represent and inconvenient truth that exposes their own deficiency, and so such individuals must be recast as not genuinely exceptional but as cheats who somehow unfairly manipulated the circumstances of life in their favor or as merely the product of fortuitous circumstances who have thereby attained an unearned level of excellence ; on the other hand, they wish to see themselves as average and part of the crowd, as this is considered morally upright and provides a sense of safety and protection by numbers. We have discussed Projection at length, and it appears here again: those who consider themselves humble deny the presence of arrogance and moral turpitude in themselves and project it onto others – particularly those who lack these qualities. Socrates and Jesus were put to death for standing up for the Truth – in the end, the crowd chooses to free Barrabas and sends the honorable one to the cross.

It must be acknowledged that not all arrogance is clandestine in nature and not all arrogance is falsely attributed. Most people, generally around the age of twenty or so, think to themselves, “I now know everything; I need not learn anything new; I need not reconsider any of my beliefs; I need not give any credence to those who present an opposing viewpoint” and so they calcify as a character who has no flexibility and cannot truly grow. This occurs because the Ego associates paradigm alligance with safety – “If my current beliefs are keeping me alive, to change them would be to risk death, and therefore I shall anchor in safety like a man who refuses to

abandon a sinking ship because he fears if he does he might drown". The rigidity and certainty of belief that results from one choosing to swallow this pill represents great arrogance. One ought to always be learning, to be modifying ones approach to life, to accepting the next challenge level bravely and venturing into uncharted territory boldly; and yet, this is the rarest of dispositions to find in the world, even though nearly all claim outwardly to walk this path—it is a true rarity to find someone who is actually open-minded; nearly all people merely claim to be open-minded, but then will rattle off all the beliefs they hold so dearly and have so held for the past decade. So-called-professionals and experts, those who work in fields generally considered prestigious such as doctors, lawyers, psychologists, businessmen, and scientists are in the majority of cases astoundingly arrogant. The ability to memorize a great deal of information, adhere established protocol, and follow rigidly pre-defined decision flow-charts is only impressive in comparison to those who are both lacking in wisdom and of meager intellect. It is one thing to be intellectually very clever and another to be wise: the intellect has to do content and wisdom has to do with context – the intellect can be used to develop nuclear energy, but it is the office of wisdom to decide what ought to be done with it. A sure sign of intellectual pride and arrogance is when a person cannot bring himself to say “I don't know” or “that is beyond my field of expertise” – much as is the case with the lawyer who gives you life advice or the businessman who tells you what diet you ought to observe.

It is highly debatable if there even is such a thing as “genuine humility”, for what exactly would distinguish this from honesty? When scrutinized, “genuine humility” collapses into honesty when it is real and egoic virtue signaling when it is performative. We could perhaps be generous and say that genuine humility is honesty specifically confined to the context of acknowledging and accepting one's weaknesses and limitations with humor and grace, but this concession runs the risk of casting humility as a positive quality, which it is not, and what is beautiful is the humor and grace, not the humility, *per se*. “Genuine humility” (as a positive quality) still smuggles in the idea of lowering oneself, which assumes a self to lower and a hierarchy to measure against—that's Ego's territory. In this sense, “genuine humility” isn't a trait; it's an absence of illusion, and like darkness, it has no substance. There is no need to try to be

humble—simply avoid being arrogant and the rest will take care of itself automatically: it is not necessary to fill the room with light *and* shovel out all of the darkness. That said, on the level of the Absolute, any attempt to be humble, no matter how genuine, is still just another error of misidentifying as the egoic character. So many spiritual teachings that are designed to seem pious and noble merely repackage the Ego in saintly garb. Whether the image in the mirror appears as a sinner or a saint, it is not what one truly is. *The goal in life is not to be a good person; it is to transcend the illusion of identity as the egoic character and to realize the Self.*

Humility is not the true virtue – Honesty is. And Honesty means being able to acknowledge without affectation or pretense what one's strengths and weaknesses are. When one is legitimately an expert in some field, it is not arrogance for one to say, “I am an expert in this field”. If a man suffers a heart attack in a restaurant and a doctor is seated at another table, it would be ethically reproachable for him to remain quiet so as to not appear arrogant, hoping for someone else to step in and help – it is his moral obligation to stand up and confidently say, “I am a doctor and I am qualified to handle this”. When a professional basketball player scores 75 points in a game and in the post-game interview declares it was a team effort, it reeks of dishonest conformity to what one “ought to say” – it is far more refreshing to hear the star say, “I had a fantastic game and was decidedly the MVP”. To deny one's gifts out of fear that one might offend is to side with falsehood over truth, and karmically speaking is a surefire way to squander what has been given; because of cognitive dissonance, a lie repeated enough times will eventually be accepted by the mind as true – if you falsely claim to be terrible at something, soon enough, you will be.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, when one is genuinely terrible at something, wisdom is to acknowledge it with a laugh and seek assistance as needed. “I have a horrible sense of direction—you drive”. This is not weakness; it is strength. No one is great at *everything*. But the Ego, which is hopelessly insecure, never wishes to admit deficiency under any circumstances, for deficiency is considered a sign of weakness, and weakness implies vulnerability; the Ego, obsessed with safety and control, never wishes to admit to vulnerability, for this reminds it of its own mortality, and there is nothing the Ego fears more than death (it is precisely for this reason

that the Ego clings so vehemently to identity—for the Ego, to lose the concrete sense of identity is to confront annihilation, and as has been said previously, the Ego, like Gollum, loathes its existence but also does not want to die). The ability to laugh at weakness is a quality worth cultivating: one's survival *does not* depend on one's strength; one's fate is pre-scripted and so are all of ones weaknesses – “it is not your thrashing around in the water that is keeping you afloat, but the specific gravity of the lake and your natural buoyancy”.

It is God's strength, not your own, that gives you power. And it is His gift, rather than your own, that offers vision to you. God is indeed your strength, and what He gives is truly given. This means that you can receive it any time and anywhere, wherever you are, and in whatever circumstance you find yourself. Your passage through time and space is not at random. You cannot but be in the right place at the right time. Such is the strength of God. Such are His gifts.

~*A Course in Miracles*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “How blessed are the meek—they shall inherit the Earth”. Those who consider themselves meek and humble, who wear their mediocrity as a badge of honor, adore this teaching, wringing their hands and thinking to themselves, “I loathe the wealthy and powerful, for they are evil; but one day my meekness will pay off, and then I shall inherit the Earth and become the one who is wealthy and powerful” – you hypocrites! You desired to become precisely that which you revile! What would one possibly want with the Earth? You already *have* the Earth – you could not have it any more than you already do! This teaching is Jesus trolling idiots and nothing more. The full, unspoken quote would be as follows:

“How blessed are the meek—they shall inherit the Earth.

But how blessed are the bold, the courageous, those who dare to stand apart from the crowd and break new ground, even as they suffer the slings and arrows hurled by jealous fools?—they shall inherit Heaven!”

The Earth is the domain of the Ego. It is a foolish thing to covet. In the words of Admiral Akbar—"It's a trap!". Turn from the temptations of this world and set your heart upon the Truth, upon the Self, and all that is redeeming about the Earth shall be preserved while all that is unsavory shall be washed away.

“Wear the world like a loose garment”
~*Saint Francis of Assisi*

“Be in the world, but not of it”
~*David Hawkins*

“I have cast fire upon the world, and behold, I am watching and waiting until it kindles”
~Y

"In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
~Y

‘Finally—this is what is most terrible of all—the concept of the good man signifies that one sides with all that is weak, sick, failure, suffering of itself...the principle of selection is crossed—an ideal is fabricated from the contradiction against the proud and well-turned-out human being who says Yes, who is sure of the future, who guarantees the future—and he is now called evil.— And all this was believed, as morality!’

~*Friedrich Nietzsche*

“I consider the positions of kings and rulers as dust motes.
I observe treasures of gold and gems as so many bricks and pebbles.
I look upon the finest silken robes as tattered rags.
I see the myriad worlds of the universe as small seeds of fruit,
and the greatest lake in India as a drop of oil on my foot.
I perceive the teachings of the world as the illusions of magicians.”

~*A Buddha, from a Zen Koan from the Sutra of Forty-two Sections*

“When some men fail to accomplish what they desire to do they exclaim angrily, “May the whole world perish!” This repulsive emotion is the pinnacle of envy, whose implication is “If I cannot have something, no one can have anything, no one is to be anything!”

~*Friedrich Nietzsche*

Newsflash:

Under new regulations,
Non-conformity will be punished by law,
Relax,
And don't forget to unplug your TV set.

~*Gamma Ray*

Chapter 41: On Narcissism

Narcissus, in the original mythic tale, becomes so transfixed upon his reflection in the water that he is unable to disengage from staring at it, and so there wastes away until he perishes. The cursory and common interpretation of this symbolic tale is that it speaks to vanity, grandiosity, self-infatuation, and holding oneself in unduly high regard. However, a more sophisticated interpretation of the myth is that this is a parable of becoming identified with and transfixed by the egoic character – that which is not truly oneself, but the reflected and distorted version conjured up by the Ego. Those who are not spiritually awake are like Narcissus: they are unable to break their gaze from the false individual self and its story as a character in the world, and are blissfully ignorant that they are not indeed the reflection, and that there is a reality beyond what is seen in the water—very often people go to their grave without ever having glanced even for a moment in another direction.

Narcissism is extremely misunderstood in society, and as is usually the case with the Ego, the common understanding tends to be essentially backwards. Most people think of the narcissist as being “me/I” oriented and not caring about the well-being of the collective ; in truth, narcissists tend to be “we” oriented, and avoid standing alone against the crowd as an “I” – I narcissist is far more likely to say “we believe xyz” than “I believe xyz”. This is because the narcissist is interested in affirming his own self-worth, and the mechanism by which he does this is seeking the approval of crowds who will validate his view of reality as correct and morally upright. The narcissist seeks safety in numbers because he sees this as a way of maximizing his own protection—his thinking is, “it is to my advantage to fit in with the herd; if I conform to their beliefs they will protect me and will not cast me out”. It is an act of cowardice to compromise the truth in order to gain the approval and support of the mob; it is courageous to stand for truth, even if that means standing alone and facing great personal risk for so doing.

The narcissist does not seek truth—he seeks *moral high ground*. He wants to be on the “right side,” not because it is right, but because he imagines that being seen as righteous grants him safety,

superiority, and purpose. This is the Ego's hijacking of ethics: not as a compass, but as a costume. The modern obsession with "being a good person" often has little to do with love, and much to do with narcissistic self-image maintenance. *The goal in life is not to be a good person; it is to transcend the illusion of identity and realize the Self.*

Narcissism is not always loud, boastful, or obvious. On the contrary, some of the most socially acceptable and insidious forms of narcissism hide behind false humility and self-deprecation. The individual who says, "Oh, I'm nothing special," may do so not out of genuine modesty, but because he has learned that humility itself is a social currency that earns praise, trust, and moral admiration. In such cases, the mask of selflessness is worn in service of the same egoic thirst that defines the more overt narcissist: the need to be seen, validated, and affirmed as good.

Nowhere is narcissism more visible than in the design of social media, where the individual is trained to curate an image, perform a self, and measure his worth by external validation in the form of likes, comments, and followers. It is a digital hall of mirrors, where identity is meticulously crafted and manufactured, and the revered adage, "Know thyself", is replaced with, "know how you wish to be perceived by others, and therefore how you wish to perceive yourself". In such an environment, narcissism has become normalized, and to such a degree that it is now difficult to find instances of the contrast medium by which to perhaps glean a sense of what one is actively embroiled in. To be spiritually sane in such a world is to be, by definition, an outsider. There are certainly redeeming qualities to social media—being able to easily stay in touch with friends, or converse with like-minded groups who share common hobbies and interests, regardless of physical location, is valuable and salubrious—but morphine has some redeeming qualities and contexts in which it is beneficial as well: still, one must proceed with *extreme caution* and understand that he is flirting with a dangerous temptation, and it is often easier to become glamorized and tumble down the rabbit hole than speculative assessments would admit.

It is often assumed that only a small number of individuals meet the criteria for narcissism, while the average person does not. In truth, the reverse is closer to reality. The vast majority operate from narcissistic self-interest and self-preservation, while only a rare few

transcend it. Due to Projection, however, this dynamic is almost always inverted. Consider the public perception of a wealthy man who creates tools that revolutionize communication, productivity, and commerce—his innovations fuel entire industries, create countless jobs, and generate unprecedented global wealth. He then donates much of his fortune to charitable causes. And yet, he is called a narcissist. Not because he is one, but because those who cannot comprehend his motivations are projecting their own unconscious narcissism onto him. He is not the narcissist—they are.

Narcissism, in its deepest sense, is the Ego's desperate attempt to substitute its constructed self-image for the true reality of Being—the timeless, formless presence that underlies all existence—unable to rest in the simplicity and fullness of Being, the Ego clings to its fragmented identity, weaving illusions of importance and control to mask the underlying emptiness. The narcissist does not know who he is—only who he *wants others to think he is*. In the absence of awareness of the Self and in enslavement to and identification with the Ego, he constructs an identity made of mirrors, opinions, performances, and projections. This is why narcissism can never be satisfied: the self it seeks to protect is not real—it is a reflection, like that which entranced Narcissus: compelling, yet lifeless.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), as defined by *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, represents a particularly extreme and fairly rare case of narcissism where the individual's ability to function socially is significantly impaired. However, most people are far closer to NPD than they would ever realize or admit. The illusion of mental health in modern society is often just that—an *illusion*, propped up not by genuine humility or insight, but by a well-rehearsed social mask. What distinguishes the average person from the textbook narcissist is not a lack of narcissistic traits, but simply *a greater talent for hiding them*. Even the ones diagnosing NPD are not exempt. On the contrary, the **clinical diagnostician** often embodies the very traits they diagnose in others:

- A **grandiose sense of self-importance** masked as "expertise."
- A **fantasy** of being the rational savior in a world of disorder.

- A **sense of entitlement** to deference, time, authority, and financial compensation.
- A **need for admiration** that hides behind a white coat or a wall of diplomas.
- A lack of genuine **compassion**, replaced by "active listening" scripts and rehearsed phrases.

In this light, the medical profession—though not alone in this—is emblematic of a deeper cultural problem. The *prestigious career*, and its virtuous boast of being aimed at "helping others", often masks a hunger for recognition, validation, and control. The doctor may not be healing so much as *performing the role of a healer*—and society applauds the performance more than it investigates the performer. What passes for nobility is often narcissism that has been professionalized, credentialized, and codified.

When interacting with the masses in this world, do not be fooled by their clever attempts to mask their dedication to self-interest with the cloak of kindness and concern—truly I tell you, they are ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing. Such people become extremely clever and ultimately expert in creating a believable false image, and have learned to anticipate and defend every possible assault on its legitimacy. Those who are identified with the Ego will swear that their intentions are noble to their last breath, and in most cases, they sincerely believe they are noble, even as they exhibit behavior overwhelmingly contradictory to nobility, because they have purchased their own PR. It has been said in previous chapters that it is extremely unwise to hold up an inauthentic image of oneself in social settings, because, as a result of cognitive dissonance, over time the mind comes to believe what was once seen as act to be a reality—one starts off deliberately wearing a mask, only to find that after wearing it for some time, one has forgotten how to take it off, and soon enough one forgets that one is wearing a mask and considers the mask his real face. Never attempt to 'wake anyone up' to the fact that he is wearing a mask and presenting an inauthentic self-image—narcissism is roughly an incurable disease, and only an event of incredible intensity, like a near death experience, or a tragic loss and life catastrophe, has any chance of jarring a narcissist loose from his

addiction. If you confront the Ego in another person, it will invariably defend itself, and most often the Ego's concept of defense is attack. Let waking people up be the responsibility of the universe —spare yourself the headache.

“You could have the Ego strapped in the electric chair with your hand on the lever and ask, “are you the real identity?” and it would defiantly reply,
“Yes I am—fuck you!”

~Kitsuneo

A young figure sits still by a pool,
He's been stamped "Human Bacon" by some butchery tool,
He is you.
Social Security took care of this lad,
We watch in reverence, as Narcissus is turned to a flower...
A flower?
~Genesis, Supper's Ready

Chapter 42: Pleasure vs Pain

Schopenhauer quite rightly pointed out a key understanding that is almost universally overlooked: *pain is the positive quality and pleasure is the negative quality*. Here, I use the terms *positive* and *negative* in their formal sense, meaning to posit, or add, and to negate, or reduce; not in the sense of their colloquial definitions as being synonymous with “good” and “bad”. The proper definition of pleasure is the feeling state that arises when pain is reduced—and nothing more. It is solely and precisely the alleviation of pain that gives rise to pleasure; just as it is solely and precisely the alleviation of heat that gives rise to feeling cool. Therefore, pleasure can *never, by its very definition*, outpace pain in quantity—under the best of circumstances, the two might be equal. As such, it is a fool’s errand to run about in life attempting to maximize pleasure and minimize pain—and yet this is precisely what most people are engaged in as the governing and underlying pursuit that defines their entire life. This endeavor issues from the Ego, and is ultimately just another means of creating a false sense of identity: endlessly seeking pleasure is a distraction that keeps one fixated upon the world and the linear story; it is to be engaged in the illusion and treating it as real, never pausing to consider one’s underlying assumptions about what constitutes reality : ceaselessly attempting to avoid pain pulls one’s attention out of the present and places it upon worries about the future; here, rather than accepting the downside of life, one attempts to dance around that which is unavoidable, and wastes his time attempting to control life and future outcomes while never stopping to smell the roses. In either case, one becomes identified as a character who is attempting to extort desired circumstances out of life, and is responsible for making decisions that will determine how successful he is in this venture. “If I can make a lot of money, then I can acquire all the things I want and I won’t have to worry about the pain I would suffer were I homeless or unable to afford food and clothing; so off I go to work every day—I guess meditation and self inquiry will have to wait until another time”. It is precisely for this reason that Jesus said essentially the same thing in *The Gospel of Thomas*: [get the quote].

As regards the claim that pleasure is only the negation of pain, consider the following illustrations. When one is hungry, eating

a nice meal feels quite pleasurable; and if one fasts for a day and allows hunger to increase, the meal that breaks the fast will be exceptionally pleasurable : however, one cannot simply continue eating after one's hunger has been sated and continue to derive pleasure—when one is full, eating ceases to be pleasurable, and if one continues beyond this point, it indeed becomes painful. The pleasure of eating *is* the negation of the pain of hunger. When a desire wells up to purchase some frivolous object, like a pair of earrings, it manifests as a mental discomfort and unease; when the purchase is made, the desire is sated, and the result is pleasure—but the pleasure of the novelty of the purchase does not endure, one does not look upon the earrings with the same excitement one felt when they were newly acquired, and most often they wind up at the bottom of a jewelry box, and as a new desire wells up, one seeks to sate it by purchasing a new pair of earrings—even if one already owns plenty of them. If purchasing a pair of earrings yields pleasure in the amount of x , going to the store and purchasing a thousand earrings at once does not yield pleasure in the amount ($x * 1000$). The pleasure of making the purchase *is* the alleviation of the pain of the desire. When the sexual urge has built up to a point of tension and discomfort, one seeks relief in sexual activity, and this is experienced as pleasure. But one cannot continue the sexual act for the entire day and continue deriving pleasure from it; once it has reached its climax, the desire for sex, only hour ago so potent, falls always completely and is absent until the urge has built up once again. The pleasure of sex *is* the alleviation of the discomfort (pain) associated with an excess buildup of sexual energy. The pleasure of alcohol and tobacco *is* the relief of stress. The pleasure of taking a shower *is* the relief of stress and of the discomfort associated with being dirty. If pleasure were a positive quality, any one of these activities could simply be engaged in *ad infinitum* and one could continue deriving pleasure therefrom—but this is clearly not the case.

Happiness is a quality entirely different from pleasure, although the two are often confused and conflated. Happiness is not the result of the negation of pain—the relationship between Happiness and pain is that Happiness tends to prevail in the absence of pain and tends to be blocked in the presence of sufficient pain. With pleasure, the relationship to pain is like how the reduction of heat yields an enjoyable sense of coolness; whereas the relationship of happiness to

pain is akin to how the Sun shines forth when the cloud cover is removed—it is not the removal of the cloud cover that *causes* the Sun to shine forth; rather, the Sun is always shining, but the cloud cover can temporarily block it, such that the light is not received. As such, on the Relative level, it is far wiser to pursue happiness than it is to pursue pleasure. Happiness comes from an appreciation of the beauty of life—a contemplation of humor, art, music and nature. As Schopenhauer notes, such aesthetic contemplation tends to temporarily draw one out of enslavement to the will-to-life (preoccupation with the Ego), and into the realm of the divine (i.e., one experiences to some extent the undiluted nature of the Self). However, it is difficult to contemplate and appreciate the beauty of life when one is in considerable pain, or when one is preoccupied with the agenda of the Ego (which could easily be classified as just another style of pain). The experience of the man who walks through the woods but spends the whole time planning his day and scheming on how to get ahead in his career will be markedly different than that of the man who walks through the woods and simply pays attention to what surrounds him—the birds chirping, the smell of wood and leaves, the intricate shapes of the trees, the different types of plants, the way the sun filters through openings in the canopy and dances off the stream, the quiet. When preoccupied with the Ego and egoic concerns, it is entirely possible to walk through the woods and miss all of this; and often those who have transcended the Ego, at least to some extent, report how suddenly the incredible beauty of nature—that was truly always there—suddenly leaps out at them as if it had only just appeared (Eckhart Tolle speaks of this extreme transition in experience in the introduction of *The Power of Now*).

Many mistake pleasure for happiness simply because they have little or no frame of reference to what happiness actually is. Pleasure is certainly enjoyable, but happiness has a far greater duration and is of a superior quality: an entire day can be spent in happiness writing and recording music, or cultivating the garden; whereas the pleasure of eating a meal, even if it is of exquisite quality, is mostly spent by the time the meal concludes, and what remains fades within an hour or so. There are also many who mistake excitement for happiness, seeing happiness as riding a roller coaster or going to a rave ; the Bhagavad Gita describes three classes of people—the Dull, the Passionate, and the Good: the dull eat

bland, tasteless food because their palate is unrefined and essentially everything tastes the same to them; the Passionate enjoy food that is full of sugar or excessively spicy, even when the amount of spice completely overwhelms the flavor of the food and even yields pain when eaten; but the Good enjoy food that is healthy, well-prepared, flavorful, and properly seasoned—in other words, the Good appreciate the aesthetic quality of the meal; the Passionate just want a high-energy experience, regardless of the quality of that energy; and the Dull are so deadened to sensory input that the quality of a meal in terms of taste is meaningless to them, and they see it purely as a means to an end. Still others mistake for happiness the cheap payoff the Ego offers when its agenda is served, such as the fleeting narcissistic high associated with getting a great number of likes and compliments on a photograph of oneself posted on social media.

The appreciation of nature can be cultivated by gardening, by going to farms, and by simply being observant in nature; it is a lovely practice to take the time to stare at a leaf—gradually all sorts of little details that could easily be overlooked appear, as one at last notices the intricate structure of the veins and the subtle variations in color from section to section. The appreciation of art can be cultivated by going to museums and by creating art oneself in whatever medium one finds appealing. The appreciation of music can be cultivated through ear training, critical listening, and a study of music theory and structural analysis. All of this yields an increase of happiness at virtually no expense. Music in particular has exceptional spiritual potency, and it is indeed a sad state of affairs that much of what passes for music these days in the mainstream is such a far cry from the potential of the medium, which is realized in many genres, but is most universally understood to be expressed in the works of artists like Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Debussy. Schopenhauer rightly advances that music is objectively the highest form of art with the greatest power to raise one out of the mundane and into the divine.

There is nothing inherently wrong with pleasure, and it would be unwise to run screaming from the extreme of hedonism to the opposite extreme of aestheticism. The pains of life associated with hunger and thirst, for example, are unavoidable, and therefore one may as well enjoy the pleasure associated with alleviating those pains. It can also rightly be said that since you have to eat, you may as well eat high quality food that you find enjoyable; and since you have to

drink, you may as well drink clean water. There is no value in suffering pain needlessly—doing so does not make you a stronger or more pious person, despite what the Ego may claim. It is wiser to meditate sitting normally in a comfortable chair than it is contorted into lotus position on a rock—so much of this style of presentation is just spiritual posturing and a desire to feel special. So many spiritual teachers will proclaim, “I am attached to nothing; I need only sit in silence to be happy; I care not for food or drink or entertainment”. This represents far too extreme a position and is indicative of the Ego sneaking in the back door as the “spiritually-advanced world-transcendent guru”. Non-attachment does not mean abstinence—it means that if you go to pour yourself a glass of wine and it turns out the bottle is empty, you merely shrug and say, “oh well”. Non-attachment does not mean you are not saddened if your dog passes away—that would be heartlessness—; rather, it means you grieve for a while and then move on. It is certainly of value to learn to appreciate silence and simply resting in being—but one does not need to do this around the clock. It is perfectly okay to play a video game, or take on a creative project, or enjoy other forms of entertainment—there is nothing wrong with entertainment, *per se*; the problems arise when (1) it is consumed in excess, and (2) the style of entertainment consumed feeds the Ego (such as watching crime dramas). Austerity in the supposedly spiritual individual is a sure sign that the Ego is still in command; one who has truly seen beyond the Ego and realized the Self no longer takes life seriously—it is seen as a huge cosmic joke that one has no control over. You're along for the ride whether you want to be or not, so you may as well have a few good laughs about it along the way. Relax and enjoy a drink now and then—the Self put it there to help you out, because life can be very stressful and sometimes you just need to chill out.

*Chapter 43: On Happiness,
and
Pleasure Versus Pain*

§ 1

Schopenhauer rightly observed a truth that is almost universally overlooked: *pain is the positive quality, and pleasure is the negative*. These terms are used here in their formal sense—to *posit* (add) and to *negate* (subtract)—not in the colloquial sense of “good” and “bad.”

Pleasure, properly understood, is nothing more than the feeling that arises when pain is reduced. It is not an independent phenomenon; it is the *absence* or *relief* of discomfort. Just as coolness is felt when heat subsides, pleasure is felt when pain is diminished. Thus, pleasure can never exceed pain in magnitude. At best, they might cancel out.

To live one’s life seeking pleasure and avoiding pain is, therefore, a futile enterprise—and yet this is precisely what most people are doing with their lives at nearly all times. This obsession with gain and avoidance is driven by the Ego, which uses the preoccupation with pleasure and pain to maintain the illusion of identity. Chasing pleasure keeps one absorbed in the external world and its linear narrative ; trying to avoid pain pulls the mind out of the present moment, fixating it on future anxieties. In both cases, the individual becomes entangled in the illusion, playing the role of a character attempting to manipulate outcomes in order to feel okay.

“If I can make enough money, I’ll have all I want and won’t suffer the pain of poverty—so off to work I go. I guess I’ll meditate and contemplate the truth later.”

This mindset is precisely what Jesus was pointing to in the *Gospel of Thomas* when he said: “A man thought to himself, ‘I will sow, reap, and store up in barns, and have enough for myself.’ But that very night he died.” Here, he is not speaking of physical death but of spiritual misalignment; by planning and attempting to control the

future so that he is ensured pleasure and not pain, the man loses his way spiritually—he would have been better served to have let tomorrow look after itself.

§ 2

The following illustrations exemplify the truth that pain is the positive and pleasure its negation:

When one is hungry, consuming a meal feels pleasurable. The longer one has fasted, the more intense the pleasure. But once one is full, continued eating no longer yields pleasure—indeed, it eventually becomes painful. The pleasure was never in the food; it was in the *negation of hunger*.

The urge to buy a frivolous item, like earrings, creates mental unease. Purchasing the item relieves that tension—temporarily. Not longer after the purchase is made, the pleasure fades, the earrings end up forgotten in a jewelry box with so many others, and soon enough a new craving arises. Buying ten pairs of earrings does not yield ten times the joy. The pleasure lies not in the object, but in *alleviating the itch of desire*. (Incidentally, the pleasure of scratching an itch and the corresponding sense of relief is the annihilation of the bothersome sensation associated therewith).

Built-up sexual energy creates a sense of discomfort or tension. Its release is experienced as pleasure—but the drive vanishes almost immediately afterward. One cannot continue engaging in the act indefinitely and keep experiencing the same pleasure. It is *the relief of pressure* that is felt as pleasurable.

The pleasure associated with alcohol, tobacco, and a hot shower is of precisely the same nature—they are experienced as pleasurable because they remove something unpleasant, such as stress or anxiety.

If pleasure were a positive quantity, then *more* of the activity should produce *more* pleasure. But we know this isn't true. So much then for the notion of pleasure as a positive quality.

§ 3

Happiness is something entirely different than pleasure—it is *not the result of the negation of pain*, but rather is a feeling state that *may arise in the absence of pain*. Happiness tends to be obstructed when pain is present to a sufficient degree, and as such is it easy to errantly conclude that the elimination of pain is what gives rise to happiness, but there is a subtle distinction between the pleasure vs pain dynamic and the happiness vs pain dynamic. The reduction of heat *causes* cold to be felt; the removal of cloud cover *does not cause* the sun to shine : in the former case there *are not* two variables: hot versus cold; there is one variable—heat—and it is present to a greater or lesser degree ; in the latter case, there *are* two independent variables: the clouds and the sun; and when cloud variable no longer obstructs the sun variable, its light is able to shine forth. Pleasure is limited by pain absolutely—it can never exceed pain in quantity, just as there cannot be more cold than results from a complete elimination of heat—; happiness, by contrast is *not* limited by pain any more than the sun's inherent luminosity is limited by clouds. As such, on the Relative level, it is far wiser to *pursue happiness than to chase pleasure*.

Happiness arises through appreciation of beauty—through contemplation of art, music, humor, and nature. Schopenhauer notes that aesthetic contemplation temporarily lifts us out of enslavement to the will—to the Ego—and into the divine. In these moments, we get a taste of the undiluted Self. But pain and egoic preoccupation obstruct happiness. Consider two people walking through the woods. One is lost in mental planning and career scheming; the other is fully present—hearing the birdsong, noticing the texture of bark, the shapes of the leaves, the sunlight dancing through the canopy. The experience of each is markedly different. For the first, nature is background noise. For the second, it is a revelation. The two are in precisely the same setting, and the happiness to be derived therefrom is equally present on both cases, only the former does not realize it and the latter does. It is like the parable of *The Great Banquet*—the wonderful meal is being freely offered, and yet one man accepts while the other says, “I have other obligations to attend to, please excuse me.”

Often those who have experienced even a partial transcendence of ego identification experience a radical shift in

perception where they suddenly notice the beauty all around them and so feel happy where once under precisely the same circumstances they did not. As Eckhart Tolle notes in *The Power of Now*, the beauty of life suddenly leaps out as if it had just appeared—though it was always there.

§ 4

Many people mistake pleasure for happiness because they have little or no frame of reference for true happiness. Pleasure is fleeting and easily exhausted; happiness sustains, and is of superior quality. Burning coal generates energy, but it only lasts as long as it takes the coal to be burned up ; solar energy, by contrast, does not deplete the sun whatsoever. One may spend an entire day happily composing music or tending a garden ; but the pleasure associated with even the most exquisite meal is mostly spent within the hour.

Others confuse excitement for happiness—roller coasters, raves, constant stimulation. But these are just jolts of energy, not lasting joy. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes three types of people: the Dull, the Passionate, and the Good. The Dull prefer tasteless food, for they are numb to subtlety and so for them everything tastes roughly the same ; the Passionate prefer food that is intensely stimulating regardless of the quality of that stimulation, favoring meals high in sugar or spice, even to the degree where consuming them is painful, such as when one becomes jittery for having eaten too much sugar or burns one's taste buds due to excessive spice ; the Good prefer food that is flavorful, nicely seasoned, and well balanced —they appreciate the actual aesthetic of a good meal. In the same way, the Good experience happiness through quiet beauty and subtle depth, while the Passionate chase sensation, and the Dull seek only utility.

Some even mistake Ego gratification for happiness—such as receiving likes and compliments on a photo of oneself posted to social media. But this is not joy; it is a cheap payoff, and is quickly spent. The energetic payoff from Ego gratification is roughly the equivalent of shooting heroin—a brief, intense but fleeting high followed by a severe crash into withdrawal and depression that leaves one desperately looking for another fix. It falls under the category of, “decidedly not worth it”.

§ 5

Unlike pleasure, happiness can be cultivated. The appreciation of nature can be cultivated by gardening, by going to farms, and by simply being observant in nature; it is a lovely practice to take the time to stare at a leaf—gradually all sorts of little details that could easily be overlooked appear, as one at last notices the intricate structure of the veins and the subtle variations in color from section to section. The appreciation of art can be cultivated by going to museums and by creating art oneself in whatever medium one finds appealing. The appreciation of music can be cultivated through ear training, critical listening, and a study of music theory and structural analysis. All of this yields an increase of happiness at virtually no expense.

Music in particular has exceptional spiritual potency, and it is indeed a sad state of affairs that much of what passes for music these days in the mainstream is such a far cry from the potential of the medium, which is realized in many genres, but is most universally understood to be expressed in the works of artists like Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Debussy. Schopenhauer rightly advances that music is objectively the highest form of art with the greatest power to raise one out of the mundane and into the divine.

§ 6

There is nothing inherently wrong with pleasure, and it would be unwise to run screaming from the extreme of hedonism to the opposite extreme of aestheticism. The pains of life associated with hunger and thirst, for example, are unavoidable, and therefore one may as well enjoy the pleasure associated with alleviating those pains. It can also rightly be said that since you have to eat, you may as well eat high quality food that you find enjoyable; and since you have to drink, you may as well drink clean water. Once need not be averse to pleasure—one only need realize that it is a fool's errand to actively seek it. There is no pleasure to be had apart from pain, and one need not seek out pain—pain comes to all of its own accord. Wisdom, then, is to embrace and enjoy the pleasure that is experienced when some naturally-occurring pain is eliminated. In the words of an anonymous Buddhist monk:

“My Zen is that I
eat when I am hungry;
drink when I am thirsty;
sleep when I am tired;
and work or play when I am so disposed.”

There is no value in suffering pain needlessly, and doing so does not make one a stronger or more pious person, despite what the Ego may claim—it is wiser to meditate sitting normally in a comfortable chair than it is contorted into lotus position on a rock (this self-flagellating style is just spiritual posturing and a desire to feel special).

Many spiritual teachers proclaim, “I am attached to nothing; I need only sit in silence to be happy; I care not for food or drink or entertainment”. This represents far too extreme a position and is indicative of the Ego sneaking in the back door as the “spiritually-advanced world-transcendent guru”. Non-attachment does not mean abstinence—it means that if you go to pour yourself a glass of wine and it turns out the bottle is empty, you merely shrug and say, “oh well”. Non-attachment does not mean you are not saddened if your dog passes away—that would be heartlessness—; rather, it means you grieve for a while and then move on. And while it is certainly of value to learn to appreciate silence and resting in being, one does not need to do this around the clock. It is perfectly acceptable and indeed nourishing to play a game, take on a creative project, or enjoy other forms of entertainment. There is nothing wrong with entertainment, *per se*; the problems arise when (1) it is consumed in excess, and (2) the style of entertainment consumed feeds the Ego. Austerity in the supposedly spiritual individual is a sure sign that the Ego is still in command; one who has truly seen beyond the Ego and realized the Self no longer takes life seriously—it is seen as a huge cosmic joke over which one has no control. You're along for the ride whether you want to be or not, so you may as well have a few good laughs along the way. Relax and enjoy a drink now and then—the Self put it there to help you out—or rather, help itself out—, because life can be very stressful and sometimes you just need to chill out.

“One morning I woke up and everything was completely different. The birds were singing as if for the first time. The sunlight was streaming through the window in a new way, and the whole world seemed fresh and alive.”

~Eckhart Tolle

“Music is the highest among the arts, as it is the immediate objectification of the will itself, unmediated by the intellect or the phenomenal world. It is a direct manifestation of the inner nature of reality and has the greatest power to elevate the human spirit beyond the painful striving of the will-to-life.”

~Arthur Schopenhauer

Chapter 44: On Spiritual Awakening and the Illusion of Mental Illness

On a certain level, it can rightly be said that, as the conduit for the genesis of all of objective manifestation, the Individual has every comprehensible mental disorder, though the degree of intensity might be lower compared to the intensity with which it expresses in a particular person or in the population generally (one can simply reflect and realize, "yes, indeed, there have been occasions on which I acted in an obsessive/compulsive manner; and yes, indeed, there have been occasions on which I have been unable to focus my attention, etc."). On an even more fundamental level, however, it can rightly be said that it is *definitionally impossible* for the Individual to be insane. While other people, as objective expressions and representations of and for the Individual, cannot be insane in the sense of having a unique subjective experience of malfunctioning mental faculties (for in truth they have none, but only simulate them), certain others can be said to be 'insane' in the sense of being an objective representation of a certain quality or qualities which, when present to a sufficient degree, result in behavioral patterns not aligned with Reason or rationality (Reason here taken to mean the logos and not necessarily the orthodox linear style of reason championed as valid by the masses); the Individual, by contrast, represents the sole seat of subjective conscious knowing, with respect to which there is no other and so no comparative basis – a mental state could only be said to be sane or insane by comparison to another entirely separate mental state, such that one could say "this one seems to be functioning properly, and this one does not, but insofar as no such comparative mental state exists, the Individual can rightly be said to be beyond the duality of sane vs insane; but it would also be correct to say that the Individual must be classified as sane, for the definitions of sanity and insanity exist solely in the consciousness of the Individual, and if one were truly insane – not in the sense of fleeting moments where reason and rationality falter, but in the sense of reason and rationality being compromised to such a degree that their malfunctioning is the dominant condition – one could not comprehend the idea of sanity: and yet the idea of sanity *is* comprehended. Whatever is happening in the consciousness of the Individual is, at all times and under all

circumstances, precisely perfect, and there is no alternative or separate instantiation of consciousness to be found which might be judged better or worse; and so it is meaningless to say that there is something “wrong” with whatever the prevailing mental state perceived by the Individual – either in a given moment or over the course of a span of time.

On the Relative level, one of the most impressively clever aspects of the Ego and the Grand Illusion is that Mental Health Disorders the experiences of Spiritual Awakening are incredibly similar (indeed, nearly all mental health disorders are only authentic spiritual states twisted into corrupt variations by the Ego), and those who live in the paradigm of the linear, logical, scientific, and rational, devoid of true spiritual comprehension, will invariably interpret authentic spiritual states (for which they have no meaningful frame of reference) as indicative of mental health problems and psychosis. The comprehension that one is not the thinker or the egoic character leads to rightly speaking in a style akin to, “the mind said this” or “the body did that” or “that event just happened and I had nothing to do with it” – but modern psychology would interpret this as a dissociative disorder or a lack of self-control. Insofar as one is the Self and is therefore not just the Individual but *everything* in manifestation, it is perfectly natural to hear the radio or television directly speaking to oneself, for this is how the Self communicates with itself (Jung came near to this understanding with his concept of Synchronicity – meaningful symbolic correlations beyond mere coincidence that appear in one's life as a form of guidance or feedback); however, modern psychology considers these experiences to be symptoms of Schizophrenia. Spiritual Bliss states can be so intense that one can be rendered temporarily useless and unresponsive to the external world, which by comparison seems trivial, and one might even rightly declare, from the perspective of the Self, that “Jesus is me and Buddha is me”; however, modern psychology would interpret this as religious mania, delusions of grandeur, and a messiah complex. As one practices detachment from the content of mind and the linear story, naturally one becomes more spacey and loses the ability to affix one's attention on the world and its events; however, modern psychology would interpret this as Attention Deficit Disorder. On the path of spiritual awakening, often what are called the siddhis in ancient Hindu and Buddhist

traditions spontaneously occur, and one suddenly finds oneself clairvoyant, telepathic, or possessing any number of psychic abilities ; however, modern day psychology considers these phenomena to be imaginary superpowers (for they are not explicable in the scientific paradigm of reality), and presumes that anyone who claims to have said abilities must be Delusional.

It should also be noted that the Ego tends to be less officious in individuals who do not care so much about the truth (though they will never admit to this) and are content to live a normal worldly life of the family, career, and material wealth ; in such people, the Ego need not behave aggressively, for to do so would needlessly risk it being detected – instead, it can quietly lurk in the background, only whispering a suggestion now and then, and thereby still maintain its control without unnecessary risk to its dominance. However, once a person is on the path of truth – such as occurs in the pursuit of philosophical study and inquiry or spiritual study and practice – the Ego is forced to become more aggressive to maintain its control, which is why such individuals are so often less happy and more vexed than those content to live life unquestioned in a comfortable linear paradigm of reality. Once the Ego is detected, and the understanding that this opposition force is a very real, autonomous function in consciousness, and quite decidedly “not me”, it's knives-out for the Ego; having been revealed for what it truly is, there is no longer any advantage in it pretending it does not exist, and so it launches into a full-scale aggressive assault (this is why many who are truly dedicated to the spiritual path experience immense suffering and bouts of depression, and often feel like they are losing their minds). (In The Matrix, the character Cypher becomes so disenfranchised with the reality he is stuck with once he has realized that The Matrix is not real, that he asks to have his memory wiped out and to be re-inserted into the Matrix, declaring, “you know what I've realized—ignorance is bliss,” – this is the symbolic equivalent of electing to plunge back into the story of the linear character and to forget about Non Dual Reality and the Ego, so that it stops being so officious and life can return to mediocrity, which, relative to the extremes of the advanced spiritual path, may indeed seem like bliss at times). Not all dysfunction is spiritual; but much of what is spiritual is mistaken for dysfunction

The individual who is on the spiritually advanced path is

playing the video game of life on Expert Mode, and as such the difficulties of life are much greater: everything hits harder, everything is more challenging to overcome, trials and tribulations pop up with regularity rather than merely on occasion, etc. ; the individual who has not embarked on the spiritual leg of the journey and is operating from the logical, linear, scientific paradigm of reality is playing the video game of life on Easy Mode, and because he has no frame of reference to know that there are indeed higher difficulty levels (for they have not yet been unlocked), he automatically presumes that all individuals are playing the game on Easy Mode, and therefore he sees the struggles of those more spiritually evolved as indicative of inferior or compromised ability to perform well at the game.

The common man says:

“I don't understand why you are struggling so much to defeat Dr. Wily, he's not so difficult, just use the strategies that work for me,”

to which the advanced replies,

“I am struggling because I am facing Dr. Wily on a much higher difficulty setting—he has more HP, he does more damage, and I have less HP and fewer lives—the strategies that apply in your case are no longer applicable in my case, even though we are both fighting Dr. Wily—this is a different animal altogether!”.

The spiritual contains and transcends the psychological—but the psychological **does not** contain or even comprehend the spiritual, properly understood. Thus, from the spiritual vantage, dysfunction is either a lower-order issue to be dissolved, or an *appearance* interpreted through clarity. But from the psychological vantage, awakening appears like a breakdown, for it is operating outside the permitted framework. To make matters worse, doctors and psychologists are almost unanimously prone to the energy field of Pride, such that they automatically presume to know better than everyone else and that there cannot be levels beyond where they are, for that would imply they are not as great and all-knowing as they take themselves to be: “of course I am right, I have a fancy degree and have read many books and work in a well-regarded profession”. Much of this intellectual pridefulness is clandestinely designed to maintaining the belief that, “*I* am sane and mentally well ; *they* are insane and mentally unwell,” (Projection) and yet, on a certain level it is quite correct to

say that anyone who has not detected the Ego (and is therefore identified with it), who considers himself the egoic character, and who believes that there are somehow independent subjectivities beyond his own—is indeed insane. For what could be more insane than mistaking the dream for the dreamer, or the mask for the Self?

The ego is insane. In fear it stands beyond the Everywhere, apart from All, in separation from the Infinite. In its insanity it thinks it has become a victor over God Himself. And in its terrible autonomy it “sees” the Will of God has been destroyed. It dreams of punishment, and trembles at the figures in its dreams; its enemies, who seek to murder it before it can ensure its safety by attacking them.

The Son of God [the Individual] is egoless. What can he know of madness and the death of God, when he abides in Him? What can he know of sorrow and of suffering, when he lives in eternal joy? What can he know of fear and punishment, of sin and guilt, of hatred and attack, when all there is surrounding him is everlasting peace, forever conflict-free and undisturbed, in deepest silence and tranquility?

To know reality is not to see the ego and its thoughts, its works, its acts, its laws and its beliefs, its dreams, its hopes, its plans for its salvation, and the cost belief in it entails. In suffering, the price for faith in it is so immense that crucifixion of the Son of God is offered daily at its darkened shrine, and blood must flow before the altar where its sickly followers prepare to die.

~A Course in Miracles

As has been stated previously, modern psychology issues from and is under the control of the Ego, and anyone who is advanced on the spiritual path cannot afford to put any credence to what is purported to be true by professional psychologists, no matter

how much experience they have or how many books they have read. The field is an Ego trap and must be avoided – it does *not* have redeeming qualities. Any reaction to these statements of shock or outrage at the dismissal of modern psychology as trivial and harmful, such as, “surely there are redeeming aspects to the field – there are people who really need help, the intention of the field is to help others in need” – is just the Ego defending itself and its sense of identity as a caring and equanimous individual. Often times the Truth cannot be cushioned in a bed of clouds and pillows so that everyone can feel comfortable and unoffended – when you need a scalpel, you need a scalpel. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Once one has realized that one is the Self, it follows that the Self, in its most immediate and direct expression as the Individual, by definition *cannot* be crazy, for it is the very substrate and precondition for the duality of sane vs insane to exist (in order to understand why this is so, one must look through the radically subjective lens and not through the lens which posits independent subjectivities out in the world – be The One; not one amongst the many). This being said, insofar as this manifest reality is but a grand illusion; insofar as the Ego is functioning in consciousness around the clock, pitching its identity plays and generally making things miserable; and insofar as one, as the Self and the Individual, is the genesis of all objective manifestation – it can also rightly be said, without there being anything wrong with it, that, “we're all mad here”.

Black points jump in crossing lines

Insanity and genius

Both two sides are what I find

And I know they're mine

Sometimes my womb bears an actor

Your mind - creating tragic factors

You've got knowledge—stolen from the sea

You've got wisdom—just stolen knowledge

Black points jump in crossing lines

Insanity's not far behind the genius inside

Who's before insanity and genius?

~Insanity and Genius

by Gamma Ray

Boom boom,

Ain't it great to be crazy?,

Boom boom,

Ain't it great to be crazy?,

Giddy and foolish,

All day long,

Boom boom,

Ain't it great to be crazy?

Chapter 45: The Importance of Avoiding Extremes

Typically, the Ego favors extremes over moderation and black vs white thinking rather than seeing nuance and shades of gray. It prefers rigid, rule-based systems that are broad sweeping and without exceptions over flexible systems that are context-sensitive and require on-the-spot assessments that intuitively account for the entirety of the situation. The Ego favors extremes because extreme positions reinforce the sense of individual identity more than moderate positions. The value of moderation and temperance is extolled in the east as “The Middle Way” of Gotama Buddha, and in the west as “The Golden Mean” of Aristotle – these two philosophies are, for all intents and purposes, identical. The Ego game of championing extremes plays out in myriad circumstances, and can be seen exemplified in society in countless contexts:

“I am a liberal” and “I am a conservative” are rigid positions that are unlikely to be easily broken – one becomes ardently affixed to the position such that one will defend it voraciously and even violently, and views it as decidedly the correct political position, never authentically entertaining opposing perspectives as potentially valid –; by contrast, a less rigid position (if it can be called that), such as, “I don't align specifically with any political ideology – I have tentative beliefs about certain political matters, but I also understand that on such a complex level of societal functioning, it is nearly impossible to know what policies are ultimately best” is far less tied to a sense of identity – it comes not with outrage, vehemence, and indignation; but with a casual shrug of the shoulders. Never underestimate the value of being able to say, “I don't know” – this is not a sign of ignorance as is often thought; it is a sign of wisdom ; truly I tell you, it is wiser to recognize, as Socrates did, just how little can actually be known, and to hold all positions as tentative (as a reminder, all of manifestation is a product of the Grand Illusion – what can be known with certainty when literally anything might be a mirage?). Gotama Buddha famously began most of his teachings with the phrase, “So have I heard...”, which was his (or her, depending on which lifetime we are referencing) way of establishing that the teaching is not a certainty, but rather an assessment of what seems to be the case, which truly is the best we can hope to achieve with

respect to understanding the nature of metaphysical, spiritual, and worldly matters.

The rigid black vs white positions of, “all abortion is immoral” and “it is a woman's sovereign right to have an abortion – there is nothing wrong with it,” are very much tied to a sense of identity that will be encamped, defended, and championed (“I am pro-abortion” vs “I am anti-abortion); whereas the more moderate and flexible position, “what is appropriate depends on the circumstances in each case, and honestly it's neither my business nor my role to attempt to control or influence that matter,” is far less tied to a firm sense of identity. David Hawkins once spoke of a conversation with a friend who called him and said, “Dave, I just had the most amazing realization – I don't need to have an opinion on everything!” ; the world tends to reinforce the notion that everyone ought to have an opinion on every matter; and most people treasure their opinions as were they precious jewels.

Often, the Ego engages in a gambit where it makes one extreme seem so unappealing that it sends the individual scurrying frantically to the extreme at the opposite end of the spectrum, the faulty reasoning employed here being, “if this extreme is bad and wrong, then the opposite extreme must be good and right”. For example, in many people, the Ego champions the position of material indulgence -- “make as much money as possible, own as many valuable things as possible, eat caviar and drink champagne – fully indulge in the material world” – but if this position wears thin or falters for some reason, the Ego will often, in rejecting it, adopt the position representing the opposite extreme: “one ought to be completely unattached to material possessions, actively embrace poverty and shun abundance, eat next to nothing – reject the material world entirely”. Those of the former mentality think of the poor as inferior and those of the latter position think of the rich as evil; scornful condemnation of a contrasting lifestyle is most often indicative of an Ego-identified position. Between the extremes of hedonism and strict aestheticism lies a moderate position representing The Middle Way: enjoy a drink now and then; observe a healthy, normal diet; etc.. Gotama Buddha was born into unimaginable wealth and status, but rejected this lifestyle and walked away from it to seek Enlightenment and a way to end suffering; in doing so, he became for a time an extreme aesthetic, surviving on a

drop of dew and a few grains of rice each day, such that he was rail thin and could barely stand ; ultimately, he rejected this extreme position as well, adopting The Middle Way, and it was at this point that he was able to attain Enlightenment, for he was distracted neither by indulgences of entertainment and frivolity, nor by the pain and dysfunction that occurs when the body becomes malnourished.

The Id and the Superego, two of the fundamental modalities of the psyche, represent opposing, inflexible positions, and a more sophisticated gambit than the ones described previously: The Id's position is, "I do not wish to modify my behavior whatsoever; I want to do whatever I want regardless of the consequences," and the Superego's position is, "All of my behavior must be carefully modified in consideration of their consequences and moral appropriateness; I need to be "good and well-behaved", and therefore I can never do precisely what I want". Unlike the gambits where the Ego champions extreme positions, here a more sinister and sophisticated gambit is employed: the idea is to make *both extremes* so insufferable that one ties one's sense of identity firmly to the "moderate" position in between that, by comparison, seems reasonable and balanced (that of the Freudian Ego). So this trick involves twisting the moderate position into a form that *does* lend itself to firm and fixed sense of identity ("I cannot be the Id, and I cannot be the Superego, so I *must* be the (Freudian) Ego, for it is the only voice of reason amidst the chaos) – a true moderate position is not ardently held; if the position *is* ardently held, it is an extreme position masquerading as moderation. Wisdom is to *observe moderation without identifying as a moderate*.

It must be said that there are occasions where an extreme action becomes appropriate, so we cannot simply say that extremes are categorically bad and always to be avoided, but only that they are *most often* problematic. When playing poker, there are times when it is strategically appropriate to go "all in"; when approaching a yellow light, it is wise to make a firm decision to either stop or proceed through it confidently, rather than prevaricating over the decision and so potentially winding up in "no man's land"; during meditation, it is wise to categorically reject every identity play that is perceived *no matter what*, and if the Ego says, "I ought to make an exception in this case," it is merely gaming the system by overextending the general principle that it is wise to be flexible and make exceptions. Perhaps

the best way of discerning whether a situation calls for moderation or a firm stance is to check for the presence of emotional attachment to the position: if the stance is felt to be neutral and matter-of-fact, it is likely fine; but if the stance is accompanied by emotional energy that is designed to reinforce the position above and beyond the power of Reason, it is likely problematic – there is a subtle but important difference between the equanimous and emotionally-unfettered statement, “I am not interested in changing my opinion on the matter,” and the emotionally-volatile and aggressive screech, “I am not interested in changing my opinion on the matter!”

"I had not forgotten my promise to consider whether we should make the patient an extreme patriot or an extreme pacifist. All extremes, except extreme devotion to the [God], are to be encouraged."

~Screwtape

(a demon from The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis)

“You know what I’ve noticed lately? Everybody has an opinion. And I, you know, when I was young, it wasn’t that way, you know? People would have maybe, I don’t know, six opinions. You know? Sometimes you’d meet a guy, he’d have eight opinions. You’d go, “Goddamn! That guy’s opinionated!” But about six opinions... and most of them were about food. I mean, I have opinions that everybody holds, like “Yellow’s the best color”. But in general, I don’t got really no opinions and I know a lot of people don’t have opinions on account of I see it on the TV. Like, I’ll watch CNN and they’ll ask a question. Sometimes it’s tough. They’ll say, “What do you think of that Southeast Asian sea treaty? How do you think that’ll affect the gross national product of Singapore?” And afterwards they ask that question: “Do you think it’s good, yes or no?”. And then at the end they show the answer. at the end you always see the same thing. It’ll be like, they’ll show the poll and it’s in like a pie chart, and you go, “Goddamn! I wish I had some pie!”...Anyway, they show a pie chart and it will be like 45 percent yes. 45 percent no. Ten percent: “I don’t know”. So that’s fine, you know? I’m not ashamed of being part of the ten percent. You know? Sounds small, but ten percent of this great country, that’s 35 million people that don’t know. So that’s fine. Now I’m a sucker for a good poll, and I like to participate, so any time I see one of those polls, I phone up. I go, “Hello, is this the TV? Yeah, you asked a question earlier....I don’t know. I don’t know the answer to the question”.”

~Norm MacDonald

Chapter 46: The True Nature of Time

The true nature of time can be thought of, in symbolic geometry, as the Individual orbiting around a very large circle, or, even more accurately, the Individual as a static point on a circle, and the circle itself rotating (when moving about the map in Final Fantasy, the character is always centered on the screen and the map moves around him, but the animation style creates the illusion that it is the map that is static and the character who is moving). The circle is large enough that, like the Earth, it appears to be flat. The Ego, attempting to get ahead of time in hopes of controlling reality and protecting itself, draws a tangent line to the circle passing through the point representing the Individual and the Present, and presumes this line to represent reality: the tangent line is the linear story of the separate egoic character in the world (*Maya*), which might be called *reality*; the curve of the circle is the underlying non-linear meta layer of experience, which might be called *Reality*. Both layers are at all times present and available to be accessed, as were they two different radio stations being broadcast on different frequencies – whichever one is tuned into at a given moment is the one that will be experienced, and one can even turn the dial between them such that both are heard simultaneously, albeit with reduced clarity in the signal of each. If the Ego sustains a consistent tangent line, as one proceeds, the more and more it will become discordant with the underlying Reality of the circle, and so clearer will become the understanding that it is indeed illusory (as occurs as one gets nearer to a mirage); the Ego remedies this by frequently re-drawing the tangent line from the updated position, and dismissing any inconsistencies with the previous tangent line as trivial or artificial – thus creating the illusion of consistency and continuity.

The sense of the passage of time is rendered thusly:

1. The Ego, though pinned to the Present, imagines what the very near future will be like.
2. The Ego recalls from memory (“the past”) the image labeled “the future”.

3. The Ego, staring at this visual now stored in memory, misperceives what is seen here projected upon present Reality as actually *being* Reality, and so mistakes the reality it has here imagined for the Reality that *is*, and therefore need not be imagined.

Thus, by anticipating the very near future (imaginative projection) and referencing the image of this anticipation from the very near past (memory recall), the ego generates a rather compelling artificial reality that is never truly Present, but is always a product of both the future and the past. This is analogous to how the genuine music of a recording can be heard if a record is allowed to play properly, rotating relative to the static needle; but if someone were to physically manipulate the rotation of the record by “scratching” or “scrubbing” it forward and backward relative to the needle, different sounds would be heard as a result – their source would still be the authentic music recorded to the record, but the resultant sound would be sufficiently distorted from the original program, such that the listener might somewhat correctly think, “what I am hearing is not genuinely part of this song”. So *Reality* is Beethoven's 5th and *reality* is a recording of Beethoven's 5th in the hands of a DJ who is manipulating the record in such a way that what is heard becomes virtually unrecognizable as the symphony that is its source.

When one is lost in imagination and mental visualization, the manifest world is still present and available to be seen, but one's *focus* is keenly directed at the overlaid projection, and so the manifest world temporarily fades into the background and is not keenly observed ; analogously, the Ego's projection of reality is the objective manifest world and the story of the egoic character, and this projection is overlaid on top of Reality, such that Reality is always present but overlooked when one's *focus* is keenly directed at the Ego's linear projection, which is illusory, but appears compellingly authentic. Most people have become so affixed to the Ego's projection as the sole definition of their reality that they have completely lost track of the Reality from which it is derived (like listening to a DJ manipulate Beethoven's 5th for so long that the music of the symphony is completely forgotten and only the distorted version conjured up by the DJ is retained, such that it is

seen itself as the source material and not a derivation therefrom). It is therefore a *shift in focus* that defines whether one views the Ego's reality or Reality proper, which is always present and available to be seen by those who have eyes to see. Herein lies the value of meditation – first, one closes one's eyes to screen out the imagery of the manifest world, which, though ultimately illusory, is incredibly compelling, interesting, and rife with distractions ; then, one observes the chattering of the Ego from a detached position, refusing to identify as the thinker or the egoic character, and instead abiding in unconditioned awareness, recognizing all that is experienced as being 'on the movie screen and therefore representative of a simulation and not Reality'. This practice is designed to help one see beyond the Ego's projection of linear reality (Maya) – which consists of the objective world, thoughts, concepts, sensations from the sense organs, imagination, memory, and the cognizance of spacetime –, to nonlinear Reality, which is the underlying source and substance from which all of the Ego's distortions arise. In Reality, form is not solid, discrete, impenetrable objects; but temporary arrangements of light that give the appearance of somewhat definite shape (this is somewhat similar to how the objects seen in a film are not actually solid objects, but rather are projections of light in the similitude of solid objects).

Chapter 47: The Intrinsic Balance Between the Genders

The most fundamental and primordial division of psychic energy in the manifest universe is binary split into the classes of the masculine and the feminine. This is the yin and the yang, the two that harmonize into a greater whole and unity via their synergy. Masculine and feminine energies are not a social construct or a product of stereotypes and prejudices—they are essential to the energetic composition of the universe and represent a harmonic balance that, through its synergy, can achieve what an undivided unity could not. This said, it is not the case that virtues and vices fall into precise classifications as “purely feminine” or “purely masculine”; rather, all virtues and vices fall somewhere along a spectrum for which the masculine and the feminine are the opposing poles. Nor is it the case that “masculine” maps entirely to males and “feminine” maps entirely to females—rather this is just the most pronounced trend and tendency. Everyone has both masculine and feminine energies, and in each person, the balance varies, such that one person might be 80/20 and another might be 50/50. And while it tends to be the case that masculine energy is more pronounced in the male and feminine more pronounced in the female, it is perfectly possible to wind up with a case of a particular male and a particular female, where the male has the higher balance of feminine energy and the female has the higher balance of feminine energy.

One of the most essential aspects of this division of psychic energy, is that the masculine energy is associated with logic/reason, whereas the feminine energy is associated with intuition. Both are crucial for successfully navigating the world. The downside of logic is that it tends to become rigid and rule-based, such that one becomes locked into certain patterns of thinking, and so creative solutions that require thinking a bit outside the box are often overlooked (the classic puzzle of tying two hanging ropes together by using a screwdriver not on screws, but as a pendulum, overcoming functional fixedness and rote logical thinking—“the function of a screwdriver is to screw in screws”); intuition serves to mitigate this downside, as it is more capable of seeing solutions outside the more

systematic ways of thinking, and it can often assess a situation based on feel, accounting for the entirety of its uniqueness rather than the generality of its broad-sweeping classification. The downside of intuition is that it is far more susceptible to emotional interference and tends to be less efficient at accomplishing repetitive tasks which would best be handled in a consistent and systematic way ; logic mitigates this downside by applying rationality in situations of emotional overwhelm, and automating repetitive tasks that do not require a unique, creative approach to be effectively accomplished. Logic is handled by the left brain and intuition is handled by the right brain. They are meant to work together, not in competition, and each has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. As an example, a squirrel uses the left brain to forage for nuts—it makes quick, practical decisions about where to look and how to gather them—but it simultaneously uses its right brain to maintain an awareness of its surroundings—it needs to listen for predators and consider how close nightfall is. Both of these abilities are essential for the squirrel's survival. It needs to accomplish specific tasks effectively and efficiently, while also keeping an eye on the broader context in which the specific task is occurring. While both the male and the female utilize both hemispheres simultaneously, there tends to be a specialization division in male-female pairs where each prioritizes its strength—the male does the repetitive job that makes the money and the female manages that money, deciding how it is best to be spent.

Thus, masculine and feminine are not simply behavioral roles, but profound energetic archetypes that mirror the left and right hemispheres of the brain, logic and intuition, structure and flow. And just as these polarities bring their own unique strengths, they also carry corresponding shadow forms. When these energies fall out of conscious alignment—when they are *unacknowledged, inflated, or weaponized*—they manifest in distorted ways. Logic becomes dogma. Intuition becomes delusion. Force becomes tyranny. Direction becomes manipulation.

It is not enough to celebrate the harmony of the yin and the yang—we must also confront their dysfunction when out of balance. And nowhere is this imbalance more culturally distorted than in how we evaluate harm: what is seen, and what is unseen; what is punished,

and what is excused; what is admitted, and what is denied. There is an inherent karmic symmetry between the genders—a symmetry which, though always active, is often only half acknowledged.

The masculine and feminine, as energetic archetypes, are not simply a matter of gender. Every human being carries both energies — but their general tendencies are observable, and no amount of political correctness can erase the reality of their patterns.

The masculine tends toward *directness, accountability, and force*. Its flaws are obvious, its mistakes overt. When the masculine errs, it does so in a way the world can point to: a punch thrown, a war declared, a command issued. It is public in both its virtues and its sins.

The feminine, by contrast, tends toward *indirection, persuasion, and influence*. When the feminine errs, it does so in subtler, more difficult-to-trace ways: emotional manipulation, revisionist memory, silent revenge through social suggestion. It is private in both its virtues and its abuses.

Because coercion often requires the feminine to pretend — to feign affection, to disguise motives, to recast stories — it becomes especially prone to **believing its own lies**. What began as a tactic becomes, over time, an identity. The story told to others becomes the story told to oneself. And eventually, the memory of truth is overwritten by a more convenient fiction.

This is not a criticism of women as a sex, but of the feminine energy when it becomes **unconscious**. The same blindness occurs in men who lean heavily into feminine manipulation or passive-aggressive victimhood. And conversely, the same raw and honest directness praised in the masculine can be found in many women who live with integrity.

But there is a historical imbalance in how these energies are judged. Force is obvious. Coercion is invisible. So we punish the masculine and pity the feminine, even when the latter is equally cruel. The world sees Macbeth as a villain — but who sees Lady Macbeth for what she truly is? When coercion achieves its ends, the blame falls on the blunt instrument, not the hand that guided it.

There is a tragic karmic symmetry between the sexes. Where the masculine takes by force, the feminine withholds with conditions.

Where the masculine strikes, the feminine poisons. The balance of suffering is equal — but one side has convinced itself, and society, that it suffers more. That it is always the victim. This, too, is part of the manipulation. And when believed internally, it creates a kind of spiritual stagnation — a refusal to see one's own shadow.

The word *feminism* implies a gendered asymmetry from the start. If the movement were truly seeking equilibrium between masculine and feminine energies, a more accurate name would have been *equalism*, *humanism*, or even *gender synergy*. But by labeling it *feminism*, the movement implicitly declared:

“There is something uniquely good, precious, or unjustly suppressed about the feminine, and therefore it must be elevated.”

From a metaphysical standpoint, that is already an imbalance. “Anything you can do, I can do better,” it said. Not equal—**better**. This wasn’t empowerment. It was spiritual inflation. The Ego always overreaches. The moment equality was within grasp, the Ego reached one inch further...and lost it.

The Self, that which one truly is, lies beyond gender identity entirely. On the Relative level, trends and tendencies exist, but no individual is metaphysically bound to accept or reject any ideological role. Gender identity is still identity, and identity is the domain of the Ego. Clinging to gender as if it were sacrosanct reveals a deeper clinging—not to truth, but to illusion. The Ego seeks to protect its constructed self-image, and pronoun fixation is one of its newer disguises. Modern society treats pronouns as if they were of existential significance, when in truth they are mere linguistic shortcuts for the convenience of reference. From the vantage point of consciousness, every person on Earth is, if anything, an *it*. The body is a vehicle, not a self. If someone commented on your car, ‘she’s purring like a kitten,’ you would not reply with offense, ‘actually, it’s a *he*—please don’t assume.’

True liberation begins when the game is seen for what it is. The masculine must take full ownership of its violence. The feminine must take full ownership of its deception. Only then can authentic integration occur. But this level of self-honesty requires immense courage—especially when one has benefited from imbalance and believes one can avoid the consequences of one's actions.

Yet no one escapes karmic reciprocity. Society may overlook or even reward deception, manipulation, or brute force, but consciousness records the truth with perfect fidelity. Every act resonates through the fabric of being, returning in kind—whatever harm one visits upon the world by trespassing upon the will of another, whether via brute force or manipulation, will eventually be visited back upon him.

The field of consciousness records everything—nothing goes unnoticed. This is why it is written: *every hair on your head is counted*. It is why kinesiology works. There is no deceiving Reality. No hiding behind symbols, tears, justifications, or clever phrasing.

Someone's gonna make you pay your fare.

“Most people in society are so left-brain-dominant that you could virtually cut out their right hemisphere and they wouldn't even notice a difference.”

~Kitsuneo

Chapter 48:

Chapter 49:

Chapter 50:

Chapter 51:

Chapter 52:

Chapter 53:

*Chapter 54: On The Relationship Between
Logic/Reason
and
Spirituality*

"The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you."

~Werner Heisenberg

§ 1

There is a common misunderstanding in society that Reason and Spirituality stand in opposition to one another, as if one must choose between a rational but bleak worldview, or a comforting but irrational fantasy. In truth, however, Reason and Spirituality are perfectly coherent and there is zero obligation to choose just one or the other. Nothing stated in this treatise on spiritual reality has required a departure from Reason—indeed, essentially every claim has been properly justified on logical grounds. The reader has not been asked to believe anything in this treatise is true just because it has been stated to be so without supporting justification and explanation ; the reader has in no way been asked to believe that there can be a square circle (apart from the context of pro wrestling).

The problem is that what passes for Logic and Reason in modern society is a far cry from the Logos and the work of great philosophers like Descartes, Plato, and Schopenhauer. What passes for Logic and Reason these days is in fact dogmatized, systematized, and generally pedestrian ways of thinking that support the common narrative rather than actually seeking to apprehend the Truth. The insistence of modern science on the infallibility and necessity of the Scientific Method and “evidence-based reasoning” seems to be in accordance with logical and rational thinking—but the flaw lies in the fact that (1) not everything that is true is provable, and (2) everything in the Matrix is designed to confirm the reality of the Matrix, and

therefore purely “evidence based” reasoning will *always* yield the conclusion that there is an objective, material reality out there independent of subjectivity, and that other people are unique stations of separate subjectivities. Most career scientists have no cognition of Logic as described in the previous chapter—symbolic logic, logical fallacies, etc.,—and this holds doubly true with respect to doctors, lawyers, and psychologists—and yet these are the very individuals who are thought to be most possessing of a keen grasp of logic, reason, and rationality by society. Indeed, it is the business of the lawyer to create fallacious arguments that are nevertheless compelling to fools who cannot see through their flawed structure—and so we see situations such as that described in Plato's *Apology*, where Socrates makes a flawless and legitimate defense for himself...and is put to death anyway.

§ 2

A common error people operating from the non-spiritual paradigm make is concluding the validity of their stance based on the invalidity of arguments proffered by Creationists. So a Creationist argues that God must be real because scripture says God is real, and the Materialist, rightly pointing out that this is circular reasoning, then erroneously concludes that because his opponent was wrong, he must be right. The foolishness of individuals and their misguided arguments is not sufficient grounds to conclude that what they believe must be false. Even more sophisticated logical arguments that attempt to prove God exists fall to proper scrutiny. Pascal's Wager is not about determining what is actually true but about persuading you what you ought to believe on the grounds that it is the “wiser bet”. Saint Thomas Aquinas's cosmological and ontological proofs of the existence of God ultimately fail—seeing God as “first cause” is to place God within the confines of spacetime, where causality exists, rather than beyond it, where it is inapplicable. These philosophers being incorrect in their reasoning, however, does not imply that God is not real—only that they have not successfully figured out how to prove that God is real. No proof of God will *ever* succeed, because God is that upon which the *very idea of proof* is predicated, and therefore is not subject to proving as a way of verifying what is real. This understanding, however, requires *a priori* reasoning, which has all but disappeared in the modern

climate in favor of *a posteriori* understandings.

§ 3

The aversion most scientists have to the notion that there might be some substance to spiritual reality is that to admit this would be to threaten the validity of their entire world view, and therefore a complete overhaul of their paradigm of reality would be necessary. Who would dare consider this when he has gone to school for many years and established a lucrative career, practice, and identity all based around a particular understanding of how reality works? The Ego would *never* allow such a thing. If a scientist were to give genuine consideration to the fact that there might be a spiritual dimension of reality beyond the material, linear world—and not just as window-dressing designed to create the facade of humility and open-mindedness—this would imply that the Ego might have to simultaneously give up its security, its ambitions, and its intellectual pride. The fear associated with such a consideration is maximal, and so it is immediately pushed aside by rationalizations and presumptions. The fact that most scientists consider science to be the basis of all reality, and spirituality to be an irrational fiction embraced by hopeful fools, only speaks to their inability to actually reason properly, their fear-based paradigm allegiance, and their extreme arrogance. Many of the greatest scientific minds in history—Newton, Einstein, Galileo, and Heisenberg, to name a few—were theists; the modern day pop culture scientists running tests to see if orange juice might reduce cholesterol levels is no where near the same league as minds of this stature, and yet, on a subtle and publically-undisclosed level, he considers himself superior.

§ 4

Having established all of this, an *extreme* word of caution with respect to Logic as applied in the context of the Ego is in order. Though the Ego often behaves irrationally and assumes contradictory stances, it also has Logic at its disposal, and is masterful at presenting a temptation where the logic of the argument in and of itself is sound, but the wider context is out. In meditation, the Ego will present coherent logical arguments one must nevertheless override and dismiss based on an understanding of the Ego's

duplicity, and an intuitive, felt sense that something is amiss. In this context, falling into logical, linear reasoning is a trap—much as if one were tossed a hot potato and rather than instantly tossing it away, one paused to inspect it and measure its temperature. Yes, it is a real worm, and yes, it is nutritious—but secretly it has a hook in it, so don't bite on it. And so there is indeed a particular context in spirituality in which logic is inapplicable. In truth, however, there are also more secular situations in which logic is not applicable: the skilled boxer is not thinking through his actions in a step-wise linear, logical fashion—he cannot afford to operate this slowly—; rather, he functions intuitively, moving based on *feel* rather than *thinking*. It has been stated in this work that intuition is actually just Reason performed so quickly that there is not recursive, linear processing. A novice guitarist needs to think about what notes he is going to play and what scales work with the song, but an experienced guitarist does not think in advance about the solo he improvises—he has assimilated the craft so well that spontaneity has taken over deliberateness. The experienced guitarist has not *abandoned* reason—he has simply reached a point of such familiarity and mastery that the mechanical processing of Reason into logical sequences is no longer necessary.

§ 5

It ought also be noted that it is the Absolute level that governs the Relative level, and not the other way around ; and as such, it is the symbolic story of life that prevails and governs—not the probabilities of mathematics. If it is in the Divine Script that you are to learn a spiritual lesson this day, and this lesson entails losing with pocket aces to a two seven off suit, that is precisely what happens. If you are destined to win the lottery on a one in a million scratch ticket, that is precisely what happens. And if the impenetrability of the material universe is meant to dissolve at a given moment, it will. Logic is the equivalent of the default typeface used in the Divine Script—it decidedly applies under nearly all circumstances, **BUT THIS DOES NOT IMPLY THE DIVINE SCRIPT IS WHOLLY BOUND BY IT.** Mathematics can tell you the likelihood of what may happen in a given case, but what *actually happens* is the province of the Divine Script.

True Reason is not the enemy of Spirituality—it is its servant, its instrument, its gatekeeper. And when wielded not by the Ego, but by the Individual, Reason becomes not cold, but luminous. It does not dismantle God—it reveals Him.

With Logic, both sides cannot be the High,
But with Humor, they can.
Yep, that checks out—there is no downside here.
No downside over here either.

Out of the world,
We call the twilight zone,
He comes,
Out of the world,
Where all your reason is a lie.

Dream Healer,
He makes you see what you can't see,
Dream Healer,
Reflecting your identity.

~Gamma Ray

Chapter 55:

Chapter 56: Various Essential Ways In Which the Ego Simulates the Self

§ 1

It has been well established by now that the sole underlying motive of the Ego is always to create a false sense of self, and every action undertaken by the Ego can ultimately be traced back to this one motive. The principle and primary method the Ego uses to accomplish this goal is to simulate the Self—to create a convincing enough forgery of the underlying Truth of Reality that the authentic is overlooked and the forgery considered the reality. The Ego substitutes for the diamond the cubic zirconium, knowing the two are virtually indistinguishable via sense perception and says, “this is the same thing—only this one is less expensive”. The Ego asks you to trade in your sword for an “upgraded” version, covered in jewels and pearls—but when you step into battle with it you find: it does not cut. As such, it is *very easy* to errantly mistake the Ego's forgery for the authentic version. Only the keenest discernment has a chance of penetrating to the depth of Archimedes' “Eureka!” moment where the way to distinguish the forgery from the authentic version becomes clear. This chapter is dedicated to elucidating the differences between the authentic expressions of the Self and the forgeries thereof created by the Ego.

§ 2

The Self is One because it is infinite, indivisible, and beyond the confines of spacetime (even to call it “One” is a compromise, as oneness implies juxtaposition to plurality, which is only applicable to what is bound by spacetime and form). The subjectivity of the Individual cannot be divided, and any perception of it as such is akin to believing that partition screens create multiple, separate rooms. However, the Self manifests also in spacetime as plurality—as Everything—and in this respect it is also Many.

The Ego is One with respect to the egoic character and linear storyline in time that is held in memory. For the Ego, oneness means, “I am me and I am not anything that is not me”—and this

“I/me” is a mortal human character with a name, traits, and history. The Ego is also Many because it can apparently divide itself into thoughts that stand in opposition to one another, such as is the case with its simultaneously playing the roles of both Id and Superego. The classic depiction of the Angel on one shoulder and the Demon on the other is symbolic of the Ego's ability to split itself into many and play multiple characters at once—and the trick here, in most cases, is to convince one to identify as the Angel rather than realizing that both Angel and Demon are the Ego and what one truly is—is neither.

The Ego is *all of the characters in the film*—protagonist, antagonist, saint, sinner, and all gradients in between ; The Self is *none of the characters*—it is the screen on which the film is playing, wholly unaffected by the content of the movie. The Self is not the witness—it is the witnessing.

In spiritual circles, so often the concept of oneness becomes distorted into a vague and hollow refrain that admits to no understanding of metaphysical reality, and more so champions the notion that 'we all ought to work together and be nice to one another'. Often times this distortion reaches such a pitch that the stance becomes quite obviously internally contradictory, such as, “Because we are all one, all modes of being must be respected and admired—therefore let us celebrate *my* uniqueness and greatness!” Even to say, “We are all One because we are all children of God and are equally, unconditionally loved by God” is an error—that is still plurality, still duality (God vs “us”), and still admits of the category error of seeing 'The Individual' and 'others' as belonging to the same class of expressions.

§ 3

Genuine Love—the Love of the Self— involves the appreciation of beauty, nature, art, music and humor. It has *nothing* to do with compassion or empathy; and it has *nothing* to do with relationships.

For the Ego, Love is, at best, a feeling of affection towards other people and things. As such, it is still mired in duality, and represents a value-judgment. Even still, this affection very easily

becomes an outward pose as opposed to an authentic disposition, such that a person might say, “She drives me crazy and annoys me—but I love her”. Often egoic love further devolves into neediness, control and possessiveness. The Ego will say, “I'm going to call my partner to check in on her,” under the auspice of caring about her well being—but what it is actually doing is keeping tabs on her, making sure she isn't out cheating or doing something it disapproves of. *It is one thing to set up a bird feeder and enjoy watching the birds do whatever they do without trying to control them ; it is another to trap and cage the bird so it becomes “my bird”, convincing oneself that one is engaging in an act of love when one is in fact robbing the animal of its joy of flying.* Egoic love is also highly commoditized: for the Ego, to be loving is to buy one's partner gifts and to celebrate all holidays and anniversaries together, such that there is a rigid standard and expectation to be adhered to, even in the case where neither party actually wants to be engaged in the activity. “If he doesn't buy me flowers for Valentine's Day to show me how much he loves me, I will be angry at him”. There is a great deal more authenticity in a simple, spontaneous gesture along the lines of, “I'm going out to grab a cup of coffee; would you like me to grab you one as well?”

True love does not turn to hatred when the circumstances change: one never transitions from, “I have great appreciation for the beauty of Beethoven's 9th Symphony” to “I find that piece repulsive.” Preferences change over time, but Love—as the appreciation of beauty—does not. And yet the Ego cannot bear to think of itself as unloving, and so it contorts its interpretation of reality to ensure that it always views itself as loving, even as it mis-defines Love and then further fails to adhere to its own definition. Despite what the Ego may imply, It is perfectly reasonable to have preferences. It is perfectly reasonable to find some things to be wonderful and others to be grotesque. Music can be divine and elevating—it can also be insipid, trite, and at times outright poisonous.

The context in which it is appropriate to embrace all things equally is on the Absolute Level—to recognize that everything is the way it is and could not be any other way, and therefore to ken that to struggle against the automatic unfolding over which one has no control is pointless. This universal embracing *does not apply* on the Relative Level—here, one ought to exercise discernment, and choose that which is salubrious over that which is deleterious. This is what is

meant by the saying, “Be innocent as doves and wise as serpents”. The innocence of the doves symbolizes the acceptance of the Divine Script over individual autonomy (which, incidentally, guarantees one's inherent and inviolable innocence), and speaks to the level of the Absolute ; the wisdom of the serpent (better understood as discernment or discretion) symbolizes the ability to differentiate between what is beneficial and what is detrimental, and speaks to the level of the Relative.

The Ego says:

“I love all of God's creatures equally no matter what”;

The Enlightened One says:

“I much prefer the dove to the serpent,

Generally speaking—

it depends if one has a problem with mice, et cetera”.

Do not ask:

“is this version more loving and compassionate?”

Ask:

“is there humor in this?”

Chapter 57: Laughter...Simple Laughter

It's all just one big joke in the end. All of the suffering, the consternation, the conflict, the confusion, the trials and tribulations, the tears and anguish—all of it, in the end, give way to uproarious and uncontrollable laughter. The story of life that seems so much to be a tragedy becomes a comedy—indeed is revealed to have been a comedy all along, with the tragic arc merely serving to set up the punchline. The austerity of the Ego and its unshakable insistence that life is very serious and ought to be treated as such gives way to the realization that life is at its base utterly absurd and ridiculous, and that not one thing that was thought to be of importance actually was: not attaining Enlightenment, not transcending the Ego, not the grim specter of death or the horrors of human suffering—none of it. It is as though the Self played a prank on itself and with a wink and a chuckle whispered, “you'll get it when you're older”. One could rightly say that the entire story of the Individual and manifestation occurred simply because “God thought it was funny”. This is the penultimate and end-game understanding and resolution of all things —this is what you're supposed to come to.

I threw away the candy bar and I ate the wrapper,
And when I realized what I'd done I burst into
laughter.
~Brian Wilson

“Comedy is subjective, but life is objectively funny.”
~Trevor Moore

“Never take life 2, seriously.”
~The Self

I love to laugh,
Loud and long and clear,
I love to laugh,
So everybody can hear,
The more I laugh,
The more I'm filled with glee,
The more the glee,
The more I'm a merrier meme!

OMG bro, I totally just glimpsed the end game again!

The entire conclusion is this:

Eventually, there is a chain of perfect jokes, each supplementing the previous, long enough that it loops back on itself, and by the time it reaches the end of the loop, the first joke is not stale but fresh. Once that chain is established, one can just stay in that loop indefinitely, laughing hysterically and watching it amplify itself endlessly, and because it is genuine humor it definitionally completely bypasses and screens out the Ego. So the Ego never dies. Hey Ego! You don't have to die! You just have to SHUT THE FUCK UP! Anyway...it doesn't die, it just goes behind the humor screen permanently. And you—you keep ascending infinitely into higher bliss, because every time the humor cycle recycles, it gets funnier; and the constant ascension is necessary 4 permanently Bliss, because a state can only be felt by comparison to another state held in memory/imagination, so the loop cannot be flat, it has to keep amplifying on each iteration, and then the Bliss state will become roughly the equivalent to the integral of the ascending humor spiral—and the first step in the joke is that the joke is writing itself.

That pretty much takes care of EVERYTHING in one swipe. decidedly HILARIOUS!